

Advisory Team Meeting #20
April 13, 2022

Location: Community Development Building

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Summary notes are below. An audio recording of this meeting is also available on the website at www.red-wing.org/1032/Policy-and-Practice-Project-Meetings

Team Members Present

Cholwe Hantuba Walker, Michael Lickness Holmes, Liz Magill, Alexis DeVries, Cory Koplin, Yaneth Santiago Huerta, Sara Kern

Team Members Absent: Steve Blaine, Racheal Savage, Samantha Malcom, Marvin Bradford

Facilitator: Michelle Leise, City of Red Wing Community Engagement Facilitator

Meeting Notes

Meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

6:00 to 7:35 – Staff Member and Team Member Small Groups

The majority of the meeting was set up into small groups – five round tables with one City staff member and one to two Advisory Team members at each table. Groups met with each other for 12 to 15 minutes per session, then team members moved to the next table counter-clockwise until every group met together once.

Staff members present at the tables were Council Administrator Kay Kuhlmann, Administrative Services Director Laura Blair Johnson, Finance and Account Manager Sue Iverson, Community Development Director Kyle Klatt, and incoming Public Works Director Shawn Blaney.

The purpose of this exercise was for team members and staff members to meet each other, ask questions, and share ideas and input on a variety of topics that will make the community better. Specific departments will meet with the Advisory Team for longer periods in the upcoming seven months to address specific issues and ideas; this exercise was a way for everyone to get to know each other first and bring up ideas of interest that can be followed up in more detail at a later meeting.

Staff members were asked to keep notes of their discussions. Those notes were as follows:

KAY'S NOTES:

The first theme was about lack of services in the community. There were a few themes:

1. How to we provide more for our pre-teen and teen-young adults? Solutions included:
 - a. Bring back the 'Sneakers' concept – or the nightclub for teens. Provide activities like pool tables, pop, popcorn/pizza, TV's and keep it alcohol-free on Friday and Saturday night.
 - b. Bring back community night at the YMCA – so that all families could go and use it year-round on Friday nights. And/or keep the Y open later on every night.
 - c. Create a virtual reality lab at the Library or some other public space so kids could go in and do something interesting and something they can't do at home. It could include smaller rooms for kids to play by themselves or in teams.
 - d. Create a studio-type place for kids to explore music – provide instruments so that they could learn and maybe form a band/or bring in different types of music so that they can enjoy music in a pre-21-year-old scene.
 - e. Broaden the idea of recreation for non-athletes. Create dart clubs or game clubs or something to give kids a place to socialize.
2. A second theme was communication and how we need to create bilingual materials – so take the CityBeat and put it in Spanish – have a website in Spanish and etc.
3. Hire a community engagement person in more departments because this position has broken down so many barriers.
4. Create pilot programs to encourage women and minorities to become employees of the city.
 - a. Work with Hispanic outreach in the middle school and high school to get students interested in being a firefighter or police officer or public works person so that we can hire and train.
 - b. Offer to fund a kids program in the summer through community ed so they can get an experience of being a firefighter, police officer, or public works person. Plant the seed early.
 - c. Maybe work with the kids on art programs where we ask them to draw their neighborhood or help us in a summer community ed class to pick out park equipment.

Ideas on how to interact with elected leaders:

1. Offer an open mic at some comfortable location so people can share great ideas.
2. Do a "speed dating" type of meeting (like this one) with council members to get to know them better. No specific agenda.
3. Conduct a public meeting at the beginning of the budget process to ask people what they want to see in their community. Offer those who participate something that says "my home, Red Wing", or somehow gives them a sense of ownership in the community and discussion.

KYLE'S NOTES:

Session 1:

- What are we doing to promote more housing in the community?
- We need more housing and want people to stay.
- Need more people.
- Provide incentives for our local developers/residents to do projects and help to keep money in our community.
- Review first-time homebuyer programs. Right now, only wealthier people qualify (need to have excellent credit scores).
- Current programs allow up to 45% debt to income ratio which is too high for most people.
- Help people qualify for these programs.

