University Northside Partnership Community Affairs Committee Meeting
January 28, 2008 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Minneapolis Urban League

In attendance: Community Affairs Committee Co-Chairs:
Makeda Zulu-Gillespie, UNP-UROC Community Liaison
Raymond Dehn, Northside Residents Redevelopment Council

Judy Baker, Parents in Community Action
Kris Nelson, Director, Neighborhood Programs, CURA
Darlyne Bailey, Assistant to the President, UNP Workgroup Facilitator
Martin Adams, Project Coordinator FIPSE-UROC
Geoff Maruyama, Co-PI, FIPSE-UROC
Courtney Bell, UNP-UROC intern
Irma McClaurin, Executive Director, UROC
Kevin Lacy, Contractor
Andy Nelson, Health Partners Research Fund
Keith Dawson, Contractor
Christopher Harris, Contractor
Kelly O’Connor, UROC Communications intern

Introductions
Makeda Zulu-Gillespie began the meeting with introductions. With your name, everyone was asked to share their thoughts and feelings regarding the inauguration.

Welcome/Purpose
Raymond Dehn announced that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the future of the University Northside Partnership (UNP). Topics to address included; an update on the progress of UROC; developing two way communications medium for the university to contact the community and for the community to contact the partnership; and the future of the stakeholder meeting.

Announcements
Makeda Zulu-Gillespie made an announcement to inform the group that Archie’s niece was murdered the weekend prior. She reminded us that Archie’s family situation speaks about the interconnectedness of our community. We need to come together to figure out solutions for talking about these situations.

Question Posed to the Group
Christopher Harris posed an important question to the group. First stating that an attempt at a partnership is usually just talk, his question was, “What makes what you guys are doing here different? North and the University have both been here for a while and had a mediocre partnership. What are the teeth of this project?”

Many people contributed to the response.

1. Irma McClaurin spoke of a series of discussions about the University and the community, specifically regarding the feedback and critiques of past-partnerships, that lead to the decision within the University to meet its land grant institution status. The University Northside Partnership, which is an umbrella group of community residents, city, university and county representatives, came out of those conversations. Two working groups emerged from the University Northside Partnership; faculty committee and a community affairs committee.
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The notion of the UROC grew out of the conversations, focus groups, and the university deciding if it is going to deliver what the Northside community wants. Research and outreach centers exist in other areas of Minnesota but this is the first urban initiative of its kind. The UROC’s commitment is the investment in the building. The University has a multitude of programs that already have presence within the community but the UROC allows them to be physically present, too (ex: Med School, Health Education Center, College of Ed, Extensions). The goal of the UROC is to coordinate and develop point of reference for community members to be able to find resources and strengthen resources that already exist.

2. Darlyne Bailey mentioned that the mission statement at the bottom of the agenda speaks to a strategic alliance; mutually beneficial and engaged. The UROC is bidirectional, not just one way. Resources meeting talent, energy and time that benefit everyone. Once we decide how to pull them all together we will be able to have some really meaningful change.

3. Geoff Maruyama has been with the U for the 30 years, and spoke to the fact that the university has not been a good neighbor to the urban communities like it has been to the rural community. Now that it is an urban age, the university needs to look at how it can build partnerships with this community. Institutional commitment not an individual commitment, rather it is influenced by people doing research; educators, social scientist, etc. North Minneapolis has a lot of opportunities but also a lot of challenges so we hope that these meetings will bring the stakeholders together to figure out a process that will be mutually beneficial.

4. Kris Nelson did not agree with Christopher Harris’s statement about the partnership between the university and the Northside being contentious. Kris mentioned that there has been a lot of partnership between students and faculty. He used the example that CURA has been around for 40 years.

Kris also mentioned that term ‘The University’ gets thrown around as though it stood for one individual rather than such a complex place. He noted that it is hard to say that [everyone associated with the university] has a ‘bad image’. There are too many aspects that get institutionalized.

