



Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission Group Norms

June 23, 2009

Through a group exercise at their meeting on 23 June 2009, commission members generated draft "group norms" to help guide their relationships and work as commission members. The draft norms were reviewed at their July 28, 2009 meeting and no changes were needed. The commission norms are as follows.

Listen

- Listen thoughtfully
- Listen, listen, then listen again

Be respectful

- Be polite
- Respectfully speak your mind
- Observe dignity and respect
- No grandstanding
- No sidebar conversations

Everyone has a fair opportunity to participate

- Everyone's opinion is equally important
- Speak to issues, not people
- Deal with issues, not personalities
- Don't interrupt; don't speak over each other; take turns speaking
- Given each member the opportunity to speak; all members participate; chair recognizes all
- Allow the chair to run the meeting

Use deliberative decision making and be open minded

- Take risks
- Conflict is good
- Agree to disagree
- Work toward consensus
- Take votes
- Challenge constructively
- All ideas have merit
- Be open to other opinions
- Don't shoot the messenger
- Be open to new ideas

Be accountable and transparent

- Report outcomes to the community
- Keep the entire city's best interest in mind (consider all residents)
- Consider the big picture (allow for constituencies)
- Leave any personal agendas at home
- Come with a positive attitude
- Have high expectations
- Challenge everyone to do their best
- Do what you promised to do
- Take care of each other

Keep focus

- Focus on what's important
- Prioritize
- Do what is important

Prepare for and hold efficient and effective meetings

- Read agenda and material before the meeting
- Come to meetings on time
- Be efficient and productive
- Stick to agenda; begin and end meetings on time; do not make the meetings fill the time slot, and end early when possible
- Provide advance notice of action items
- Prepare and turnaround documents on timely basis "TADS"
- Avoid repeating points already made by others; when someone states your point, just say you agree rather than repeating it; minimize what you say if it has already been said



Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission Hopes and Fears

June 23, 2009

Through a group exercise at their meeting on 23 June 2009, commission members generated a draft list of "hopes and fears" for their work as a commission. The purpose of this exercise was to identify aspirations for the commission over time, as well as barriers or challenges that could derail their work unless the group attends to them. The commission reviewed their draft hopes and fears at their July 29, 2009 meeting and no changes were needed. Below are their hopes, possibilities, and opportunities, followed by fears, issues, and concerns.

Hopes, Possibilities, Opportunities

Outcomes

- We stay on task and accomplish a lot; do a good job to make this last 20+ years; we can be proud of the end result; pave the way for the best city to get even better
- City becomes inclusive to all
- Our work increases engagement of community members across the city; bring a new era of civic engagement
- Make a positive difference for Minneapolis communities; make a difference that is seen by the community; make positive change; make a positive difference
- All Minneapolis residents feel the city values their opinions

Inclusiveness, Unity

- Fight for the less empowered
- Equal status of cultural community with neighborhoods and community/neighborhood organizations
- Commission brings unity to all communities
- Focus on big picture vs. your picture
- We find consensus
- All commission members are seen as representing neighborhoods and communities
- No divisions by elected versus appointed

Engagement, Influence, and Respect

- We are respected as a group by City Council and the community; we create our power
- City departments and boards embrace public participation; we influence department processes for better
- Partnerships (including with the city) are viewed as an asset to neighborhood organizations
- Develop a broad collaborative

Direction and Focus

- Preserve the best of NRP; reinvent for new era; healthy transition of NRP to new Phase 3 system
- City funds will be spent most efficiently
- We find ways to increase funding at capacity for neighborhood
- Develop a strong, capable commission; we set our own agenda and pace; agenda items set by all commission members; we elect a chair and other officers soon

Neighborhood Strength

- We develop a system that helps neighborhoods thrive
- Strengthen neighborhoods; improve life experience for all residents
- Commission, city leaders committed to neighborhood autonomy
- Have the neighborhoods feel a part of this

Fears, Issues, Concerns

Influence, Outcomes

- We don't accomplish anything that is useful to the city
- City does not respect NCEC recommendations; city will not allow NCEC to be too successful; Council ignores our work
- Powerless, no genuine influence on future of neighborhoods or funding; we have no power
- We bite off too much
- Never move from "engage" to "empower"
- Working relationship with NRP Policy Board is not good/collaborative
- Throwing out baby (NRP) with bathwater
- Further cuts to NRP or NCEC funding; inadequate financial support

Neighborhood Strengths

- That neighborhoods lose their voice
- We forget about the importance of neighborhoods
- Losing neighborhood autonomy
- Individual neighborhood desires will not result in overall city improvement

Respect, Equity, Fairness

- That my thoughts/ opinions won't be recognized
- Appointed vs. elected, us vs. them conflict; division between neighborhood elected and appointees
- Not representative of all ethnic groups
- That hate will live
- Those who have more will dominate those who have less
- Frustrating
- That bad feelings will hold back positive change

Commission Process, Structure

- We get bogged down rehashing past vs. directing the future
- We become mired in gridlock; mired in solving and discussing "corner cases"
- We spend all of our time on process
- Agendas published without lead time and minutes not out soon enough
- Ineffective meetings; we don't elect a chair and others soon
- No alternates for neighborhood representatives
- We become a staff-driven commission



Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission Reflections: Individual Contributions to Commission's Work

June 23, 2009

To help this newly formed commission better understand the tremendous talents they bring as individuals to benefit the work of the commission, at their 23 June 2009 kickoff meeting commission members documented their reflections in response to the following question: What can I uniquely contribute over my term of service to help ensure that this commission successfully and effectively meets our charge? Below is a compilation of their responses.

- I am less tied to an individual neighborhood perspective than many other commission members, and I believe that that freedom will better allow me to work toward overall city advancement.
- I can contribute interorganizational skills and communication skills. I can reach across disparate groups and build bridges. I am good at relationship building.
- The power of parks, recreation, and environmental education to create and support healthy, happy, engaged communities.
- Accomplishing a lot with diminishing funds.
- My experience working on the "other" side of the table... as a staffer, as well as working closely with my neighborhood group.
- Focus on establishing a process that continually engages and empowers neighborhoods and their residents in the actions taken by the city.
- No preconceptions, eagerness, and willingness to represent my district/ community.
- Process oriented. Citywide knowledge. Real estate occupation. I am not running for office.
- Offer knowledge, ideas, and time to help improve our city. Contribute to creating positive relationships and helping other attain their goals.
- My experience as a neighborhood leader since 1992 and service on the NRP Policy Board will help bridge the inherent conflicts and divisions that arise during the transition years to a new system by and for neighborhoods.
- Tend to prefer and look for opportunities to build consensus where possible; good understanding of public budgeting.
- Provide a systemic perspective from the combination of my work in neighborhood organizations, serving on a city board, working with city staff, working with a business association and business owners – and I am not from Minnesota.
- The perspective of someone who has experienced running a neighborhood on a day-to-day basis, and who has spent their career learning how to build strong, engaged communities.