

Advisory Team Meeting #12

July 14, 2021

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Summary notes are below. A recording of this meeting is also available on the website at www.red-wing.org/1032/Policy-and-Practice-Project-Meetings

Team Members Present

Michael Holmes, Steve Blaine, Sara Kern, Cory Koplín, Samantha Malcom, Cholwe Walker, Liz Magill, Thomas Young

Team Members Absent: Juan DeLaFuente, Alexis DeVries, Yadira Ramos, Doug Larsen

Facilitator: Michelle Leise, City of Red Wing Community Engagement Facilitator

Staff Guest: Kay Kuhlmann, City Council Administrator

Meeting Notes

Review Draft Recommendation Document to City Council

Team members reviewed a document with draft recommendations that the team put together at the June Advisory Team meeting.

It was noted that the Youth/Teen Center idea was moved from long term to medium term.

The team then verbally approved the recommendations to go to the Council for consideration.

Discussion of City Support and Policies Related to Community Events

Kay Kuhlmann provided an overview of how the City helps support large citywide events currently. That often includes providing in-kind support like helping set up for the events, covering the insurance, and offering public safety support. In addition, sometimes the organizers can ask the City for additional small grants (usually between \$2,000 and \$5,000) for additional family friendly events to enhance the larger event.

Kay also explained that each City Council member has \$650 in their individual Neighborhood Enhancement Fund to give to a group of residents or organization to fund something that helps a neighborhood or community.

Kay briefly summarized the Night to Unite event hosted by the Police Department every year. She also mentioned the Private Use for Public Property, which is a necessary

form to fill out for events held on city-owned property. Sometimes event organizers will ask Council for a waiver of these fees to help support the event.

Team members discussed ideas that would help make citywide events more welcoming to and reflective of diverse residents. These ideas are summarized here:

-- As part of the idea to create an African-American heritage event, it should be prioritized that the organizers are local BIPOC people. Some funding could go specifically toward organizing the event.

--The City could add criteria that organizations must meet in order to receive City funds toward events. For example, if an event requests \$5,000 from the City for activities, the organization would have to explain how it will reach out to all people/families through its planning, programming, promotions, etc.

--When events have tents and booths from businesses or vendors, it's difficult for some to pay the fees. The City could help sponsor some of the event space so more BIPOC businesses and vendors could have spots at these events. The same goes for family events that might cost a fee.

-- The City could help residents learn about the low- and no-cost programming options the community provides by creating some kind of pamphlet or handout and focus on organizations that provide scholarships or special free days. Team members shared that many families do not know the options available.

-- The idea of using digital boards around town was mentioned to help promote upcoming events. That could be new digital screens or current ones already in the community that could be utilized better for this purpose.

--The City could work with its own departments/organizations to provide and promote more low-cost options. These ideas came up:

* The Sheldon could provide very last-minute tickets that people could purchase at a major discount. This would mean fewer empty seats in the audience and more community members who could enjoy the arts. Stipulations could be put into place for some tickets, such as tickets for age 16 and older, families with small children, seniors over age 80, etc.

* Include more programming at the Sheldon and Library that appeal to a diverse audience and ask a wide variety of people to help give ideas for those programs.

* Look again at the parameters around who can receive discount packages at the Water Park. Right now, discounts for pool tickets are based on free- and reduced-lunch status. This should be examined again to include more families who may not meet that guideline but are still just getting by.

* Reconsider some uses for the Mississippi National Golf Links club house. It could potentially be used for some activities and gatherings the community

needs. Possibilities include free golf lessons, free equipment for skiing, snowshoeing, etc.

* The City could possibly partner with organizations, such as the Y, and sponsor free family days so more families can participate in these community assets.

Discussion on Increasing Involvement with City Government

What does getting involved with City government mean to you?

- It feels scary and full of politics.
- It feels like you need a college degree and money to get involved.
- Lots of people think you need to be formal and highly educated and “wear a suit and tie” to get on boards and commissions.
- Unless people have the right connections, it feels hard to learn about what’s going on and how to get involved.

What are some barriers to getting involved?

- Time can be an obstacle, especially when people are so overwhelmed and overloaded.
- Childcare is sometimes needed.
- Knowledge – many people just don’t know how to get involved or feel comfortable doing it.

What would help remove some barriers to getting involved with government?

- Providing childcare and transportation during meetings would be very helpful. Often it’s difficult for families to have access to participating due to work schedules, etc.
- If we want people at the table, we need to meet people where we’re at.
- Stipends for all board and commission members would be helpful.
- Making sure meeting agendas are focused and don’t go too long. Others acknowledged that it’s difficult to be very exact on times. But general timeframes are good so people know what their childcare will be, etc.
- Mentoring was discussed, but people also mentioned they do not want it to appear to the public that someone is overly influenced by another person on the same group. For that reason, the staff liaison may be able to fill this role.
- Possibly start a practice where the staff liaison meets again with the new board and commission member after one or two meetings. That way, the new board/commission

member has some context for the overall experience and will have additional questions.

-- More promotion of openings, but also more personal reaching out by board and commission members, especially in diverse communities so people feel a sense of encouragement that they can do it.

-- Would be helpful if more people knew their Council members and mayor. The Council and mayor could attend more citywide events. Also, it would be great for them to do more informal things like “coffee with your Council member” at one of the coffee shops, etc.

How can City government reach out more?

-- Reach out more to everyone, especially people of color and those who don't feel recognized in any way.

-- Educate people and share when and where their voices are important

-- Sometimes the lack of being involved makes it harder for some people to make that first step.

-- We need more conversations among people of different backgrounds to help people understand each other. It's okay for people to be different in some ways but as long as people start to appreciate and understand those differences – that is the goal.

-- Education helps. What are the stereotypes and how do we think about those?

Next Steps

The team chose Michael to present the recommendations to the Council in August. Other team members will come to support.

At the end of the two hours, residents Chaz Neal and Ruth Hutchinson, who were in attendance, asked to add a couple comments. It was recommended that the City help promote Ignite's Learn to Earn program, which is a great community resource, to students. In addition, the City could work with the school to promote the Flight Paths and the Learn to Earn program to students at Tower View Alternative High School to make sure that group is included.

The meeting lasted 2 hours and 10 minutes.