The university has always been cautious of being an urban campus. Politically, the university did not want to be identified with ‘the cities’. Now, however, with the growing realization that the Twin Cities drives the economy, the UROC sees the partnership between urban area and the university. The UROC will not be perfect but we have to start somewhere. Kris went on to mention that even though he is an ‘insider’ at the university, he still has trouble finding the right person to talk to so we can only imagine how much trouble community members must have. The UROC is trying to make it easy to find people at the university and for the university to find people within the community.

5. Irma McClaurin went on to mention that the notion of community engagement is new for the University. At the University of Florida, faculty and staff are never encouraged to go into the community. Faculty have been plopped into the University but then kind of encouraged to stay within the institution.

Now more than ever, communities are demanding that the universities within their communities start giving back. There are roughly 37 land grants that are trying to figure out how to take what we know to benefit the communities based on what the community members say not on what the institution wants. In the past it was consultative but this the UROC is an attempt to be collaborative. By no means are we perfect, but the work that comes out of this will be based on the interactions and requests of community members. The areas of focus have been identified by the community members.

6. Makeda Zulu-Gillespie reminded the group that the University leaders at the table were not chosen haphazardly but were chosen because of their skills, knowledge, ability to make systematic change and their belief in the community. University is trying to respect all knowledge, not just from the faculty but...
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also from the community. Tonight is about how the process will have teeth. Creating the process, how it works and implementation cannot be about the University telling the community how to do it; it has to be everyone at the community affairs table figuring out how to do this together.

7. Raymond Dehn mentioned that the UNP is an opportunity for the diverse community to say to the university that we are serious, we will help formulate your role and we will hold you accountable. When you say one thing but do another, we are going to call you out on it. If we do not do anything, it is going to be a group of academics sitting around the table talking about the situation. The community giving input to the university can help someone to think in a different way which will establish a chain reaction. I lived in the neighborhood for 8 years and on the sideline. Community moves forward and then stops, repeat. This is a convergence that will help us constantly move forward.

Christopher Harris thanked the group for such an in depth response. He mentioned that he went to Howard University in Washington D.C., which is also a land-grant institution. He mentioned that if you start well, things usually progress well. In his opinion, even the construction has started just okay. Christopher believes that the way you start is the way you finish and in his opinion, the partnership is only okay at this point. He said he would be willing to jump in and help because he does not want to come across as a naysayer but he wants to be honest. In his opinion, the construction is okay but not good.

Irma McClaurin thanked Christopher Harris for his honesty and encouraged him to record his observations and share it with her following the meeting. Irma spoke to the fact that the university will always default to what it knows know but it has to get better at that. It is a challenge on both sides. We [the university] have made it clear that we are committed to doing as much as we can to keep the stimulus in the community.

Updates

Northpoint Health and Wellness, Arleta Little
Arleta was unable to attend the meeting

The UROC, Dr. Irma McClaurin
The Imagining the Landscape workshop was held on December 13th. One of the visions was to come to an agreement about the exterior of the building. At 8:30 am the group met at the police station to brainstorm the opportunity to incorporate art and culture into the landscape. Some of the ideas included; weaving cultural icons into fencing; using cloth from the Hmong community; decorating the tower, the band around the building; the back of the building.

The back of the building is as important as the front. The new design includes the parking lot as an way to reclaim green space in the front. The idea is to link the spaces. An idea for the green space included culturally significant herb gardens.

Building renovation has been finalized. Stahl Construction and MN Best Enterprises, Inc. will be renovating the space. The space committee, which Irma is a part of, meets every Monday so she is able to provide feedback that will improve the process, ultimately meeting the needs of the Northside.

Over a year ago we had a meeting about the mortgage crisis in North Minneapolis. The focus of most programming has been focused on financial literacy. Sherry Pugh said that what is not being looked at is peoples mental health and the health of the community. How can the university contribute? In order to make policy change, we have to have data. Northpoint and Hennepin County have collected data. We want to pull that together and give them understanding of data and human effects - suicide, divorce, children displaced.

