

## **Community Engagement: PLACE Subcommittee**

February 4, 2014

9-10 am

Neighborhood Development Services Conference Room

Attendees: Mark Watson, Andrea Douglas, Claudette Grant, Ebony Walden, Margot Elton-Ratliff

### Meeting Notes

#### Subcommittee Member Feedback on Public Engagement

##### *Mark Watson*

- Attendance
  - People who attend meetings are those who are already engaged
  - Underrepresented Groups
    - Large subset of the population that cannot attend meetings – physical ability and time constraints
    - Trust is a key issue
    - Engagement shouldn't have to be meeting specific
- On the Ground
  - Engagement should be done by foot soldiers – citizen outreach volunteer group
    - Model after a planning spin on “Guardian Angels”
  - Facilitators
  - Should be in place continuously to get a sense of real neighborhood concerns
  - Conversations with these people could jumpstart any development or planning process – get a sense of the real issues

##### *Andrea Douglas*

- Intermediaries used too often to try to figure out what communities want → current lack of actually going into the community itself
- Critical to build trust – there is an underlying distrust that stems from Vinegar Hill
- Market analysis might suggest something entirely separate from what residents want to see for their community – problem when development happens to people without their control or their desire
- Continuous engagement
  - Keep things fresh and ongoing – should not be a “one and done” process
  - Make small announcements along the way rather than large announcements when something big happens
  - Keep people constantly aware of what is going on
- Planner Primer to help educate the non-planner public
  - Language of development – planner jargon explained
  - How development works – what government has control over and what it does not have control over

##### *Claudette Grant*

- Important to bring meetings to people rather than try it the other way around
- Charlottesville is good at developing ideas but struggles with the implementation process

#### Suggestions for Citizen Planner Group

- Neighborhood Leadership Institute – creates new leaders for our community – could this be tied to helping community engagement?

- Youth as citizen leaders
  - Kids have opinions of their own, but also represent their parents opinions
  - Use middle and high school students as a group of ears on the ground
  - Potentially work with schools – either to add to curriculum or to allow students to get community service hours for this work?

### Products

- Desire for a toolkit product similar to the one developed by Seattle
- Group to review product examples distributed and give feedback on desired end product for our process
- Intermediate product – interviews
  - Ebony/Margot to conduct interviews of various people involved with public engagement in the City to get their opinions
  - City Staff, community members, engaged participants, non-engaged residents, etc.
- Intermediary product – online survey
  - Question about how to keep people from “filling the ballot box” and answering multiple times
  - Question about whether Charlottesville tourism has done a similar survey recently
  - Comment about wanting to be sure that language and delivery are well crafted so people will actually fill out survey
  - Discussion about distributing hard copy survey at other public meetings – rather than trying to have a specific meeting – allows for data collection without asking people to attend another public meeting

### Action Items/Next Steps

- PLACE Subcommittee members to review precedent documents and give feedback to Ebony and Margot on desired end product
- PLACE Subcommittee members to review online survey questions and give feedback to Ebony and Margot
- PLACE Subcommittee members to think about 1-3 names of opinion leaders and community members who ought to be interviewed
- Ebony to work with City Communications staff to begin developing online survey

**Please provide feedback on these items by Monday, February 17th**