



Track 2: *Community Engagement Task Force*

June 27, 2007
Meeting Minutes

Task Force attendees: Russ Adams, Mohamed Ali, Diann Anders, Kathleen Anderson, Mark Fox, Elena Gaarder, Diana Hawkins, Justin Huenemann, Jeremy Iggers, Mary Keefe, Anne McCandless, Repa Mekha, Chris Morris, Matt Perry, David Rubedor, Jessie Saavedra, Jeffrey Strand, Joyce Wisdom, Shirley Yeoman

Task Force attendees absent: John Berenstein, Don Fraser, Xang Vang

City staff in attendance: Jennifer Amundson, Steven Bosacker, Robin Garwood, Erik Hansen, Cara Letofsky, Barb Lickness, Council Member Robert Lilligren, Alicia Scott, Greg Simbeck

Facilitators in attendance: Nora Hall, Karen Gray

Minutes

Opening Remarks and Introductions

City Coordinator, Steven Bosacker (summary) – Steven Bosacker emphasized that we've put a lot of work into this process to this point. We should be very open in terms of creativity--think fresh and think future. We firmly believe it's important to think about this and build for the future. There are common threads and we've heard about some things that could be better. We do not know the outcome but we do know some concerns. We're genuinely interested in getting a set of fresh ideas for to enhance our efforts for the future.

Council Member Lilligren, CE task force co-chair – Council Member Lilligren welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested that task force members interested in being the community co-chair should contact him or Jennifer Amundson. The co-chairs' task is to keep things on track while the facilitators lead the group discussion.

Each participant was asked to introduce themselves using one word, or a couple if needed, to describe their expectations for this process:

Karen Gray – engagement
Robin Garwood – fundamental
Matt Perry – innovative
Anne McCandless – innovative
David Rubedor – inclusiveness
Shirley Yeoman – clarification
Jeffrey Strand – public participation
Jeremy Iggers – media
Elena Gaarder – accountability
Russ Adams – authentic
Chris Morris – vital
Mark Fox – results
Kathleen Anderson – creative
Diann Anders – empowering
Joyce Wisdom – progress
Jessie Saavedra – listening

Diana Hawkins – success
Mary Keefe – exploration
Justin Huenemann – institutional humility
Cara Letofsky – co-creating expectation
Repa Mekha – innovative
Robert Lilligren – useful
Mohamed Ali – transparency
Jennifer Amundson – progress
Barb Lickness – truthful
Erik Hansen – collaborative
Greg Simbeck - hopeful
Steven Bosacker - fresh
Debbie Evans (observer) – empowerment
Cheryl Luger (observer) – empowerment and responsibility

A brief review

- The group reviewed summary slides from a Community Engagement Task Force Summary [Presentation](#) given by Steven Bosacker to the Committee of the Whole on April 26, 2007
- There was a reference to the [Community Engagement Report](#) as a summary of previous reports and recommendations on community engagement in the last few years and the public [meetings](#) from early 2007 where residents responded to the report and generated four additional recommendations.
 - A summary of the [public feedback](#) can be found online at http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/PublicFeedback_CE.asp

- The Community Engagement Report includes several summary recommendations – some work is underway on some of those as part of a [three-track](#) work plan that outlines work the City is doing to establish base-lines, consistency, and clarity for how residents can affect City decision-making. This task force falls within Track 2 and has a focus on engagement through community organizations.

Clarifying points:

Question: Is this task force’s scope specific to the recommendations that came from the CE Report?

Response: The task force’s work plan is based on the [five task force charges](#). The work of all three tracks will overlap and the outcomes are meant to collectively address the recommendations.

Request for additional information:

- A short bio from each Task Force member including their affiliations
- More background information about community input from past meetings

Definition of Community Engagement

There was some discussion about the definition used in the PowerPoint presentation and the CE Report:

There are many possible definitions of community engagement, but there is broad agreement that our main objective is to empower people to influence decisions that shape their city and their lives. With that in mind, the definition that has been developed by the City and used in the CE Report is” community engagement always involves a city government decision. Of course, community building, outreach and education activities are also important to the City.”