Child and Family Center, Irma McClaurin
University of Minnesota and Dr. Cicchetti remain committed to find a way to bring his research process to North Minneapolis. We are still looking for ways to have him connected.
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CURA, SEED Grant, Kris Nelson
Operated through Robert Jones, CURA has administered the SEED grant projects. These grants are not just projects, they seed relationships; community based research deluxe. The workshop on February 23rd is a chance for participants to show that they have been doing with the grant. Irma is going to moderate the community panel. The anchor of the event is the future funding. March 15th is the deadline for the next round of grants. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP so you get dinner.

PAR Workshops, Darlyne Bailey

PAR is a way to evaluate how well things are working. PAR is a bi-directional way of letting people know that they are valuable to the process. This is a workshop about the foundations of PAR. How do you do it, how do you get started, etc? There are two events remaining. The next one is at the university and the third is at the Urban League. Makeda mentioned that the next workshop is full but if you show up, they will let you stay.

Tuesday, March 24, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm, President's Room (3rd floor), Coffman Union
Wednesday, April 22, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm, Minneapolis Urban League, Laura Scott Williams Room 2100 Plymouth Avenue

Brainstorming Session- University Northside Partnership
Raymond Dehn planned a brainstorming session to start formulating ideas as to what the UNP is going to look like. Everyone was encouraged to pick 3 or 4 questions from the list and respond with proposed suggestions.

The questions:

1- How do we define resources: Both human and financial capital?
   - The best way to define ‘resources’ is to tell folks that this is what they ‘bring to the table’, to the partnership. No resources are too small or ever too big, all are valuable and necessary. And even step out of the way as they come in.
   - Start by creating realistic expectations about financial and human resources. Define achievable goals for resources. Provide examples so everyone gets perspective on what is reasonable. Celebrate ‘wins’. Dream big—set a bigger vision and work towards it

2- What are the best mechanisms for communication?
   - Door knocking to introduce the U to the people. Radio KMOJ, KFAI, B96, etc. Being seen on TV and around in the community.
   - Beyond the internet and list serves we need to give notices of open meetings. I believe that there is value to physical message/bulletin board. Flyers/newsletters and word of mouth.
   - Newsletters, Radio, PSA, Public Town meetings, Billboards, maybe something actually on the building.
   - Real, raw and uncut. There needs to be direct communication between the contributing faculty of the U of M, representation of UROC and the residents of North Minneapolis. The middle man needs to be cut out in order to decrease the wasting of precious time.
   - Often, all types, to reach every audience we find important: seniors, youth and immigrants
   - High schools for the youth and ask them what do they want in their community. Partnership with a mentor. Schools/Churches, Community Centers, Community fairs, U of M/High Schools
   - Kevin Lacy added; No one in his family has ever graduated for college. Although he said he was unsure if that was the reason, he told the group that the University of Minnesota is very intimidating. Kevin suggested that the university should have field trips for community members to visit the university but also for university faculty and staff to visit the community. He told the group
that in order to be seen in the community, the university has to be there and not just in the UROC space.

3- How do we engage the ‘unusual suspects’ to include a diversity of individuals and groups at the table— including youth?
   - Host open events, meetings, etc. to invite youth, older adults, and specific ethnic groups (SE Asians, American Indians, others) to hear their concerns and issues.
   - In order to engage the ‘unusual suspects’ the university needs to increase the visibility. Find the human connection. Getting fraternities involved in the community. Engage the young people to show them how the university can benefit. How do we engage the community through the 115 non-profits?
   - We have to invite people. You can inform them but they won’t come. You have to inform them and they will come. We allow for a diversity of opinion as long as it is not intending to disrupt. We need to target active youth. If we want to effect change, we have to start with youth. Reach out to the Southeast Asian and Hispanic.
   - Being that UROC is based through the U of M, I find it odd that there is not more participation from U of M undergrads. Why aren’t we utilizing that resource? If one of the goals of UROC is to make an education at the U of M a possibility for youth in North Minneapolis, then why not utilize the voice of current students.

