

# Neighborhood Task Force

March 4, 2008  
Meeting Notes

**Member Attendance:**

~~Chuck Bennett~~  
~~Dan Dorn~~  
~~Levi Herrera~~  
Don Homuth  
John Lattimer

Dave MacMillan  
Rick Massey  
Brad Nanke  
~~Pamela Schmidling~~  
John Shepard

Sam Skillern  
Thomas Smith  
Kate Tarter  
Laura Tesler

**Staff Attendance:**

Jan Calvin, Neighborhood and Community Services Manager  
Debbie Kees, Staff Assistant

**1. Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review - Brad Nanke****2. Appearance of Interested Citizens**

None noted at this time.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Motion: Accept minutes of February 21, 2008, meeting as written.  
Moved By: Lattimer  
Seconded By: Tarter  
Discussion: None  
Action: Approved

**4. Develop Marketing and Outreach Recommendations**

Calvin distributed additional copies of the information available at the February 21 meeting regarding recommendations to enhance neighborhood association marketing and outreach efforts.

Recommendation #1

*City Council continue to include funds specifically for marketing neighborhood associations in the City's annual budget.*

Homuth asked for clarification on using the City's Trust and Agency accounts to handle donations for neighborhood associations. Calvin said she had talked with Finance staff, and would be talking with staff from the Legal Department as well.

Nanke pointed out that, if these recommendations are what the Task Force wants to put forth, they should do so without worrying if the funding will be there. Calvin clarified that the money already allotted to individual neighborhood associations for communications is separate from the general marketing budget. However, NAs are being asked to report to the City how much of their funds--if any--they know they will not be using by the end of the fiscal year. That money will then be added to the funds available for general marketing.

Lattimer asked what the purpose of the marketing campaign was. Suggestions from Task Force members included helping citizens understand that neighborhood associations exist as well as what

the purposes of the NA are. Calvin noted that there is currently about \$12,000 budgeted for the general marketing of NAs to the public, so efforts would not be a full-fledged campaign. She is assembling a marketing committee which will have its first meeting this month. They will advise staff on effective ways to use the budgeted funds. Staff are already publishing a monthly article in the Statesman Journal on general NA activities, and are moving ahead with a short notice on the water/sewer bill this spring.

Calvin also noted that it is difficult to evaluate marketing efforts, to point to any one thing as the pivotal factor in increased participation. Homuth said that some things can be quantified, such as an increase in meeting participation, event participation, or webpage hits. However, involvement itself is difficult to gauge, as it generally occurs outside a formal meeting. It helps to be aware of the parameters for measuring the success of an event or program, before the planning begins.

There was a general discussion on the limited amount of time available during the current fiscal year to plan and use the allotted marketing funds. Homuth noted that repeated exposure to a message is necessary for the message to actually be heard. The abbreviated time available to NAs to spend their marketing budgets makes this difficult. In addition, staff have indicated that NAs may not encumber funds this fiscal year which will be used for next fiscal year, which prevents efforts such as a one-year contract for newspaper advertising, an otherwise cost-effective use of the budget. Smith wondered if the money will be available next year at all. This is a great program to start, but he wondered how long it will last.

#### Recommendation #2

*City staff establish a Trust and Agency account for community donations that support neighborhood association marketing efforts.*

Tarter asked whether the Trust and Agency account mentioned in recommendation #2 would be accessible by all 19 associations, regardless of whether it is a 501(c)3 organization. Calvin responded that each NA would have its own codes for accessing funds designated for its use, and all of those codes would be tied to the same Trust and Agency account. There would not be just one pool of money for the associations to use on a first-come, first-served basis. She also pointed out that this would allow neighborhood associations to seek sponsorships for marketing efforts, not mandate it. This also brought up the question of what constitutes a marketing effort, since--in order to receive these donations--the primary focus must be to market the association. Criteria would need to be determined.

Smith said that a donation designated to a specific neighborhood association would be deposited to that NA's budget. But he asked how a donation which was general in nature would be accounted for. Calvin said the donor would be contacted to see what the donor's intent was. The donation then would be applied accordingly.

#### Recommendation #3

*Neighborhood associations each establish annual community engagement goals.*

Smith voiced concern over the possibility of a neighborhood association's goals being used against them if they did not meet the goals. Nanke asked whether to make the requirement for goal-setting a part of the SRC Chapter 64 parameters. Calvin said that it should be codified only

to the extent that NAs are required to set goals, not meet them, and that the goals be of their own choosing. Tarter wondered if this requirement were important enough to add to Code. Nanke said that goals could be used to show the effectiveness of neighborhood associations.

Shepard stated the language of recommendation #3 needs to be elaborated upon so the rest of the community understands what it means. Calvin reminded the group of the four commonly accepted roles of a neighborhood association. Each NA could structure its goals around the roles it chose to fill.

Homuth contended that a community engagement goal is not a point achieved; rather, it is something that is constantly shifting. Meetings are not the point of a neighborhood association. Even if people participate in just one event or project, that's a success in community engagement.

Shepard wondered how community engagement goals were associated with the NA's marketing budget. Calvin said that the marketing budgets are aimed at increasing civic involvement. The intent is to strengthen neighborhood association participation. Homuth said that civic involvement covers a broader spectrum of action than community engagement, and the goals should be focused that way instead. It would be easier to measure than community engagement. Calvin added that marketing funds are not tied to goal setting.

MacMillan wondered how to sell the goal-making stricture to an association of volunteers who are likely leery of becoming a money-making machine. Calvin said that, for example, if all that a neighborhood association wants to address is land use, they must decide what is the best way to get the pulse of the community in order to make land use decisions. The NA must decide what type of communication, action to take, and role to play as representatives of that geographical area.

