UNP Community Affairs Committee Meeting

March 18, 2009 2-3:30 pm
Minneapolis Urban League

Attendees: Makeda Zulu-Gillespie, Co-Chair, UNP Community Affairs Committee
          Raymond Dehn, Co-Chair, UNP Community Affairs Committee
          Sherrie Pugh Sullivan, Executive Director, Northside Residents Redevelopment Council
          Judith Baker, Director of Parent and Community Relations, Parents In Community Action, Inc.
          Ishmael Israel, Board Chair, Northside Residents Redevelopment Council
          Rev. Carl Joyner, Holsey Memorial CME Church
          Irma McClaurin, Executive Director, Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center, University of Minnesota
          Kris Nelson, Director of Neighborhood Programs, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
          Geoff Maruyama, FIPSE/UROC Facilitator, Associate Vice President, University of Minnesota
          Martin Adams, FIPSE/UROC Coordinator, University of Minnesota
          Kathie Doty, Hennepin County Relations Liaison, University of Minnesota
          Dick Senese, Associate Dean for Public Engagement, University of Minnesota Extension
          Sara Axtell, Community-Campus Health Outreach Liaison, University of Minnesota
          Sharon Banks, Project Manager, Construction Management, Office for Business and Community Economic Development
          Courtney Bell, Intern, Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center, University of Minnesota
          Stephanie Wilkes (recorder), Administrative Assistant, Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center, University of Minnesota

We started with introductions –

Updates

Geoff Maruyama – FIPSE

Healthy Foods
Health and Wellness workgroup will continue to focus on School yard gardens. He is partnering with Northpoint on a Blue Cross Blue Shield planning grant to study consumption habits. FIPSE may partner with the Minneapolis Urban League on a farmer’s market – waiting to hear from the MUL.

Youth Entrepreneurship
YE has completed two sessions – one with Kwanzaa Community church and the other with Alternatives incorporated. FIPSE will do another program this summer. NEON had a successful summer with their youth entrepreneurship program also. FIPSE is now moving toward program evaluation.

Out of School Time
Has built a community of Providers to share information – What types of service and to whom is the service provided? Karen Goodenough is the contact for this effort. Karen works with Plymouth Christian Youth Center.

Sharon Banks – March 12 Meet and Greet for UROC Building Renovation Project

Sharon Banks indicated that the meeting went well, and served as a networking opportunity. She shared a handout from the meeting with information on how construction plans and bid information will be released, and said that at the meeting made everyone aware of when the plans will be available.
She also shared that the landscaping, janitorial and maintenance contracts will be contracted out individually, to allow for interaction with more companies (rather than just 1 company that contracted all 3 together). She is sending out a request for proposal, and is hoping to be able to use an open bid process (she is asking for an exemption, so there can be more interaction with the North Minneapolis workforce). She hopes that the RFPs will be completed by the end of the month, and awarded sometime in August.
At the March 12 meeting, they also went over the bids already awarded – HVAC (Legacy Mechanical) and electric (Name?), both small business enterprises.

Kenneth Brown, Marvin Smith and Mr. Watley were all mentioned as potential people to work on the project, and Sharon Banks let everyone know her contact information was listed in the Brief should anyone have any questions or suggestions.

Ray Dehn asked if there has been any talk regarding other meetings like the March 12 Meet and Greet as follow-ups once the contracting bids have been awarded? A chance to present what was done, to bring some statistics and hard facts, to address people’s concerns that they may not have been treated fairly?

Sharon Banks replied that something like this could be arranged after the bids are awarded, although for some of our targets we won’t be able to address whether or not the targets were met until the entire project is completed. We will provide briefings that address who was selected, who was not and why, but these meetings might also be valuable.

Sherrie Pugh Sullivan responded that she is glad to hear that the University is going outside its usual process for this, and that they need to get the word out about it – in NorthNews, Insight News, the Hmong and other community papers, and possibly in statements to different community councils. She said that anything being done outside the norm needs to be shared with the community.

Makeda Zulu-Gillespie agreed with Sherrie Pugh Sullivan, and said that sharing that kind of information might also be helpful in how the community sees the UROC Building Renovation Project.

