

West Central Neighborhood Planning Agenda

Thursday, April 16, 2009

(Meeting held at Native Project at 6:30 p.m.)

I. Welcomes and Introductions

- a. **Attendance:** Kelly Cruz, Jo Ann Pizelo, Bonnie McInnis, JoAnn Stewart, Alec Gonzales, Louise Stamper, Caleb Stamper, Bobby Enslow, Cantwell Standifer, Dan Owen, Annette Owen, Luann DeWood, Dr. DeWood, George Craig, Rose Matiese, Patrick VanInwegen, Kaye Turner, Jen Hussey, Melissa Owen, Toni Lodge, Rosetta Rhodes, Kay Howard, Brittney Chapman
- b. **Meeting called to order at 6:36 PM**

II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes (March 19th Meeting)

Minutes approved unanimously, motion made by Sister Anne, seconded by George

Introductions were made by meeting members

III. Presentation by Patrick Van Inwegen of Draft Neighborhood Survey

Discussion and Approval of Survey

As a result of a meeting held March 4th at the porch Patrick Van Inwegen and his class have developed a survey based upon responses from that meeting. Professor Van Inwegen teaches political science and other courses. Professor Van Inwegen explained that the development and administration of a survey is a good educational experience for his students. He explained that the survey has both open and closed questions that result in a rating. The survey is essentially two surveys in one as it contains a different set of questions for businesses and residences. Professor Van Inwegen added that the survey would be too lengthy if broken down further i.e. profit or non-profit, housing or renter, business opportunities or amenities.

Administration of the survey will be block by block and will give about 150 responses, one per block. Some questions will lead to a good sample, but we may need to target additional blocks based upon how many responses we receive. We will take the feedback from this first survey round and alter the survey for further use. First part will be done over the phone, then people can volunteer to go door to door on a weekend to fill in the gaps of the survey (i.e. if we missed a demographic group). In consideration for the students who have another month of school if we want them to administer the survey if at all possible so they can gain additional experience.

Kelly, brought up the e-mails that George received about the survey. He proposed that we go page by page to look at the survey. It was agreed that we would go page by page. Before we got to the questions it was mentioned that the survey is negative in tone and that there was worry that the planning process may be negative as a result, it was noted that we should look at our strengths too, an example of this was the mention of crime in the survey i.e. if we promote only crime. Some were also concerned that the questions may be too difficult for members of the community and it was suggested to make the survey as simple as possible as not everyone thinks about the important issues in the community on a daily basis.

Several members inquired as to how the SWOT will fit into the survey. It was noted that the survey began before the SWOT but it was hoped that the two would come together. The survey is a tool and it was suggested that we can always alter the questions on the survey based upon the SWOT. It was mentioned that several of the questions did mirror SWOT responses. It was mentioned that schools and retail questions were not asked on the survey and that these questions are important.

Discussion did ensue about the possible negative overtones of the survey, it is felt by some that the neighborhood will have an even more negative response. Members mentioned that there is a lot of negativity in this neighborhood and we do have problems so sometimes negative questions must be asked. It was stated that we need to have both the good and the bad statistics in front of us. "If we have the NRO coming to the neighborhood and saying that she has shutdown 75 drug houses, we must know we have a problem. This time will be poorly spent if we do not understand we have also had five murders in our neighborhood in the last seven years." To plan the future of the neighborhood we need to plan for safety. It was suggested to undercut the negative by asking more positive questions. It was also mentioned that we need more quality of life and diversity questions. It was suggested that we start with the more positive questions and end with negatives, but it was then mentioned that this could hamper the rating system.

It was asked if there was any science to the survey. Professor Van Inwegen replied: "needs are important, you want an opinion of what people think of the neighborhood. We want the questions to be answered. More open ended at the beginning, closed at the end. People will give more information early on. There is a science about positive or negative in the beginning. If a survey is more than 10 minutes a lot lower response." Kay mentioned, "I have been in the neighborhood for 48 years my husband for 54, I worked with the census, you have to ask the questions as worded or you might get a different response. If we get a 20% we will be lucky". Louise mentioned, "there is a scientific methodology to this that will get what we need to know from people. It is not just the group that makes the survey. Patrick and his students have used a lot of tools to get here."

Question 1: it was noted that question one was oddly worded and made mention that what if a small business was ran in the residence. It was also suggested that if a business was ran in the building that the owner of the business be asked if there are residences in the building also.

