

CITY NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Minutes for the April 26, 2010 meeting

District Council representatives in attendance: Jim Del Ciello, (Southwest District Council and CNC Vice-chair); Chas Redmond, (Southwest District Council and CNC Chair); Chris Leman, (Lake Union District Council and CNC Budget Committee Chair); Irene Wall, (Northwest District Council and Neighborhood Planning Committee Chair); Lori Oliver, (Northwest District); Sharon Sobers, Thurston Muskelly, (Central District Council); Laine Ross, (Downtown District Council and Neighborhood Matching Fund Committee Chair), Dan Wasell, Philip Shack, Phillip Duggan, (North District Council); Nancy Bolin, (Northeast District Council)

Guests in attendance: Veronica Sherman King, Christa Lensson, Ron Angeles, Ed Pottharst, Christa Dumpys, Ted Divina, Beth Pflug, Kerry Wade, DON; Amy Hirataka DOIT, Skip Knox

Agenda and March Minutes

Agenda and March minutes were approved with no changes

Inclusion, Sustaining and Best Practices Panel Presentation

In 2008, Seattle City Council provided DON with funding to increase diversity on District Councils. North, Northwest and Central District Councils worked with a consultant on a pilot project on inclusion and increasing diversity on their district councils.

Central District Council dropped Roberts Rules of Order at its meetings to ensure better equity among diverse members. Angela Powell's instruction and materials were very helpful. The Central District Community came together to work on Powell-Barnett and Flo Ware Parks.

Northwest District Council spent a lot of time defining diversity in their district. They focused on meaning of the organization, planning of agendas, identifying existing participating groups, meeting time/location and structure, how to outreach to various groups. Leadership of Council needs to be engaged in the process.

North District Council addressed the questions of the purpose of the District Council, who should be at the table? What does diversity mean? What are demographics of the area? Looked at meeting time and location. Members met one-on-one with leaders of different groups. Outreach effort resulted in a grant to Eritrean Church to remodel their space to accommodate meetings/events. Even if some groups cannot become members, it's good to get their input and include them in the conversation.

Q. Was a concern in the past about "best practices" for district councils. Feeling was "one size does not fit all." Concerned over dropping Robert's Rules of Order.

A. City did not instruct council to drop Robert's Rules of Order. Council dropped them in order to give equal voice to all members. Not all groups understand the rules....can be intimidating to many.

C. Northwest looked at bylaws to see if membership requirements created barriers to inclusion. Dropping Roberts Rules of order addresses the same type of issue.

Q. Was there pushback from any members?

A. North District looked at as more of an exercise; looking at bylaws, outreach. Wanted to make meetings as welcoming as possible. Did not encounter pushback. Northwest had discussion, but would not define it as pushback. Was more of a discussion around resources. Angela's presentation at Central District helped to defuse strong personalities that might have otherwise offered more pushback.

C. Reminiscent of neighborhood planning efforts to recruit diverse groups to participate.

Q. How will interest be sustained over time?

A. District Council has to be at neighborhood level.

Q. Has Central changed membership to individual basis?

A. Works with business associations, churches, block watches.

C. What is the role of the District Council? How much community building are they charged with?

C. Process has merit, but feel the problem does not really exist in Northwest. In the end, felt that Northwest District Council can't be turned into something it is not. Northwest is changing somewhat, but would like to focus on researching what groups are out there that don't know about the District Council. Members should have business cards, raise awareness of the system. Would like DON to assist with identifying groups in the districts who are not hooked into the system.

C. All good ideas. Would be good to have City demographer provide information to district councils on demographics in each district.

C. CNC lobbied for City to reinstitute demographer position. 2000 census has not been broken down by district. Would like to see demographic breakdowns in the future.

Staff felt project was useful, although challenges still exist. Takes time and resources to build relationships. Having an intern in the North District was definitely helpful. Staff and Council members must be dedicated to the work. Developing leaders in the community is also an important part of this work.

C. Concern that work is not sustainable. A peer-to-peer model would have been a more efficient use of limited funding available. There was information available that CNC had previously created that would have assisted consultant in her work. Would like to see more staff /city resources made available to district councils.

Seattle Communities Online Project Presentation

Project to allow communities to use on-line tools more effectively, including blogs, twitter, Facebook. Blogs, such as the West Seattle Blog, allow communities to communicate up-to-date information quickly and widely. Amy shared various examples of the on-line tools and use. The site provides instruction to groups who might want to learn to use these tools in their community. Neighborhoods on the Net will list all blogs, listservs, web sites, etc maintained by community organizations. Please e-mail Amy if you see any out-dated, inaccurate information listed. <http://www.seattle.gov/seattlecommunitiesonline/neighborhoods.htm>

C. Information often used for commercial purposes.

A. If not otherwise funded, some advertising is inevitable.

Q. Would like to have presentation at Central District Council.

A. She is available to present to any groups/councils who are interested.

C. Amy has done a great job on the Green Lake blog. It's hard for volunteers to keep up with lots of different types of on-line tools.

Q. How do you include seniors/others who do not use this type of tool? Could training be provided?

C. Other side of the coin, is a lot of folks ONLY get their information electronically.

C. Chas keeps up the Sustainable West Seattle blog. It is not difficult, although it takes some time.

Committee Reports

Neighborhood Planning Committee – Irene Wall

Committee has been discussing Low-rise code amendments. Committee drafted a letter addressing some of the core issues in the changes. Would like district councils to review the letter and get comments back. Council has identified five housing types to promote. Courtyard/Townhome type house is still included, with minor changes. Parking is another issue....there are no requirements for on-site parking in developments in urban centers. Would prefer to see amendments to zoning be neighborhood-based, rather than applied city-wide. Customized zoning could be tied to neighborhood planning process. Neighborhoods would prefer to have design review for smaller projects, not just commercial projects. Would also like to see better graphics in the report.

There was concern over the timing of sending the letter. CNC will not meet again until after the City Council Built Environment Committee meets. Would like to have time for district councils to review and sign off on.

It was moved that CNC authorize the letter, giving district council chairs the option of bringing it up with their councils first.

Budget Committee – Chris Leman

City Council budget hearings to be held next week. Should plan to attend if possible.

Beginning of the bi-ennial budget process. District Councils should consider letters to Mayor around budget priorities. Next Budget Committee meeting is May 12.

Neighborhood Matching Fund – Laine Ross

Twenty-one Large Project applications were received. Laine sent a request to District Councils to outline process they are using around Large Project Fund. Need responses back. Laine and Chas will put together a report from this and distribute to district councils.

Transportation Committee – Ref Lindmark

Bridging the Gap committee has approved process for managing large street fund projects.

Transit plan for Seattle will be updated. Will be extensive public input.