4- How do we engage the community through the non profits?
   - The question was rephrased by Christopher Harris to include fortune 500 companies in the community outreach. He mentioned that the community is full of young people who want to be entrepreneurs. Mentorship could include job shadowing but also lectures, etiquette dinners and other events. non-profits are as helpful as they can be but the problem is that a business can’t be started with only $50,000. Christopher proposed the idea of entrepreneurial mentorships to get young people involved with community members. Start ups could be owned by the university until it is up and running and could then sell the business back to the entrepreneur. Have a mentorship in all areas- even a business etiquette class/lectures/etc. Engaging the community not only non-profit.
   - UROC as a great way to inform youth and the community about these issues. The Northside is known for teen violence and teen pregnancy. UROC should be a safe place for community members to come and learn more, seek resources, and feel comfortable in doing so and possibly offer on-site referrals.

5- Do we include a representative from each Neighborhood Organization?
   - You have to go into the community because a lot of people don’t connect with the organizations.
   - I do not feel that a representative from each neighborhood is a necessity because of the close nature of Minneapolis neighborhoods. As a resident of North Minneapolis, I saw no lines of division between my neighborhood and the next. Real, honest, and effective representation is what is needed.
   - Conduct regular outreach to the Northside. Host periodic meetings inclusive of all Northside neighborhood organizations to socialize, input, dialogue, and give suggestions.

6- How does the general community respond/comment or voice concerns to the committee?
   - Quarterly meeting to have the community come in and talk. Point of contact so people can post and response.
   - Holding listening sessions so that people can come and express the concern without people having to respond. A way for questions to be presented. How do questions get answered?

7- Propose a structure that allows for participation by all and direction by a smaller group.
   - Clarify respective goals/objectives of various University Partners to distinguish responsibilities and jobs.
   - Large advisory group is great but when it comes to detailed stuff, a work group of 10 people is more realistic. This larger group would be responsible for the capacity of an advisory.
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- Minimize time commitment of people by offering regular update that focuses on presentation and dialogue of specific tasks. Separate working group activities. Encourage smaller groups of people with greater interest in commitment to specific projects, who will plan, guide, participate, and report out on the work?
- Establish break out small groups to own targets.
- Monthly group meetings that are open. Smaller group meetings that meet more often.

8- Propose a time line for engagement
- Identify levels of partnership. Figure out the different types of partnership so people don’t think they have to be engaged at the same level. Who decides who gets to partner. How to questions and comments get back and forth between the University and the community. Develop standards for accountability.
- Engagement has begun! How do we continue to sustain, deepen, and ensure mutually beneficial outcomes for all involved? Engagement is truly the task at hand.
- Engagement is ongoing forever but timelines for projects, input feedback, and implementation must have hard stops, reports, evaluations to make progress?
- Partnership through community engagement needs to start now.

9- How does the community influence/inform what research or projects take place in the community?
- Construction that allows community residents and partners to hear about University research projects and findings on a regular basis.
- Conduct listening sessions periodically to hear community issues and concerns.
- Provide meetings/forums to education community residents on research issues and protocols.
- City identifies research questions with rationale why it is a pressing issue and who it affects. Project how the research will help the city to move forward. University and city agree on researcher skills and the knowledge needed. University and city choose the researchers. Report back to certain milestones and adjust. Present preliminary findings, establish and discuss results.
- Need to have a way that questions/information about research in the community is presented and how questions get answered.
- All information, priorities gathered need to be put into a plan and the partnership would have to prioritize initiatives annually—not perfect but a start
- Convene groups of community and University people with shared interests in specific topics, but let them define the topics for shared work, facilitate groups if necessary—but definitely appoint community co-chairs. Start with focus on issues, capacity, and opportunity for the group to help with the issues.
- Ask the community to define targets then assemble. Co-produce/create the research. Design together, conduct it collaboratively as equitably shares resources. Integrate education and opportunities with each.

10- If we need a smaller work group, what does that look like?
- Includes the U and community leadership with a commitment to communicate respective interests, issues and commitments/limitations; as well as check back with respective stakeholders to work.
- A smaller work group should be representative of our larger group, in terms of gender, age, etc. The most productive workgroups are no more than 7-8 folks who have a clear purpose, timeline, and transparency.
- Community must be able to define the relationship with the U. Do this to bring about perspective and balance.