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### **Building New Britain Avenue: Community-based Action, Small Business, and Neighborhood Revitalization**

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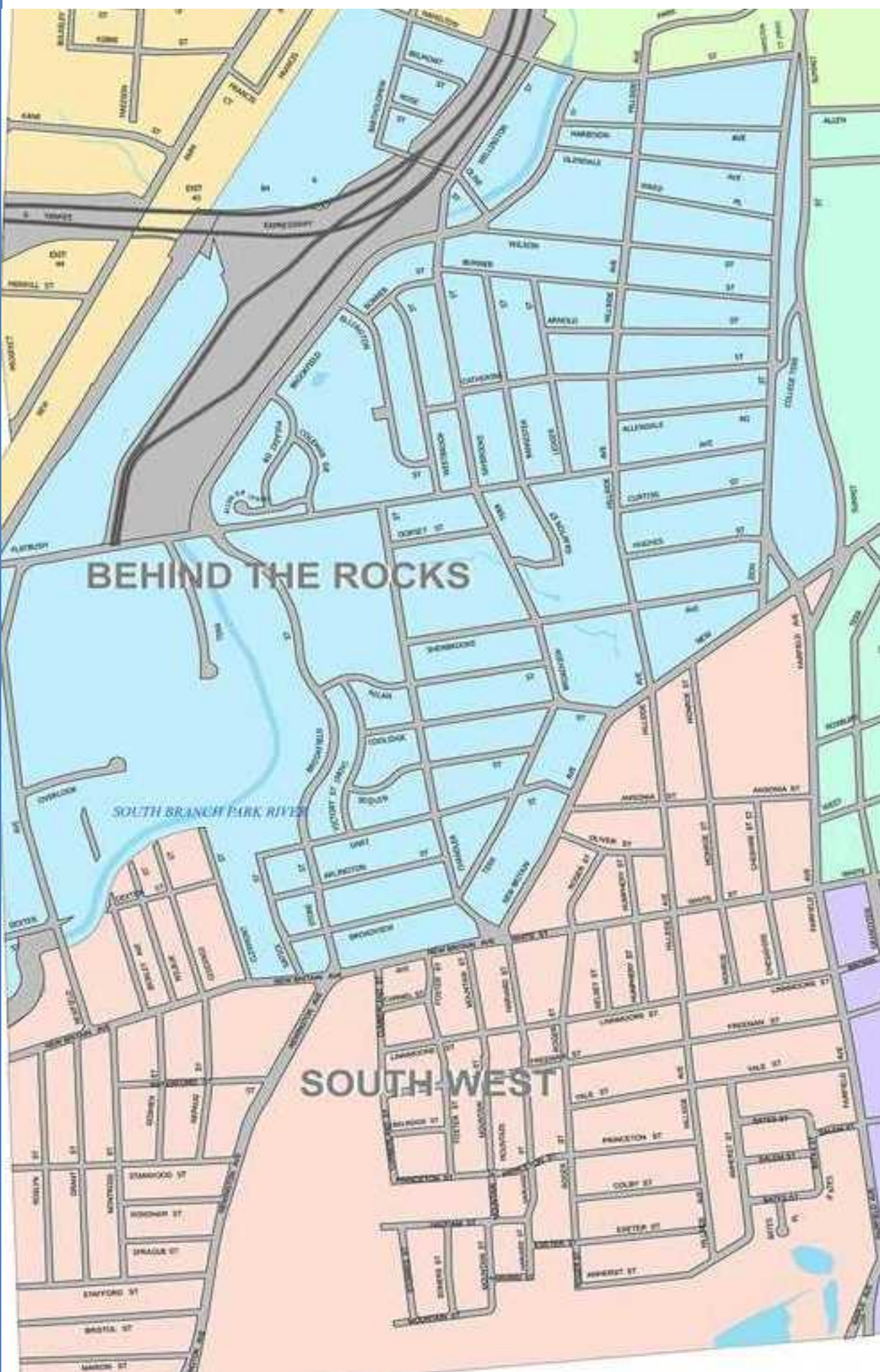
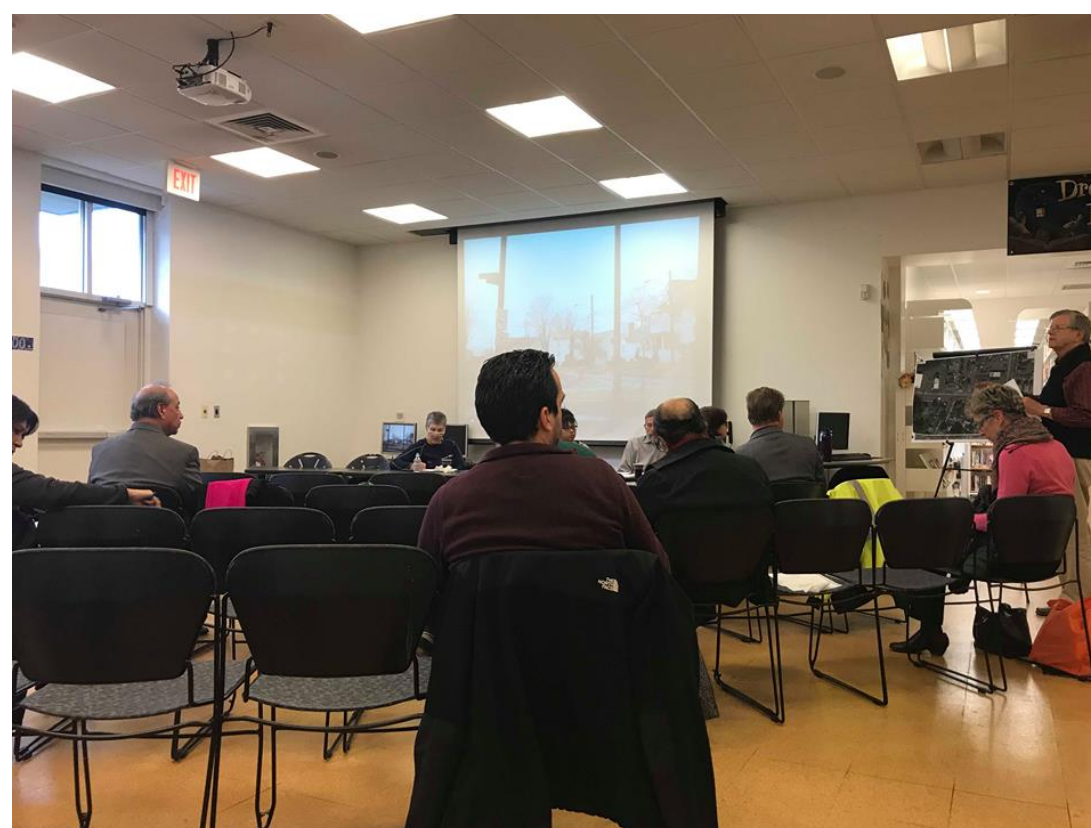
# Building New Britain Avenue: Community-based Action, Small Businesses and Neighborhood Revitalization

Community Partner: Southwest and Behind the Rocks NRZ  
Faculty Advisor: Carol Clark

Larisa Bogomolov



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NRZ of Southwest and Behind the Rocks		Last Semester Takeaways from Working with the NRZ		This Semester's Research Plan		Step 1: Small Business Conference	
<div><div>What is an NRZ?</div><div><p>The NRZ (Neighborhood Revitalization Zone) of Southwest and Behind the Rocks neighborhood is one of fourteen community advocacy groups in Hartford whose goal is to improve the quality of life for residents. The revitalization of the neighborhood depends, in part, on strong communication and cooperation between the local businesses and the NRZ.</p></div></div>		<div><div>What we learned</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Many shared interests between small businesses and the NRZ</li></ul><div><div>Public Safety</div><div>Relationship with the Community</div><div>Common Areas of Concern and Potential for Collaboration</div><div>Street Traffic and Sidewalks</div><div>Infrastructure, Façade, and Parking</div></div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Businesses are open to working together</li></ul><p><b>Takeaway:</b> Start with common concerns and reach out to businesses</p></div></div>		<div><div>What?</div><div><div>How can the NRZ develop a better relationship with Small Business Owners?</div><div>What steps can the NRZ take to be a more effective partner for revitalization?</div></div><div><div>How?</div><div>Step 1: Relationship Building</div><div>Small Business Conference</div><div>Step 2: Running an Effective Community-Based Organization</div><div>Lessons from the Literature</div></div><div><div>Why?