Irma McClaurin responded that she thought Sharon Banks should coordinate Sherrie Pugh Sullivan’s suggestion with Hawona Sullivan Janzen, UROC’s Communications Coordinator.

Irma McClaurin - Urban Research and Outreach/Engagement Center

Irma gave updates on:

1. UROC Building Renovation Project – Irma McClaurin shared that while Sharon Banks and BCED is working on the bidding side, the plans for another aspect of the project – the final design – should be ready in the next few weeks; there are currently a few issues being worked out in regards to drainage and rainwater that will affect the final design. She said that the project is moving along well, especially since its only been just over a year since the building was purchased. She shared that 2 community meetings have been held: the first, a presentation of the design to the community in November of 2008; second, an “Imagining a New Art and Landscape” workshop in December 2008 (a summary of this workshop is pending, and will show how the workshop influenced changes in the design, such as recaptured green space).

2. UROC Futures Conference – She shared that the UROC “Coming Together to Create a Shared Future for North Minneapolis” Futures Conference was held on February 20 and 21, 2009, and reported that from the evaluations completed by conference participants, the response was that participants were mostly satisfied with the conference and found it very helpful. She also shared that the strategic planning consultant for the UROC strategic planning process and herself will continue the strategic planning process by convening an action planning team to review conference data and refine the strategic goals for UROC. These will then be presented to up to 6 focus groups of community members, whose input will allow UROC to finalize its strategic plan, by June or July 2009 and produce a conference proceedings summary. She then asked those here at the CAC meeting who also attended the Futures Conference to share their thoughts.
Dick Senese shared that the thought the history exercise on the first day of the conference was really informative for him, since he is not from North Minneapolis or Minnesota, and that it was great to see all the people present.

Sherrie Pugh Sullivan shared that she thought it was excellent. She also shared that an email she got today about a job and education fair in St. Louis Park inspired her to share it with us so we could begin to think about ways the University could identify with the youth in North Minneapolis, potentially by hosting similar events in North Minneapolis.

Irma McClaurin responded that she is in conversation with Clifford Stanley, the president of Scholarship America, and that they are interested in seeing ways in which they might collaborate to work with youth in North Minneapolis.

Martin Adams shared that he thought the facilitators did a good job and that a number of activities were done; he found it to be a nice weave of the activities done and how they will affect the future of North Minneapolis.

Geoff Maruyama shared that he liked how the conference started by seating everyone in diverse groups, and then shifted to seating everyone by their stakeholder groups – he appreciated crossing groups.

Raymond Dehn shared one criticism – the voting piece at the end of the conference became a bit of a "distillation down" process. He thought it seemed fairly obvious which ideas rose to the top, but that there may have been other ideas that got less focus that still may have been important.

Geoff Maruyama said that he also thought it would have been nice to have the opportunity to hear a little more background about the ideas, expanding on the one line written on the flip chart.

Makeda Zulu-Gillespie agreed, and said that in explaining to someone what the Northside Seed Grant program was to someone who didn't know, she affected their knowledge of the program and, in turn, their vote. She shared that she thought it was great to have the conference at PICA, since they work with diverse populations in North Minneapolis, and that she thought the food was great.

Irma McClaurin shared that the action planning team will have access to all the conference data, not just the final voting. She also said that UROC is evolving, and that she sees as a strength of UROC its potential capacity to respond to timely issues, allowing it to stay on the cutting edge of the issues in North Minneapolis.

Judith Baker shared that she thought the facilitators were good at keeping everyone on track and bringing everyone together – and she appreciated that they kept some time for everyone to have fun as well.

Irma McClaurin also shared that she thought it was a testament to people's commitment that when the conference was over, everyone didn't rush out right away, but instead many stayed and talked.

**Brainstorm Exercise**

The meeting broke out into small groups of 3 to go over the question and suggestion handout (questions and suggestions to these questions generated at previous meetings). The instructions were for each group to look at their questions and begin to develop strategies, looking at what was brainstormed previously and what is repeating. Each group was to create a structure, and keep in mind that more can always be added. Each small group will report back to the larger group after approximately 20 minutes.
Makeda Zulu-Gillespie shared that once UROC figures out the logistics of Monkey Survey in conjunction with University of Minnesota policies, the surveys may be more widely distributed. The hope is to have more understanding of the UNP by September, when UROC is in the building.