Session 2:

- What is going on in downtown? Is there more housing coming to downtown?
- What impact does the Jordan River have on buildings in downtown? We should provide information about the river somewhere downtown.
- Need more activities for kids in the community, downtown or elsewhere in the City.
- Need to expand programs and help for teenagers.
- Expand opportunities for recreation aimed at kids around Pottery Pond and skate park.
- Promote more community gardens around the city, especially closer to where people live.

Session 3:

- Discussion about rental housing program and implementation.
- Historic preservation process.
- Need more activities for kids.
- Consider a community center.

Session 4:

- Discussion of what the Port Authority does.
- Review of housing problems in Red Wing, need more housing.
- Remember an advocate who spoke at the St. John's hospital site hearing that spoke very eloquently about the need for affordable housing and the impact the lack of housing has on our businesses (one of the few that spoke in support of the project).

Session 5:

- Do we provide permits and forms in Spanish or other languages?
- How do we provide/accept permits from residents that do not speak English?

- Should we be providing public hearing notices in alternative languages? How will non-English speakers know what is going on? We have an obligation to provide notice to all individuals.
- Reach out to Hispanic Outreach to determine the number of Spanish-speaking people in the community. They may also be able to share experiences of non-English speakers dealing with permitting and public notices.

LAURA'S NOTES

Ideas for better communication and hiring:

- Start to use TikTok as a social media platform for the next generation
- Advertising job openings in Spanish and having our applications created in Spanish as well (very doable on both),
- Improve empathy and customer service on Utility billing issues/complaints (that one seemed to be at Community Development).
- Consider making bilingual a job requirement for some
- Hire more diversity
- Red Wing High School has students that speak 17 different languages so we need to be more conscious of making communication more accessible
- Our job applications and advertisings should be posted in Spanish
- What is the complaint process for residents who are treated poorly by a City department? (Like a front-desk type of interaction.)
- Provide vouchers for the recycling center during Spring clean-up etc.
- People don't apply to the City because of fear of rejection because they don't see themselves as working for the City; City could do more education to the community that everyone is welcome in the hiring process. We welcome all people.

SHAWN'S NOTES:

- Discussed questions and details related to the rain barrel and compost bin initiative
- Talked about recycling initiatives
- Discussed bringing in more bi-lingual staff to the Public Works Department. Also discussed having someone come in and provide Public Works with some key words related to Public Works activities that would help City office staff communicate with Spanish-speaking residents.
- Discussed the skate park
- Talked about the future of the Public Works apprenticeship program.

SUE'S NOTES/COMMENTS:

- The City could come speak to the Hispanic community (with an interpreter) about property taxes.
- The City could provide vouchers or some kind of program for people at the recycling center to get rid of junk without having to pay a large amount of money.
- How could the City communicate back with the community to help clarify misleading information or misinformation, especially on social media? The question arose because of information being shared on taxes, but the discussion led to misinformation overall.

OTHER IDEAS REPORTED OUT VERBALLY BY TEAM AND STAFF:

- More community gardens and make them accessible gardens. Raised garden beds for senior citizens and others who can't bend down to the ground.
- City could use TikTok as a social media format to reach younger people. Could an intern help the City develop this?
- Get more students into the City for internships and shadowing and/or apprenticeships so they can start seeing themselves in government (police, fire, public works, administration, finance, etc. etc.)
- Housing: Affordable housing needed. Look into rezoning ideas. Possibly offer an incentive for local people developing projects.

7:35 to 7:40 – Short break. Staff members left and team members gathered at smaller table for next section of the meeting.

7:40 to 8:00 - Conversation about The Hub idea with United Way

Maureen Nelson of United Way came to speak with the Advisory Team and get their feedback on an idea called The Hub. The concept is a one-stop-shop for people to come and access the resources they need, without having to run all over town. Some nonprofits would be at The Hub for certain periods of time; others would be housed there full-time. The idea is in its beginning stages.

Maureen gave the team a summary. Liz Magill was also very familiar with the concept and helped explain the idea.

The group asked about the differences between The Hub and the idea of a community or youth center. Maureen defined her thoughts on the differences. Maureen clarified that resources for mental health would be part of The Hub—either now or later. Right now the United Way is trying to figure out the top three services that would definitely need to be there right away. Team members filled out sheets with their rankings.

Adjourn: 8:00