



THE INTER-NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL (INC) OF BOZEMAN, MONTANA
RETREAT MINUTES
Thursday, Feb. 21, 2018

Attending: Carson Taylor (moderator), Jennifer Rockne (SCAN), Kathy Powell (UNA), Joe Genovese (NHVN), Amy Kelley Hoitsma (NENA), Chris Nixon (NENA), Suzanne Held (NENA), David Steinmuller (The Knolls), Milt Mozen (The Knolls), Anne Maroney (The Knolls), Laurie McKinney (MarLin), Gail McMillan (formerly BPNA), Linda Semones (BPNA), Jon Wirth (SCAN), Rob Edwards (BCNA), Pat Flaherty (UNA), Ita Killeen (UNA), Marilyn Raffensperger (SCAN), Megan Sageman (MarLin), Corky Bush (VUNA), Julian Calabrese (Cooper Park), Elizabeth Williamson (Cooper Park), Bob Wall (SENA)

Tanya Andreasen (Neighborhood Coordinator), Melody Mileur (City of Bozeman Communications Coordinator), Commissioner Terry Cunningham, Britt Fontenot (City Economic Development Director)

4:08 Tanya convened the meeting

Kathy gave overview of the NRO.

Bob provided a little history.

Jennifer talked about INC and recent activities. Presentations by the City on a number of the plans and reviews in progress (Strategic Plan, NCOD update, Parking plan, downtown plan), opportunities for the group to provide input on those plans. Also took some of the information from last year's retreat and tried to move some issues forward, particularly around helping to create replicatable processes for some of the functions of neighborhood associations.

Working to foster more cross-pollination and communication between neighborhood associations.

Improved messaging around the neighborhoods program. Worked with MSU on their off-campus living handbook and good neighbor committee.

Promoted Good Neighbor Day in September 2018.

Promoted and participated in Seat at the Table meetings.

Introductions

Tanya – Outcome info from last retreat. Summary was assembled after last retreat, including action items. Items were: cohesion, outreach, communication, engagement.

Some cooperation between NAs – SCAN and UNA on several issues, traffic calming across NAs (in cooperation with WTI).

Outreach – Tanya assembling welcoming/onboarding materials for new board members, new NA committees.

Communication – marketing materials getting refreshed, Tanya budgeting for additional collateral. Trying to get some visual continuity. Cultivating a better relationship with area media. Melody sending out weekly FYIs in addition to press releases.

Engagement - working on systems development, to try to fine tune and customize processes so they work for individual neighborhoods.

Missoula, for example, has predefined neighborhood associations that cover the whole city. In Bozeman, trying to make sure that the channels provided through the neighborhoods program are also available to citizens that don't live in recognized neighborhoods.

Federal funding to the City will increase when our population exceeds 50,000 – so it is important for Bozeman to get an accurate count in the 2020 census.

Adopt a Drain program – neighbors can adopt a storm water drain, keep track of the “gunk” that is diverted from the system.

Pints with Planners – increase interactions between citizens and City staff.

External events and initiatives:

Good Neighbor Day

Seat at the Table conversations

- Neighborhoods Association hosting an event at the Library next Thursday, 2/28, to present some of the collected data
- Collaborations with MSU – Epic-N allows students to use City issues and data for projects. ADU design project was successfully. Coming summer course will study Neighborhood Program, analyze, and provide feedback.

Off Campus Living Committee (spawned from Good Neighbor Committee) making progress on assisting student renters. A proposal has been submitted to MSU to fund a full-time position, plus 5 work study positions and a grad student. City will help with financial support.

Discussed what City is doing right with Neighborhoods Program.

- Good info coming from City departments reporting to INC

- Program has helped make local government much more accessible to citizens. Facilitates better dialog, interaction
- City commitment to increased outreach and good accessibility to staff
- Full time neighborhood coordinator
- Good dissemination of info through Nextdoor and social media
- Helping to encourage stronger neighborhoods

Dinner discussion – identify challenges of the Bozeman program, then review materials from other cities (Bend, Missoula, Bellingham) and think about applicability to our challenges

Post-dinner reports:

Jennifer – Bellingham.

Challenges: getting involvement, participation at steering committee level, helping members feel like they are an important part of the process, communication and communicating about events (consistency and methods of communication), representation (need to build credibility in neighborhood and build numbers of involved people), alignment – strategic plan talks about engagement with residents and also with MSU, hard to align goals to facilitate resolutions to those issues.

Ideas from Bellingham: neighborhood sub-area plans. City has 20 neighborhood associations. 5- and 20-year plans, cover traffic and streets, etc. City has more streamlined communication process (Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Committee has regular meetings with mayor). Planning Dept. has a citizen planning academy (similar to our citizen police academy) – provided training to neighborhood leaders, providing a tool to facilitate infill housing.

Ita – Bend.

Challenges: engagement, housing, getting people involved when there is a mix of renters, owners, multi-family, growth issues and what is NA's responsibility, traffic issues.

Bend has 13 NAs. City designates boundaries, cover entire city. Associations must have a meeting every 18 months or they are inactivated. Can be reactivated. Each NA gets funding for administration, postage, and leadership training. Mediation services are available. NAs are part of land use planning decisions, review of applications for zoning changes and similar requests.

City does provide subpages for NAs on their website.

Megan – Missoula.

Challenges: involvement, maintaining interest after issues resolve, how could we identify good boundaries for neighborhoods to help facilitate cohesion, how can we convey successes and positive aspects of neighborhoods to other NAs.

Missoula – city does pick boundaries for NAs.

The neighborhood page on the City website now has a webform for people to submit information about events.

Talked about challenges to imposing neighborhood associations on the city.

Kathy – no city was studied by their table.

Challenges: communications (Nextdoor can have some issues), involvement (new neighborhoods, within an NA), continued leadership, how to utilize the NA for input on issues that are not immediately within the NA boundaries, interconnections within and between NAs (trails, etc.), what is vision for neighborhood (would that draw people in to participate in visioning meetings?)

Solutions: communications – talk to Tanya and communications dept about printing flyers for your NA, have a repository of examples. Leadership – term limits. Communications to recruit new NAs – table at events like Farmer’s markets, other advertising. Mentoring program to develop new leadership within NA.

Missoula – has community tool sheds. Talked about doing walking tours of neighborhoods, maybe encouraging gardens.

Favorite ideas:

- Leadership training / mentoring. Planning academy
- Get ideas from other cities about what works and doesn’t
- Succession of leaders within NAs
- Social events to build cohesion
- Communication channels to get information to thought leaders about the City and about NAs (success stories)
- Establish complete coverage of all city residents by an NA
- Provide some tangible advantages for active associations
- Monthly / bimonthly publication about NA activities – successes, failures, upcoming items of interests (City projects, etc.)
- Mandating that NAs are involved in City processes
- More publicity about NAs - using participatory events (SLAM, farmer’s market) to get info about NAs distributed
- Library of communications tools and other assets that NAs can use
- Build up neighborly activities
- Vision meetings to help coalesce neighbors
- Using NA as an avenue for moderating intra-neighborhood conflicts

Tanya requested some input from us to help prioritize these activities.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Minutes recorded by Bob Wall.