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PRESS RELEASE

OARC Holds Planning Meeting for Awbury Park Revitalization Project

OARC, a community development corporation whose primary mission is to create and stimulate economic development in the Northwest area of Philadelphia has obtained funding from the PA Department of Community & Natural Resources (DCNR) to revitalize Awbury Park which is located on Haines Street between Ardleigh Street and Stenton Avenue. As part of this revitalization effort, and in partnership with the Fairmount Park Commission, OARC has hired Advanced GeoServices to conduct a planning and feasibility study of the project.

On January 23, 2007, a meeting was held at the Ogontz Grille & Sidewalk Café with City Agencies and other professional stakeholders, who have specific responsibilities at Awbury Park. Other attendees included representatives from the offices of State Representative Dwight Evans, Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller, State Representative John Myers, State Representative Cherelle Parker, Councilwoman Marian Tasco, and State Senator LeAnna Washington. The purpose of the meeting was not only to give an overview of the project, but to also encourage early participation into the Master Planning Phase and to help establish open communication among the various stakeholders in the community.

Jack Kitchen (Chief Executive Officer of OARC) who was also in attendance commented, "I was extremely pleased to see this collaborative effort coming together. The fact that this meeting was attended by so many representatives of elected officials as well as the City agencies speaks well about Northwest Philly. The Awbury Project is another step in developing a "Safe Educational Corridor" and at the same time making the park more user friendly to visitors. No longer will the staff of Martin Luther King High School have to watch students disappear into the woods as they cut through the park to get to their homes. Visitors will have safe access to much larger areas of the park that are currently unused and unsafe. If you haven't already heard it: "Change the Environment - Change the Behavior". When residents see change, they see hope!"

"This was a great meeting from our perspective", said Steve Kuzmicki, OARC's Director of Housing & Economic Development and Project Manager for the Awbury Project. "We want to be as comprehensive as possible when it comes to revitalizing Awbury Park. Having representation from the elected officials and City agencies is a major step in that direction. Our next step will be a community meeting in March 2007, and then some aspects of the construction will begin in the spring."

For more information about the Awbury Park Revitalization Project, please contact Steve Kuzmicki, at 215-549-9462. Visit www.OARCPhilly.org for information about other OARC initiatives.

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