



Track 2: *Community Engagement Task Force*

August 1, 2007 Meeting #5 Minutes

Approved August 8, 2007

4:00 p.m. - Room 319 City Hall

Task Force attendees: Russ Adams, Diann Anders, Kathleen Anderson, Mark Fox, Don Fraser, Elena Gaarder, Diana Hawkins, Jeremy Iggers, Repa Mekha, Anne McCandless, Chris Morris, Matt Perry (co-chair), David Rubedor, Jessie Saavedra, Jeffrey Strand, Xang Vang, Joyce Wisdom, Shirley Yeoman

Task Force attendees absent:, Mohamed Ali, John Bernstein, Justin Huenemann, Mary Keefe

City staff in attendance: Jennifer Amundson, Michelle Chavez, Bob Cooper, Council Member Cam Gordon, Council Member Diane Hofstede, Luther Krueger, Cara Letofsky, Barb Lickness, Council Member Robert Lilligren (co-chair), Greg Simbeck, Alicia Scott

City staff absent: Erik Hansen

Facilitators in attendance: GrayHall - Nora Hall, Karen Gray, Megan Gomez

Introductions, administration and presentation

- **Introductions** - Council Member Lilligren welcomed everyone to the meeting; everyone introduced themselves.
- **Additional Meetings**

Council Member Lilligren asked about the possibility of adding two more meetings for our group. He noted that we will not meet if not needed but would like to reserve Aug. 22nd and Aug. 29th if needed. **Co-chair Perry** agreed that we may need to have more meeting time.

Task force comments:

- I would like details and information about format if we are going to meet more.
- What does “if we need more meetings mean?”
- It has been my experience that this is not uncommon—needing to add more time. Maybe it’s a lesson to be learned in community engagement. I would like to see there being a place to start before we get to the table.
- Would like to have materials earlier.

Lilligren – Noted that we will have a work plan and will tentatively schedule the extra meetings in case needed. Today we will see the beginning of a framework and will build on that. He noted that non-voting staff members are planning to meet now also to help us determine how to get to deliverables. He also noted that part of the openness to the process was because we didn’t want it to seem like we were steering the group--but, point well taken.

Perry – Noted that he would like to have a work plan with specific input and specific outcomes.

- **Minutes** – Perry suggested that since we haven’t had time to review the minutes from last time I suggest we table minute approval until next time.

Presentation on City of Minneapolis Structure and Practices – **Amundson** noted that this is essentially the three pieces that were handed out. This can give a view of how the city operates. There’s not one document we can hand out that shows everything. The Public Participation Spectrum is from 2003. We are not purporting that all of these are happening. It’s just an illustration. There might be some gaps. It gives a framework.

- 1) Org chart
- 2) Description of current CE Activities
- 3) Public Participation Spectrum

Additional comments about structure and practices:

- When I see empowerment, it's empty. That's a gap. What we can do is look at how we can fill that. We can look at the broad strokes of what is there and what's not there.
- If you look at the definition of empowerment, there was nothing that truly fit the definition. Even the NRP action plans – they have to go through committees - the final decision making is not by the public.
- Would voting be an example of something in the empowerment column?
- Yes, except they don't always do what you want once elected.
- One thing that is not really on here is the connection points. If people could think about where those connection points are. For example block clubs to police department.
- I think the public part spectrum is helpful because it breaks down by function, which I think is useful. Also on the org chart, library, park, etc. in on the side then NRP and Park are brought back in but to my dismay, not school. Are we just creating stronger silos and not working together. Schools and what's happening to kids is our biggest problem. The community needs to have an interest in schools. I have a handout about the gradual isolation of schools from the community. It has an impact on the livability of neighborhoods. Why do we insist on excluding that?
- Are we excluding them or are they excluding us?
- Yes, but look at what they've done. Do we want to leave it that way?
- What he's saying is do we need to have a column for schools.
- I think that's true of all the independent boards. Now with libraries changing, will we have even less coordination?
- We're identifying a gap - this could be a recommendation.
- Perry noted that we shouldn't look at this document and try to fix it--but look at the landscape.

Small Group Reports

Four groups met to “identify where there are possible gaps or where there could be enhancements, and recommend improvements, enhancements, or ways to fill gaps.” Following are the summaries of what the small groups reported to the large group. Noted from each group are included at the end of these minutes.