Irma McClaurin shared that an important piece of information that came out of the survey and the Futures Conference is that people are finding a lot of confusion regarding the acronyms and the workgroups, and that the questions that need to be answered are: what is the UNP? What is or should be its relationship to UROC? What should it be going forward? She also shared that if the Community Affairs Committee reaches the consensus that it wants more facilitation for this process, UROC may be willing to support that process with consultants (GrayHall was used in the past).

**Group 3 – Geoff Maruyama, Sara Axtell, Courtney Bell**

*Question 5, Do we include a representative from each neighborhood organization?*

*Question 6, How does the general community respond/comment or voice concerns to the committee?*

**Question 5**
Group 3 did not think representation was needed from each neighborhood, that it might be contradictory in that it could create further division in the process of creating unity. Instead, the UNP would benefit from broader participation (like bringing more community members to the Community Affairs Committee meetings).

The UNP needs to find avenues effective to reaching out to the neighborhood organizations – broadcasting on KMOJ and KBM (the North High School radio station), church media (bulletins, other means of plugging the Community Affairs Committee meetings throughout the week), and touching out to the community organizations (Lao, Latino, etc., as well as different demographics).

**Question 6**
Group 3 had a similar response for Question 6 to their response for Question 5, and reaffirmed the need to plug the Community Affairs Committee meetings. Courtney Bell also talked about the phone call responses she’s gotten, having dialogues with those interested in coming to the Community Affairs Committee meetings to see what best fits all schedules.

**Group 4 – Martin Adams, Makeda Zulu-Gillespie, Irma McClaurin**

*Question 7, Propose a structure that allows for participation by all and direction by a smaller group.*

**Question 7** led Group 4 to brainstorm a number of questions:
- What is the role of UROC and the UNP in economic development, or what can it be?
- What is the UNP – simply the Community Affairs Committee meetings, for an airing of ideas? What could it be?
- What should it be?
- How do we clarify the scope? If it is through a community benefits agreement, who is and how are they accountable?
- Where does the UNP take authority? Who is speaking for the University? for the UNP? Who is responsible?

Irma McClaurin brought up the questions: What is the scope of the UNP? What about involving representatives from nonprofits? What can the UNP do as an alliance that the individual organizations cannot?

Makeda Zulu-Gillespie also brought up the question of turf, and the need to have an honest discussion about it.

Irma McClaurin also pointed out the need to look at how the UNP was defined – was it with all? If the definition needs to be refined, then that needs to be identified.
Sherrie Pugh Sullivan said that the University always defined the UNP was with the community and the city, but wondered if the community did the same.

**Group 5 – Sherrie Pugh Sullivan, Kathie Doty, Ishmael Israel**

**Question 9, How does the community influence/inform what research or projects take place in the community?**

Group 5 thought that in order for the community to have influence, the University needs to identify first what the goals are – then the community can say OK, along those lines this is what’s important to us, then the University can look at what projects that have that will work with the community’s needs. An example of this would be Dr. Cicchetti – his work was what the community wanted. Once the agreement on the research projects is made, then a timeline should be set, which will allow for accountability. Once the University has identified its priorities, the community can find likenesses and alliances that align and correspond, which would allow for an iterative and continuous loop.

Sherrie Pugh Sullivan said that the University has researchers who present their research, and that they should use existing tools (community forums) to do these presentations.

Dick Senese responded that the word ‘research’ is often problematic, because it can be looked at in many different ways. He pointed out the need for demystification, and said that Sherrie’s suggestion of presentations to the community would help do this.

Geoff Maruyama said that the IRB has requirements for human subject forms, and these forms can sound scary; he said we need to think about a way to meet the goals of the IRB and not sound so intimidating.

Irma McClaurin said that we need to think about how we can humanize science, how to let community know what happens at the U. She also thinks it might be better to flip the process proposed by Group 5 - instead of the University defining, the community consulting and the University revising, she would like to see the community being able to tell the University “this is what we need.” She then asked the question of whether or not the UNP is an entity that can create a series of these forums? She has heard community organizations share that they get 20 requests to do research with the University; is the UNP the body to choose the top 3 of these requests and move on them?