</div><div>Better small business representation in NRZ decision-making &amp; Joint efforts in neighborhood revitalization</div></div></div>		<div><div>Goal: Meet the needs of business owners:</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Take into account owners' time and availability</li><li>Focus on owners who live in Hartford</li><li>Have an agenda focused on resources for owners</li><li>Set action steps at the end of the conference</li></ul></div><div></div><div><p><i>*April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 NRZ Small Business Conference</i></p><p><b>Small Business Conference Results</b></p><p>The Small Business Conference provided businesses with resources, and introduced them to the NRZ. The NRZ now hopes to continue to reach out to owners and involve them more in decision-making.</p></div></div>	
Step 2: Lessons from Literature: Organization Building				Lessons from Literature: Community Building			
Set Clear Goals		Effective Outreach to Merchants, and the Public		Strong Institutional Structure		Marketing, Media, and Reputation	
<div><p><i>"Effective community development includes project stages such as identifying needs, issues and assets, setting a development agenda, creating goals, and learning lessons."</i></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Organization is crucial in effective community development models.</li><li>Successful organizations have a clear agenda and goals.</li></ul></div>		<div><p><i>"Identifying distinct futures depends on the inclusion of a diverse group of stakeholders with varying opinions about possible outcomes."</i></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Forums and conferences are effective in gaining the support of merchants, property owners, and the public.</li></ul></div>		<div><p><i>"Successful boards should be organized, and have key skill areas which include the following: running an effective organization, creating a vision, leading and managing, volunteer management, and community consensus building."</i></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Effective organizations have a structure that aligns with their goals and priorities.