Group #4 summary report

- If we use organizations to disseminate information we need to give them resources to do the job. The city also has to hold the organizations accountable to get the information out.
- The internet is labor intensive but cost effective in the long run. The city needs to have an easily understood Web site that is kept current.
- We need to really work on cooperation between different entities. The city could play a huge role in bringing together the county, schools, etc. Non-collaboration is frustrating and expensive.

Group #3 summary report

- Develop a Department for City Engagement directly under the City Coordinator.
- We thought “listening” was missing. It should be part of the mission statement.
- City commissions as a whole need to engage better
- Expand range to other issues beside land use (if we look at the Portland Plan)
- Annual or biannual gathering of community

Group #2 summary report

- There is a gap between government and people in the neighborhood. One way of bridging is community level staff. Two-way flow.
- Gap in information processes. Meetings are happening and decisions are being made. Find ways to tap into existing systems.
- Gaps in feedback loops – just as there are policies that suggest that there be sharing and reporting before decisions, there should also be a policy about feedback after decisions are made.

Group #1 summary report

- We need to do a better job of connecting with schools – they get money from us, this could be an influence point.
- Proactive engagement - oftentimes we are reactionary and only engage when problems arise.
- NRP Policy Board – better attendance.
- All independent boards need to be more a part of CE.
- A gap in coordination between entities and groups of the city - NRP does provide powerful networking opportunities. There was a management board (MRT) that was abolished – when this group was functioning well it was top managers from various entities meeting. Recreating something like this could improve coordination.
- Meeting times and locations are inconvenient. Maybe more evening meetings.
- Current times make it difficult to engage people – The future funding for NRP is uncertain. This along with increased crime, few jobs, etc. make it hard to get people to stay and be involved.
- Nonprofits as possible connection points. (Northway etc.)
- Achievements can be wiped out quickly.
- Increased engagement by adding organizations at the 13-groups level.

Review draft of Track 2 Report

Amundson noted that Alicia has started work on a draft of the Community Engagement Track 2 Report that voting members should review. She noted that the staff work group got together to start working on a draft based on what members have said. Staff noticed that many of the values that people have been taking about are included in the [International Association for Public Participation](#) core values. So, for charge #2 we tried developing the core values using IAP2 as a base. She emphasized that this is just an idea of one way to go. She also noted that we could arrange the report in a less linear fashion if the group decided.

Lilligren – The core of this is the core principles and then the qualities of the principles and the next part are how do you do it? He pointed out that 5 of the 7 [IAP2 core values](#) reference decisions. We made a leap and so we want to make sure people are comfortable with this direction.

Additional comments about the draft:

- Will there be a set of recommendations? Would these be at the end? (Lilligren noted that the recommendations can look like whatever this group wants them to look like.)
- I like the idea of principles. Recommendations might shift. I think principles help hold us to that. These guiding principles we can always go back to.
- I'm hesitant to comment since I haven't had time to review it but I would like there to be a piece in there that notes that there was no agreement on the definition of community engagement. (Amundson noted that this was a good point and also said we need to make sure to include minority viewpoints.)
- I agree that the principles are a good idea.
- I endorse the use of the IAP2 principles.
- I would think that part of the principles would be formed by other voices during work.
- I like the idea of principles but the recommendations might be more holistic – integrating. We aren't there yet. It's hard to think of formatting for recommendations when we don't have any yet.
- We should be careful with the use of the word "enterprise."
- Council Member Gordon said he likes having principles. If we come to an agreement on principles, that would be wonderful. Regarding the specifics, I don't want up to get stuck where we have to fit everything into principles. He also noted that we should be careful with the use of the words "flushed out."
- Lilligren noted that – We're not looking to agree on what the principles are tonight, just the idea. He said that not seeing anyone disagreeing we will continue moving in this direction.

Comments about making the draft public:

Lilligren asked if the group is comfortable making this draft report available to the public. He said he is hesitant not to make it public unless it's the will of the group. Perry noted that he is an advocate of full disclosure.

- Gordon asked that “enterprise” and “flushed out” be dealt with first.
- And we'll work on more specifics, right? (Lilligren answered “yes”)
- Please note that it was handed out at the meeting and hasn't been discussed--because we get phone calls.
- Make it very clear that the group hasn't acted on it.
- Audience comment - – I think the draft report should say that it's a “draft document of the 1st five sessions that was given to the task force.”