Kathie Doty wanted to underscore how important it is, how she does not want to underestimate how difficult it is for the community to decide on these issues and then to present them to an academic institution.

Sherrie Pugh Sullivan shared that it needs to be a matching of both parties. For example, around the issue of diabetes, the organizations did their own research on the effects of diabetes on the population, and then went about trying to get a dialysis center but couldn’t. There were 3 community groups working around the same issue: Northpoint Health and Wellness Center, Northside Residents Redevelopment Council, and Reverend McAfee at New Salem Missionary Baptist Church. She said it would be great if the community is hearing lectures at the University about issues like this that affect them, and that the community needs to learn and we need to get that information to them. She also pointed out how amazing it is how much people know regarding the bad data.

Irma McClaurin asked the question: how can the UNP facilitate that learning (mentioned by Sherrie)?

**Group 1 – Ray Dehn, Sharon Banks, Stephanie Wilkes**

**Question 1, How do we define resources: both human and financial capital?**

**Question 2, What are the best mechanisms for communication?**
Question 1
Group 1 saw the need to match resources with goals, establishing goals and then working backwards from those goals, defining the resources available and those needed. They talked about matching applicable skills with expectations, and establishing realistic goals based on realistic expectations. They stressed the importance of celebrating all wins, big and small, and that there needs to be a process established for receiving information. Also, Ray Dehn explained his 3 Ws concept, noting that in partnerships like these, people need to bring to the table at least one of the 3 Ws: wealth, wisdom or work.

Question 2
Group 2 thought that in the case of communication, it is not about narrowing the focus, but broadening it. They also brought up the issue of outreach to other cultural entities, and the importance of having the communications available in foreign languages.
They then listed a number of means of communication that could be utilized:
- Internet (where the UNP needs a presence
- Radio (Al McFarland, Insight News)
- Newsprint
- Bulletin boards
- Spoken word pieces (or a town crier type of announcing) – Courtney Bell brought up the University student group, ‘Voices Merging’
- Blogs, Facebook – this would be viral communication, and needs to spread
- Door knocking
- People to people contact – the idea of ambassadors, or perhaps the University going into the high schools
- Ray Dehn also talked about the need for someone to go on Al Flowers and Zach Metoyer’s television program

Group 2 – Judith Baker, Dick Senese, Rev. Carl Joyner

Question 3, How do we engage the ‘usual suspects’ to include a diversity of individuals and groups at the table - including youth?
Question 4, How do we engage the community through nonprofits?

Group 2 went about thinking about their questions while considering the idea of strategic mapping, and likening the plan we need to form to a campaign plan

Question 3
Group 2 expressed the need to reach out to the ‘unusual suspects,’ and the importance of tapping into community life and going to it – going to community events, and not only attending but bringing value (one suggestion: bring Goldy Gopher), and also recruiting volunteers, and making the efforts tangible.
This would require a mapping of the organizations with the high impact events, and could also include UNP created events, where there was a focus on youth, possibly around job opportunities and career counseling.
They also stressed the need for recognizing the many cultures present in North Minneapolis, and the idea of mapping.

Question 4
Group 2 talked about the question of how to build trust and coalitions, and thought that one thing the UNP could provide would be its role as a credible convener. Around the diabetes example, it could bring together all the groups that are working on the issue separately, forming a diabetes interest group, and talking then about what research, outreach and teaching could occur at the University to work with this interest group. They envisioned having a few of these issue groups.
They also brought up the authority of making decisions.

Rev. Carl Joyner pointed out that an issue for him is that of the disconnect between the researchers and those who need the information from the research.

Kathie Doty shared that she knows of a statistic that says that a research lag of 7-15 years exists between research and practice.

Dick Senese suggested that it may be a measurable goal to decrease that lag. 
Irma McClaurin stressed the importance of recognizing the different kinds of research, and understanding that there are some researchers you don’t want out talking directly to people, and that some researchers don’t care so much about the application of their research.
She thinks that the UNP as a credible convener could address issues like diabetes, the brownfields and HIV/AIDS. She thinks they could identify the researchers, and sees as part of UROC its ability to have the funding for these kinds of initiatives.
She also asked the question of once this convening is done, what is the UNP? And also stressed the importance of the UNP asking how the research can be used.