</li><li>Having a hierarchy of positions, such as a chair, vice chair, treasurer, secretary, and sub-committees is crucial with each position having clearly defined responsibilities.</li></ul></div>		<div><p><i>"The Internet, and affordable, easy-to-use software applications allow downtown organizations to communicate their rapidly changing message twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week."</i></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Media is an important tool in reaching out to community members and keeping communication open and up to date.</li><li>Media can effectively advertise an organizations work and accomplishments.</li></ul></div>	
Application to the NRZ and Recommendations							
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>When first developing the small business meeting, there weren't clear goals, and the meeting fell apart.</li><li>After developing clear goals and an agenda the small business conference was successful.</li></ul></div>		<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The April 19<sup>th</sup> Small Business Conference laid the foundation for gaining support of local business owners.</li><li>Closing or redefining neighborhood anchor institutions limits opportunities for outreach to and participation of different members of the public.</li></ul></div>		<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The NRZ released their strategic plan for business and community development. The plan identified specific goals for the organization.</li><li>Current limitation is that the NRZ is volunteer based.</li><li>The NRZ is looking for a small business owner to join their executive board. Some positions need to be filled and more clearly defined.</li></ul></div>		<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The NRZ currently has an active Facebook group, but can have more of a presence on other social media platforms.</li><li>NRZ is not well known among businesses.</li><li>Website and email addresses can be updated.</li><li>The NRZ should also consider an e-newsletter to highlight businesses and events in the community, as well as offer an online venue for sharing feedback.</li></ul></div>	
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