Tarter noted that goals could also be to simply continue what the NA has been doing.

Nanke stated the need to produce an issue paper if this recommendation is advanced. He would be willing to visit the neighborhood associations to clarify.

#### Recommendation #5

*City staff prepare marketing tools that can be used to spread the word about neighborhood associations.*

Lattimer noted that recommendation #5 will be very helpful (marketing tools from staff for NAs to use). There are no businesses nor schools in Croisan-Illahe Neighborhood Association, which makes fund raising difficult. Homuth pointed out that what NAs do is what they have to market. They are often program and activity entities. Lattimer said the public must first understand what an NA is and what is the connection with the City government.

Calvin asked whether NAs would want standardized or customized marketing tools to use. Lattimer noted that they would have to be customized, since the techniques that work in one neighborhood will not work in another. Nanke agreed, stating that we should start with generic tools to see how they work.

**Agreements/Action:**

Consensus was given to approve the recommendations as follows:

1. *City Council continue to include funds specifically for marketing neighborhood associations in the City's annual budget.*
2. *City staff establish a Trust and Agency account for community donations that support neighborhood association marketing efforts, providing a tool for neighborhood associations that choose to seek business sponsorships and community donations to support neighborhood association marketing efforts.*
3. *Neighborhood associations each establish annual civic involvement goals.*
4. *City staff prepare marketing tools that can be used to spread the word about neighborhood associations.*
5. *Department Directors, Division Heads, City Council, and City boards and commissions be presented annually with information and tools that can be used to spread the word about neighborhood associations.*

**5. Cultural Competency Tools**

Calvin stated there is a difference between diversity and cultural competency. The latter refers to having the awareness, competency, and skills to connect with and engage people who are different from you. The intent of providing NAs with cultural competency tools is to assist them in this aspect of their roles.

Tarter asked who the NAs are trying to serve. She opined that a diverse executive group is needed in order to best serve a diverse population. Smith noted that neither he nor the other members of his board are culturally competent. The chief stumbling block is language. Since much of the population in his neighborhood association speaks Spanish first, the board cannot be culturally competent if they cannot even speak their neighbors' language. Tarter said that language is not the only key to engaging people. Nanke agreed, noting that printing documents in Spanish does not guarantee participation since some people who speak Spanish do not read it well enough.

Shepard pointed out that differences are cultural, not just linguistic. A group of people uninformed because of differences may not care about land use issues, which is the chief concern of many neighborhood associations. Minority groups care more about doing than about meeting to discuss issues. Tarter pointed out that, as opposed to land use, Neighborhood Watch is a project that everyone is more likely to get behind. It is more applicable to everyone.

Homuth agreed, stating that NAs need to know how cultural and sociological aspects of the population fit into the community, not just what language they speak. NAs need tools to acknowledge cultural components. Nanke wondered whether the City has what it is needed. Tarter wondered whether proposing solutions at this point is getting ahead of things, since the group at the table has similar cultural backgrounds. Calvin said that Levi Herrera (Task Force member) would like to hold workshop conversations with the neighborhood associations to start

the process of building culturally competent organizations. Smith thought that was a great idea, and suggested holding regional meetings, where several NAs would attend at one time.

Tarter suggested striking this recommendation and reconvening the Task Force next year, when results from Levi Herrera's outreach would be available to better guide the Task Force. The March 20 Open House with neighborhood associations could also provide feedback on this issue. Calvin suggested rewording the recommendation to the following:

*Identify challenges and opportunities neighborhood associations have in connecting culturally diverse populations in their neighborhood.*

The Task Force gave consensus approval to advancing this recommendation.

## **6. Flex Team**

Nanke defined a Flex Team as a group of staff to address short-term issues in a neighborhood that are in a need of a targeted solution. This idea came from the work of the previous year's Task Force.

Lattimer wondered whether several NAs with a similar problem could receive help from a flex team. His example was Nelson Park needing help. This park is bounded by Croisan-Illahe, South Salem, and Sunnyslope Neighborhood Associations. An effort needs someone to help organize it between the three NAs. Calvin said that that case could be addressed by a Neighborhood Services Specialist, with assistance from Parks Maintenance staff.

Nanke noted that the difference between normal staff assistance to an issue and that given by a flex team is that the latter would be for issues that cross departmental responsibilities. Calvin added that staff have told her that there is no staff time available to participate in a flex team. She also added that staff from departments such as Police, Compliance Services, Fire, and Community Development have indicated that they already respond to issues across departments. What makes a flex team different is the community involvement and duration of the effort.

Calvin asked what the criteria would be to activate a flex team. Shepard wondered if they would address safety issues only. Calvin reminded the group that the flex team's integral focus is to join City staff with community members to address a situation. The neighborhood association triggers a call for help, and then the flex team strategizes with neighbors and local resources to solve the problem. This community-based problem-solving would leave the neighbors better connected so they can find their own solutions in the future. The NA would be deciding what is important, what needs a flex team approach. Skillern pointed out that flex team involvement could produce both long-term and short-term strategies to address the situation. Nanke suggested that either the neighborhood association or City staff would be able to activate a flex team.

Smith pointed out that, in the past, staff generally don't respond to an issue until it is at crisis point. He and his neighbors would like to attack issues before they get to that point. Assistance from a flex team could help make that happen. Calvin agreed that the City is in a reactive mode, although the staff would like to be proactive. The flex team takes advantage of when people are most interested in an issue.

This issue will be addressed further at the March 13 meeting. Smith asked Calvin to return with pertinent information about the community policing efforts in the north part of town, how the crime prevention council is developing.