Discussion points:

- The definition seemed to say that community engagement has to have some government action to it;
- It is very top-down and does not value assets and or a two-way process;
- It is only engagement when we want to engage;
- Not everyone is going to meetings but it doesn’t mean they are not engaged. There may be only a few people at the meeting, but there may be other people engaged and their voices might be channeled.

Response/clarification: The definition was used to scope this conversation and establish a starting point for achieving consistency in the City’s work related to community engagement.

It was noted that scope is not definition and the word usage could be clarified.

A task force member recommended looking at the [International Association for Public Participation](http://www.iap2.org/) Web site: <http://www.iap2.org/>.

Formal participants

Some discussion considered what “formal participants” means. Council Member Lilligren noted that this is an opportunity to brainstorm, then we will define more about what the formal process will do. The group brainstormed a list of possible organizations (categories and specific):

Possible organizations to consider as participants in a community engagement system:

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| • 87 neighborhoods | • County |
| • 67 neighborhood organization plus Metro Urban Indian Directors (MUID) | • MNDOT |
| • 51 boards and commissions | • Chamber of Commerce |
| • Business Associations | • Professional associations – legal, medical |
| • Block Clubs | • Ad-hoc committees |
| • Media organizations (ex: Twin Cities Media Alliance that works with a lot of cultural groups) | • Organized labor |
| • Schools (public, private, charter, colleges and universities) | • Political organizations |
| • Community development organizations | • Project-specific (any person whose life or property is at risk for city action) |
| | • Association of minority contractors |
| | • Affordable housing groups |

- AARP
 - Disabled communities
 - Visitors and transient communities
 - Town home associations
 - [Minneapolis Public Housing Authority](#)
 - Youth
 - Foundations
 - issue-based organizations such as the [Sierra Club](#)
- Individuals (Joe Q. Resident) were mentioned also. To keep focus it was noted that the charge for this task force (and track 2 of the work plan) is to consider participation through community organizations and this is part of clarifying how can affect City decision-making.

Voices in Community Engagement

There was discussion around what currently happens and what groups or individual voices are missing.

Ideas about how organizations do community engagement and thoughts around representative versus direct democracy were discussed.

Perspectives included the idea that the St. Paul model of district councils compresses the system further to have fewer voices heard, to the other viewpoint, that 87 different neighborhood groups can lead to a lot of murkiness.

It was also noted that in elections, if only a few people vote the election is not thrown out.

Some people don't want to be engaged and a representative form of government allows people to turn to their elected representative for decision-making.

Other questions / comments from the discussion ---- for consideration...

- Wi-Fi could be a tremendous tool for community engagement.
- We should also consider "how do all the stakeholders have a say." The conversation should talk about how to effectively and efficiently do this.
- What does participation mean? Do you have to go to a meeting? We should challenge ourselves to think broader.
- We need to find a way to tap the resources of the people who are gathering all the time. The methods of engaging don't work in the ways they use to work.
- On what topics are we engaging people?
- Who is doing the engaging? It was noted that some will not participate if they don't like who's doing the talking.
- Should we or should we not have formal relationship with non-geographic groups?
 - Sometimes its geographic, sometimes it's cultural, sometimes it's issue. It's not necessarily about discounting geographic but including others.
- On citywide or issue-based concerns such as green initiatives, do we need additional community engagement options to only geographic-based organizations?
- When talking about formally recognizing non-geographic organizations does it weaken the ability of neighborhood groups trying to be representative?
- Maybe the notion of partnerships rather than isolating organizations is how work gets done.
- Does moving away from geographic-focused community engagement allow other people who purport to speak for the neighborhood water down the influence of the people who are directly affected by the decisions?
- If there's a weakness, it's how do we get the people who need to be heard the most
- Remember that many people don't own a computer (for example 60% of people in Phillips)

Optional Q and A for task force members (via email)

The questions and responses can be found in the PDF document titled **Q_and_A_Post_CETF_meeting#1(June-27-07)**.