

Minutes
Culture, History and Governance (CHuG)
Sub-Committee
October 3, 2007

Present: Judi Barrett (COG), Ralph Willmer (VHB, Mark Whitehead (Lincoln)
CHuG: Paul Giese, Nancy Henderson, Mark Hochman, Karen Keane, Jack
MacLean, Bill Stason, Peter Sugar, Harriet Todd

We discussed the following:

- Prior to Judi's arrival, we reviewed our conference call yesterday (by Paul G and PS with Judi), where we briefed her on what we were going to discuss today: integration with the other subcommittees, how to avoid burn-out, how to conduct surveys, where we may be looking for her assistance and input.
- We expressed our concern that, in dealing with some of the subjects where other subcommittees are also involved, we must avoid stepping on their toes (here Judi's oversight will be critical)
- In looking at our Asset List, we may start with qualitative questions, but we will eventually have to get into some quantitative analysis in order to discover what values are the drivers of the research
- We are still considering some additional people for our subcommittee – to help with some of the tasks. Mark has proposed Brian Newmark, who lives in town and could/would be willing to help us (see the material Mark has distributed earlier)
- Another question: how to involve the schools with what we are doing: they are a critical part of the town and we must at least have a conversation with them
- We continued to raise the question of how do cultural institutions fit into a town MP: in Lincoln we have a great opportunity to increase interaction with them
- It was recognized that for some towns, growth dominates the approach to the MP – it is less so with Lincoln
- Judi did not wish initially to address our questions – she is more interested in finding out what we are trying to achieve. In this context she asked why we had chosen to deal with Cultural and Historical institutions first before looking at Governance. Our response as elucidated by Paul was: we decided to tackle C&H first because there would still be some relevance to governance we would discover as we worked with these, whereas if we started with Governance, this would quickly overwhelm all our efforts.
- Regarding the potential overlap of some of the work with other subcommittees, this is not necessarily a bad thing as it may bring different perspectives to the topic. In any event, Judi thinks that a meeting between all subcommittees would help clarify this. (This is something that should indeed be happening and was in fact implied after the June public meeting. There are those on our committee who feel that a full-blown meeting between all members of the subcommittees would be too cumbersome: a better forum would be for the chairs only and perhaps one other member each – or the chairs on a podium doing the discussion with the rest of the subcommittees attending on the floor)
- Communication is still somewhat lacking in that subcommittees – other than CHuG - are not posting their minutes on the website. This should be corrected!
- The real point in working with the other subcommittees is to have clarity and good information and thus communication is the key

- We need to set our priorities and also be cognizant of all the information we are trying to collect in order that no gaps are to be found late in the process – when it would be very hard to retrace our steps
- It is also important for us to determine the eventual format of the MP, and to establish the most important pieces. This will also show the way as to what we will be doing for the MP and what work will be left for others as part of the MP (to be monitored as part of the implementation strategy). This particular planning process is critical in helping us to avoid burn-out
- We must avoid creating a MP which would be too insular – based on particular individual's interest. Thus the way we handle the surveys becomes important: how can we elicit the maximum information. (By surveys we are speaking of both paper surveys and focus groups)
- It is probable that there will only be a single survey – collecting all the important questions the subcommittees have. Follow-up surveys would be part of the MP. The way data will be gathered for the first survey will influence subsequent surveys
- There is another aspect of the survey: some towns have found that they cannot have a well defined sampling of the opinions, because the survey papers were distributed to any and all to increase the participation. A scientific survey may be harder to conduct. This will be a policy issue. But remember: what the majority wants may turn out not to be the best and thus leadership in interpreting and possibly modifying the results would be critical
- We returned to the topic of how to complete the CHuG interviews: Judi's advice was that for the moment we should try to avoid any organization where there may be an overlap with other subcommittees.
- Judi also indicated that we must keep in mind that a MP by its very definition is a physical plan. CHuG's work has been very philosophical, but there are aspects which will point at physical things: e.g. the school campus where currently there is a planning effort on the way to create an emergency egress. It was emphasized again that we need to involve the schools in the MP
- We questioned Judi on the baseline – at one time this was intended to be the do-nothing scenario and was to be ready for the SOTT in November. We recognized that this was impossible and thus were going to hold the MP meeting early in 2008. Judi now thinks that to have a good baseline report would take 6-8 months (to be discussed further)!
- We agreed that we should meet only when we need to and not necessarily on a fixed schedule.
- We set up our next meeting to discuss Governance issues and begin formulating questions for what we are trying to discover.

Next Meeting: 7:30 AM on 17 October, 2007