**Some Actions To Take**

- get the names of people, businesses, & organizations involved. contact them. (see page 4)
- think deeply about what you want to happen (as opposed to what is currently happening). say it. (see page 5)
- find ways to tell the story of your neighborhood, from your point of view. encourage others to do the same. (see page 6)
- go to an official meeting. (see page 7)
- have your own meeting. (see page 8)

**MY NAME IS AMANDA** and I made this zine because I am a volunteer organizer in my spare time (what’s left over after doing paid work to survive). I’ve spent 4 years trying, meeting, discussing, emailing, studying, holding space, calling bullshit, and building relationships with my neighbors, and I am still learning how to impact my surroundings.

**MY NAME IS AMANDA**

let's connect. email me:

a.r.huckins@gmail.com

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**Speaking Up and Self-Advocacy**

or, democratizing the machines of "progress"

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**Getting Information**

if you disengage, you give up information. plug in any way you can to keep your community informed.

find the best version of what you don't like & talk to it. it might feel like all developers, all banks, all city government are The Enemy, but these are the players. to start, get to know the credit union instead of the big bank, Urban Development instead of campaigning elected officials, small builders instead of giant development firms. ask questions, take notes.

if you are effective opposition, decision-makers will try to co-opt you. if they finally invite you to "the table", it's not an honor, it's tactical. being allowed to participate doesn't mean you have to act like /agree with other participants. participate as you.

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**Build A Team (Volunteer Jobs):**

researcher - read & summarize official documents (head of team)

space holder - set up a place for people to show up for their meeting (e.g. front porch)

researcher & presenters - build & maintain a public meeting

communicator - design, print & distribute flyers & press releases. run social media pages. increase community profile & public awareness

representatives - bring forward accounts of the good work that people are doing & defend them. engage media & public to support neighborhood improvements. act in community's best interest.

climate change organizers - set up a place for people to show up and work on improving the local neighborhood to address climate change

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**You Just Found Out**

about a plan to change your neighborhood.

you & your neighbors won’t get anything out of it and won’t even get a say, but someone else will make a lot of money. this really pisses you off.

information is scarce and what’s out there reads like an ad. it’s hard to tell who is in control and why.

you feel like there’s nothing you can do. this sucks.

okay, now take a breath and read on...
speak up because you know more about the subject at hand than the people who are controlling the conversation

your questions enter the process long-term. realize get things covered. demand answers. stop your questions. direct you to step their answers and responses. great. let them address and respond. great. if they offer a way to enter the process like (or even say) you are only saying providing solutions, but who we need --- instead, you are read to ill in the bank of next time. they might not, so communicate with you about it. but can change your perspective to demand answers. ask questions. do this, not that.

**Ooops, You’re the Rep**
you ended up being the person who went to the most meetings & now you’re a default representative. remember to keep pointing to people who aren’t being engaged. maybe you got on the board, in the room, & on the radar of people with power. remind them often of who they still aren’t hearing from, because you only speak for a part of the community. continually advocate for significant power shifts. check your ego (and other people’s assumptions). own that you are not exceptional & are a volunteer. acknowledge that regular people with no training can do important work. challenge assumptions about who is “qualified” to lead. encourage neighbors to claim their own power.

**Stepping Back/Moving On**
this is a note on taking care of yourself, from personal experience: this work is often demoralizing. the more you learn about how development works, the harder it is to imagine that we can reclaim self-determination in our communities. take care of your spirit. nurture relationships that provide mutual emotional support. take your time. we DO have power, but seizing it requires a lot from us. the systems where power lives are literally built to keep us out. showing up is time-consuming. visioning a better future takes imagination & hard-to-muster optimism. honor small victories. you decide when to rest or change course. allow yourself to notice when you’re ready for a change. make it.

**Going Forward**
can be the beginning of engaging with the problem