Question 5: It was suggested that question five be open ended thus leading people to respond as to why the like ...

Question 6: It was suggested that this be worded to be more positive

Question 7 and 8: why must these questions be asked? We want an accurate representation of West Central it was also identified as a potential issue, i.e. absentee landlords. It was added that some tenants may not like this question as they feel that they might be being checked on or inspected. It was mentioned that absentee landlords are a huge problem in West Central and Kelly mentioned that he has even received calls from renters who cannot reach their landlords. Kelly also mentioned that WA state law states that rental properties must have a representative that lives in the same town. It was added that possibly the question be rewritten to state "how long does it take your landlord to respond if there is a problem?" It was also suggested to ask "do you know how to contact your landlord?" thus eliminating question 8. With the deterioration of properties and slum lords and crime these questions must be asked. It was suggested that number eight be reworded.

Question 9: There was discussion to eliminate question 9 but then it was noted that we may miss an important response like absentee landlords. According to the SWOT this is an important question. Perhaps the question can be reworded to "has your landlord been by in the last year?" It was also suggested to add Why to the end of the question.

Question 11: It was mentioned that this question would be a good questions for landlords. It was also suggested that we use the term emergency services instead of just signaling out the police.

Question 14: It was suggested to ask about other modes of transportation besides just the STA.

Question 15: more on the quality of life in West Central: living or working.

Question 16: It was suggested that some may get confused about this question and more about what is available in our community should be mentioned. In response to this it was noted that if a group is left out of this question they may be offended. It was suggested to add, do you know what non-profit groups are in your neighborhood? Or do you have any suggestions as to additional non-profits?

Question 20: ask the surveyed, "what is your role in this business?"

Question 24: There is concern that this question may be too leading, it was suggested to ask, what serious barriers does your business face? It was added that there could be two questions here, perhaps to ask about crime after the initial question.

Question 25: It was mentioned that question 25 and 30 are similar. In response it was noted that 25 is right now and 30 is for in the future.

Kelly made a suggestion to accept the survey with the revised version. It was noted that we can always tailor the survey in the future to other tasks. Professor Van Inwegen noted that we need to make the changes soon so that we can start the survey. He added that with phone contact we can usually get a 50% response. Calls to residences will be made 6 to 8 PM and business call will be made during the day. The revised edition of the survey will be going out via e-mail to members and we need a quorum of 50% plus one.

A motion was made by Kaye to move forward with the survey and was seconded by Joanne.

IV. S.W.O.T Analysis Update – Rosetta Rhodes

The elements of the SWOT were listed out in paper form. Check marks were placed under the elements where we thought it would fit. It was then tabulated which element we addressed the most down to the least. Social health was number one, neighborhood 2, leadership 3, economic development was 4, land use was 5, urban design was 6, transportation was 7, housing is 8, parks and recreation 9, natural environment 10, capital facilities 11. This was prioritized based on the exercise from the last meeting. With the survey we will wait to see how it turns out and see what all it says. The SWOT includes comprehensive plan elements, we have to include these when we submit the plan to the City. Responses on the left are from committee (strengths). Top column relates to the comprehensive plan. The easiest explanation where does all of this fit into the plan we are going to write.

V. Additional Discussion

It was suggested that we need to become familiar with all areas of the neighborhood as there are certain spots where there is an exodus. Kelly added that he and Rosetta talked to 25 different businesses about the planning committee, but none of them have sent representatives to the meetings. He added that he will follow up with additional correspondence. It was suggested that we ask if the businesses have a plan. Melissa mentioned that connectivity is dead last and that development follows pavement, she added that we should look at this when we develop a plan. Louise suggested that the survey be available for neighbor days. Kelly notes that the SWOT will be on the agenda for the next meeting and that if possible will be available via PowerPoint. Melissa added that EWU is working on the Monroe corridor and she will get some additional information for us.

VI. Good of the Order

4/22/09 City plan commission will be listening about cottage housing issue.
11 AM at the council briefing changes.

Future agenda items; Survey, SWOT, Monroe corridor.

Kudos were given to Professor Van Inwegen and George.

VII. Adjourn

George made a motion to adjourn, Sister Anne seconded, meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM.

List of Resources

- a. Planning website-www.spokaneplanning.org**
- b. Link to West Central Planning Website -
http://www.spokaneplanning.org/NeighborhoodPlanning2009/NeighborhoodPlanning/West_Central.htm**
- c. Future CD copies**
- d. Paper copies**