

April 23, 2007, Neighborhood Task Force Work Session

Committee members present

Dave MacMillan DM
Kate Tarter KT
Don Homuth DH
Pamela Schmidling PS
Thomas Smith TS
Jay Howe JH
Chuck Bennett CB
John Lattimer JL
(+City Councilors Nanke, Stucky, Tesler, Walker)

Council Members

Janet Taylor JT
Rick Stucky RS
Brad Nanke BN
Bruce Rogers BR
TJ Sullivan TJ
Laura Tesler LT
Dan Clem DC
Brent DeHart BH

Presentation

(script in PowerPoint):

Jan – introduction
KT – Items referred by Council, Guiding Principles, Recommendation levels
JL – (commends Jan and Debbie’s staff work) Level 1 (off script – need more staff, NAs do more than just land use now)
TS – Level 1
LT – Level 1 (also thanked citizen members of task force for their time)
inclusion/outreach task force
JH – Level 1 – Land Use/Developers
BN – Level 1 – Annual review process
DH – Level 2 (representing 11,000 households in West Salem, lots of land use applications in West Salem) Greater notification area
PS – Level 2 Incorporate NAs into CC meetings, and Council agendas
TS – Level 2 – Matching grants, SNI support
PS – Level 2 – Interdepartmental team
CB – Level 3 – Planning Commission role, communication tools re: properties in development
DH – (difficult to speak at Council, harder with “blank faces”) Level 3 - Public communication forums
JH – Level 3 – boundaries, group to study fewer or more NAs in Salem, reconvene task force in 1 year
Jan – budgetary impacts, priority order

JT – Will control format and allow questions from the audience. Thank you for your time, I agree with the quality of our staff. This fall when I made the motion for this TF, it was to increase involvement in NAs. As past chair, I know how difficult it is to get broad participation.

JT - **Question** – Businesses. A former member didn't know a business rep could be involved. How much did you discuss bringing in businesses into NAs? ESSNA raises \$, through business sponsorships.

BN – Yes, there was some discussion, part of the broader communication.

JT – 20 businesses she talked to didn't know which NA they should be involved in.

BN – Most NAs don't do knock and talks on a regular basis. Only way to communicate is in passing conversations. Staff needs to be telling people. Everyone should know which NA they belong to.

JT – **Question** – If we were able to, in the budget process, find some money to add some staff, would the NAs be accepting of more input from CC on structure, rather than being so autonomous?

JH – Truitt Bros. and Salem Alliance Church have had a rep on Grant for years. Many letters, newsletters reference the fact that businesses are involved.

JT – Businesses need people to sit them down and tell them.

TS – Structure – It would be depend on what the structure would be. We have an 8-member board, I include everyone's vote in the vote. Board should go same way as members anyway.

JT – Many NAs have only 7-10 people there every month. Some recommendations made at CC against projects because they agree with NA. I worry that a few people are representing up to 25,000 people. Policy from City – certain percentage of people should be at each meeting?

JL – We talked about many organizations for NAs, looked at orgs from around the country. None of us have a problem saying we need more people involved. That is the basis for many of the recommendations. West Salem has different approach to involving folks than other orgs. I too try to include everyone in the vote. Participation has increased at C-I from 3 to 30 because of a conflict. We couldn't agree on a specific kind of structure, but would listen to CC, especially if you are providing resources.

TS – Agree with JL. Even 10 percent would be difficult.

JT – What about 1%? TS – I think we meet that.

TJ – **Question** – Address email from Susann Kaltwasser? TF was created to help with communication, but did a poor job itself with communicating.

BN – All past emails re this TF included all NA chairs. Only had to speak up to get these emailed directly to them.

BN – **Question** – Once the staff reviews this and makes recommendation, how will we get this back to NAs?

Jan – Existing website continued to be used, info there. Staff report will talk about dispensation of each of the recommendations. We may group them, i.e. Planning

Commission would get 4 of them. The public involvement and review process will be included in the report.

Bill Smaldone – SESNA chair – It is important for the Budget Committee to set aside some resources for the highest priority recommendations (or high on the wish list if must). This will save money in the long run. Response to JT comments: Concern about whether NAs are representative or not. It depends on the moment. NAs are representative of people who are alert, most people are not very alert until it is on their turf. If we are looking for a target %, it needs to be very clear – 1% of households, adults, all the time? 1% is extremely high. Would be a voluntary target for distant future, but would require an enormous investment. SESNA only sending to 100 or fewer right now; 2000 would be a huge leap.

JT – It is an idea. Goal to get more of the community recognizing what NAs can do for them and the city. It would make our jobs easier.

DC – Question – If org structure is self-elected board, and 20 people show up, is it really representative if only 4 people can vote? Did you discuss not the representativeness but how you really get the citizens involved so they feel they have a voice when they come to the NA?

Jan – Yes – discussed what would more staff do. They would help chairs design the best use of the agenda so people would get involved and what would you do with additional resources.

BN – Size of NA? If we had twice as many in the NA, would more people participate? Most had 20 or so, no matter the size. WSNA on upper end. Town hall format allows everyone to vote.

TJ – Question – Good that focus of initial recommendation was narrowed (developer meetings). Are you aware that it takes 30 signatures to send out a mailer for a general membership meeting? Is that something that you would like to address? That we send out a postcard to every general membership meeting? SGNA

Question – when land use actions come up, it may benefit entire ward or area, but people 2 miles away won't show up at an NA meeting to support, but next door neighbors show up with chip on shoulder. How do we accurately gauge the interest of the NA?

CB – If we use NAs to show absolute certainty of people's opinion, not right instrument. What you get is representation of concerns and interests from people well informed on matters. You can't look to NA groups for certainty, it is a judgment call. At NA level is distorted view because often polarized and have strong interest. Many developments have greater impact than on neighborhood, thus some recommendations from task force.

TJ – Role of NAs and communication. It helps NA board to have pulse of the NA, not the 30 ticked off people who came to the meeting. Need a direct way to collect data about the rest of the NA's opinions.

DH – Suggestion – Electronic news network, 200 people. Informs people of things not on the agenda. Summer – ourwestsalem.org will have its own committee discussion group, whether on an agenda or not. Won't be on the attendance sheets, but will address issue of participation. JT – Agrees.

BD – Question - In report, items that look towards more citizen communication. My perspective, people in middle of PH, people say they have no input. #7 Developers conducting public meeting, how different than PH, City staff there, on or off record, public meeting law?

Jan – Recommendation is earlier and more direct conversation. Developer share info, listen as they like. To City's advantage to have staff at that meeting, also developer and people closely impacted. Applicant would have to document that they had the meeting for application to be deemed complete.

Bill Smaldone – Respond to TJ's query. SESNA has done surveys. For example, how people see the meth problem. Effective if you have enough resources.

BR – Support recommendation going to staff. Defend "someone in my ward". Communication was misinterpreted. NA didn't have enough time to get responses back.

JT – This is just the beginning. Framework.