

Successful Collective Action

A Project 20/20 Leadership Meeting

August 27, 2008

United Way, 7:30 a.m.



Present: Kim Andrews, Sanita Virgil, Talia Champlin, Pete Christ, Teresa Durham, Erv Brinker, Charles Coleman, Mark Crawford, Jerome Wyrick, Carla Dearing, Karl Dehn, Cathy Jewell, Mac McCullough, Diane Thompson, A. J. Jones, Randall Champlin, Dale Kimball, Denise Martin, Linda Tsoumas, Matt Rogers, Eric Morris, Alice McCotter

Project Update

Alice reported on August fundraising, which was over \$3,600 in individual and business donations. She also shared the results from the July meeting surveys. Alice reported that on August 19, Talia presented Project 20/20 to the Battle Creek City Commission. The Commission offered their support and asked to be kept updated on the progress. Work continues within the Advisory Committee on securing estimates for printing project information and the development of a logo. Progress continues on fundraising and membership development.

Learning About Successful Collective Action

Talia reviewed with the members what we learned at our last Group Leadership meeting. At that meeting, the group indicated that (using the Harwood scale) they saw greater Battle Creek somewhere between the Impasse and Catalytic stage. Talia reviewed what that definition was and then walked through the Harwood recommendations on “What to Do” and “What to be Careful Not to Do at that stage. The Project 20/20 Phase I definition was then compared to ensure we are in alignment regarding how we move forward with building public capital.

The group was asked to think about times when they were part of a successful collective effort, and talk within small discussion groups, what that experience was like. They were asked to answer three questions: What were the key factors that contributed to success? What implications could that have for this group? What group behaviors or norms would we adopt if we wanted success in acting collectively? There was a lot of dialog during the feedback session. Factors noted during discussion were:

It has to be safe to talk openly.

Must have courage to challenge with humility.

Can't have an “I know everything” perspective.

Employ “active listening.”

Open discussion is inhibited by perception of not being important enough to be listened to.

Reframe what “failure” is. It is learning what doesn't work.

Change comes from either crisis or a compelling vision.

Most significant opportunities cannot be addressed by any single entity.

There has to be “trust” within the group and community.

There has to be a willingness to change.
It is important/critical to know institutional history/memory.
Understand leadership transitions, how is it passed down.
Determine how to put focus on specific issues.
Can't expect everyone to come in – you have to go out.
Get into the community where people congregate.
Framework needs to include networking, cooperation and collaboration.
Must have knowledge and understanding, relationships and determination.

We can learn that sometimes initiatives can have varying levels of interest. Some will be critical and you must be involved. Some will be okay but you don't have the resources to support. Some you may have no objections to and feel neutral about. Some can be counter-productive.

Need to bring new people up to speed quickly.
Leaders need to have demonstrated success in creating collaboration.

Closing Comments

Members were reminded to complete their survey, invite others to join us and pass along contact information to Alice.

The next Monthly Group Leadership meeting is September 24, 7:30 – 9:00 at the United Way Board Room or alternate location. A notice and agenda will be distributed prior to that meeting.

Alice McCotter
Humanergy
alice@humanergy.com
(269) 964-3922 (home office)