Other miscellaneous comments:

- Atlanta has a program where they've moved 200 groups into 24 neighborhood planning units.
- Regarding the speaker from Harvard – A task force member noted that Bob Miller said he has money in the budget for expenses related to this if the group decides to take the professor up on his offer. (Lilligren noted that we have started putting together a grid models.)
- There was a suggestion to have Pam Costain, chair of the Minneapolis School Board, come to talk to our group. It was noted that Pam comes from the Wellstone tradition. It could be a healthy reaching out.
- Perry said he is thrilled with what happened today. The train is moving forward. He also noted that the CE site has a lot of background material available for review that we might be able to pull suggestions from.

Meeting adjourned

Notes from Small Groups

Group #1

- Are non-profits connection points? (Northway – goal to build wealth in the community)
- Can we be more effective in smaller groups?
- Businesses don't talk to each other any more
- 80+ groups can be administratively heavy, but it creates a different level of input.
 - **Neighborhood groups: some are naturally consolidating**
- Unprecedented crime destroys neighborhoods
 - **Hopefully can fall back on the infrastructure**
- Uncertainty in the job market – NRP may be gone, foreclosures, make it difficult to keep people from moving and to get them involved
- Sometimes it's hard to engage people
 - **Get citizen input into the planning process**
- Citizen committees at 13 planning district level, 80+ too many
- System of CE is fragmented
- No communication between independent boards and city
- Connect with county, schools, parks, library for the CE process
 - **Have them come to meetings and speak**
- Management review team went away
- Hearing time and location very inconvenient
 - **More evening meetings (have to consider the EO's that can't work at all hours)**
- **More video recording**
- We need to connect with schools
- “Scope creep” – city has limited authority over independent boards
 - **City could get valuable information – we've moved away from this, should move back, not a new principle**
 - **Community centers**
 - **Parks get a flat amount and can apply for more**
- How much separation is administrative?
 - **Independent boards need to be formally included in some kind of CE system.**
- Disconnect between community standards and what is happening in schools
 - **Schools get a lot of money from the city – look at what we give them**
 - **Community schools are better for CE and communication in general.**
 - **Requirements of the funding that there be CE**
 - **Schools consistent expectations throughout the district**
- In many areas CE is reactionary?
 - **Coordinate input from NRP to city departments**
- Perception that officials are wide but not deep
- On NRP policy board some reps from other groups are spotting in attendance; only show up when it's their issue

- **NRP is powerful – networking brings**

together City, school, etc.

Group #2

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- Gap between government and people in neighborhoods
 - **Community level staff and resources, more exchange and communications (processes)**
 - **Help inform people of the various avenues and resources available to them**
 - Gaps in formation processes at multiple levels of understanding and communication
 - **Figure out what is already working in communities that serve as systems of communication and information sharing, provide supporting resources**
 - Gap in balance between information and empower
 - Gap in feedback loops after input is provided.
 - **Establish policies that require reporting back after implementation just as with policies requiring reporting before decision-making**
 - Gap in balance in power (shared power)
 - Gap in neighborhood action plans and funding
 - **If the next recommended system holds this as value = resources and staff should be provided**
 - Gap in flow of decision-making: very top-down

Group #3

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- **Department for Public Engagement**
 - **Under City Council with adequate staffing**
 - **Commission of Public Engagement**
 - **Help identify resources**
 - **Limited taxing authority**
 - Listening
 - **Add at front-end**
 - **Need to integrated community engagement into the mission statement of the City, written large**
 - City Commissions need to engage the public better
 - Community engagement may be a way to bridge institutional gap between City government and school board
 - Heed to look at Portland – although Minneapolis citizens probably want to be engaged on a wide range of issues
 - Annual or Biennial Gathering of the Community
 - Sponsored by Mayor/Council
 - Celebration
 - Connection point
 - Listening
 - Including school, library, park boards

Group #4

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- Neighborhood Action Plans are not looked at
 - Standard of customer service gap
 - City to Neighborhood and vice versa
 - **Bring more citizens to city hall in a fun way – food and transportation**
 - Gap in City departments communication between other
 - Gap in City-County communication
 - Very little communication between entities – School-City-Park-Library-Citizens (ALC's too)
 - **Recommend serious cooperation between City-School-Park-Library-NRP**
 - Current information needed, not old studies – facts
 - **Give resources to keep information current**
 - **End “gatekeeping” of block club information**
 - Digital gap
 - Face-to-face gap
 - Cultural gap (beyond just language)
 - **Welcome packets – multicultural, Welcome team, Welcome committee**
 - Gap in City-“Group” communication expectations
 - **Give resources (with expectations) to break City-“Group” gap**