Judith Baker shared that she agrees with that all are saying, and that she has been thinking about these issues and talking to Alyce Dillon about them. She knows that with PICA, their base is so diverse and they have so many people that if needed, they could call on and get a response from 1000 people in no time – and she wants to think about how this can happen for Irma McClaurin and UROC. She thinks that if all the community could come together, they would be so strong – but how can this be achieved? She knows that many people and organizations are very “turf-y” and wants to think about how to show them the importance of looking past that. 

Kathie Doty talked about the importance of finding ways to unite people.

Judith Baker talked about at another committee meeting she had this evening, and that there has been a turning point since Jackie Cherry Holmes and Sharon Sayles Belton.

Sherrie Pugh Sullivan posed the question: What was it, besides the rebellion in 1968, that brought the community all together, and how did the community use that? She thinks this may be our number 1 research question.

Irma McClaurin shared that she heard 3 issues:
1. The question of how do we get information regarding AIDS to the community, and share that there is hope?,
2. Diabetes, and
3. The critical environmental issues – how do we get the research started and get the information? If this something the University can help support? An example of this would be UROC’s work funding a Family and Community Health in the Mortgage Foreclosure Crisis project (funding for grad student and community researcher).

She feels there has to be a way for the community to say what it believes the core issues are.

Kathie Doty asked if there needs to be research done on the earlier question of community cohesion, if this is a necessary topic for research? She noted that asset mapping is a way of doing this, in that part of doing it involves community learning.

Makeda Zulu-Gillespie pointed out the importance of doing this work together; Kathie Doty said it can happen naturally that way.
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Dick Senese said it is about developing and building capacity, and that it cannot be one way or the other. He also said that it has to be on a topic that is tangible, a “so what?” kind of topic – it needs to get away from abstractions and get to what is real. He said there needs to be an underlying structure to sustain and make a real impact.

Kathie Doty expressed a concern that all the “doing” verbs were being attributed to the University; Dick Senese responded that he thinks the alliance of the University and the community were doing the verbs.

Sherrie Pugh Sullivan pointed out that we need to not just stop at groups, and instead go to the community members. She talked about another way of bringing trust would be to get Al McFarland’s radio program back into the community, reestablish a place where that can happen.

Irma McClaurin said that it is important to understand what the people in the community are doing, to understand their work and their perspectives. She also talked about shared power as a tricky thing, and that as people we are who we are.
She said that we need to figure out what this “marriage” will be like – is the UNP the same as UROC? If no, what is the UNP, and what is its relationship to UROC?
She asked the group to think about CURA.

Kathie Doty responded that the CURA approach is to work with the community. She pointed out the power relationship, based on who has the money and the ability to come and go freely – and that discussing this power relationship can lead to some uncomfortable conversations.

Rev. Carl Joyner sees this as a bottleneck – the University as a convener, having connections with the top and the bottom of the bottle. If it is the partnership as the convener, it opens up the bottle, and allows access to the middle – a place for money, resources and power to flow. He said that right now there is opportunity, opportunity we do not want to lose out on.

Irma McClaurin asked how we can take advantage of the opportunity, without opening up the wound again and again, allowing us to move past the history. Ten years from now, she would like to see that there is a sense of cohesion, and that it is a force to be reckoned with.

Sherrie Pugh Sullivan asked if the community is place based, and wondered if some of this will not translate until UROC is “here,” if until Irma McClaurin and UROC are physically in North Minneapolis the link is not “real” yet. She talked about having enough of the disconnect from the University, and that we need to think about what will become the mechanism.

Dick Senese then asked what the mechanism would be for saying no?

Kathie Doty asked who would be saying no; Dick Senese responded that it would be UROC and UNP.
He also said that if you can say no to a request, and still keep trust in the relationship, then you know you are in the right place.

Sara Axtell shared that this was her first time attending a Community Affairs Committee Meeting, and that she thanks everyone for having an open and really exciting discussion. She also told everyone to keep her in mind when thinking about connecting to faculty (due to her position as Community-Campus Health Outreach Liaison).