Setting Your Community Vision

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What is Organization?

The Foundation

Organization according to the dictionary is:

1. group: a group of people identified by shared interests or purpose
2. coordination of elements: the unit or structure
3. relationship of elements: the relationships that exist between separate elements arranged into a coherent whole
4. efficiency in arrangement: efficiency in the way separate elements are arranged into a coherent whole
Community Visioning - Defined

- A process that brings together all sectors of a community to identify problems, evaluate changing conditions, and build collective approaches to improve the quality of life in the community.
- The participants must create the definition of their community.
Fundamentals of Successful Collaboration
Some of the Right Ingredients!

- Individual agendas and baggage are set aside, so the focus remains on common issues and goals
- Strong leadership comes from all sectors
- People with varied interests and perspectives actively participate in the process
- The effort produces very detailed recommendations that specify responsible parties, costs and timelines
- Difficulty can be expected at certain points, but it is understood to be a part of the natural process
- Take time to learn from past efforts (both successful and unsuccessful)
- Consensus is utilized to reach desired outcomes
- Group must be empowered to make decisions
Steps to a Successful Visioning Process

- Bring together the project “champions” or initiators
- Project Kick-off conducted to insure an inclusive process
- Environmental Scan – identifying external forces and trends impacting the community from all levels/sectors
- Community Scan – group evaluates the impact on the community if no significant change or intervention occurs
- Measure your planning and problem-solving capacity
- Create a 10-year, 20-year, 30-year Community Vision Statement. It must reflect commonly held values
Steps (continued)

- Identify key Performance Areas – what are those areas/sectors we can feasibly impact
- Develop an Action Plan – again, the Plan must identify responsible parties, costs, sources and resources, and timelines
- Celebrate and acknowledge the success of your efforts
- Transform the Action Plan into an Implementation Plan (The Game Plan)
- In some cases, you may need to establish a separate Implementation Committee – they insure that the Plans remain on track and assists with moving forward
Steps in the Process Outline

- Mission Statement
- Develop Policy
- Establish Goals
- Define Tasks & Deadlines
- Assign Responsibilities

- WHY
- HOW
- WHAT
- WHEN
- WHO
Establishing the Visioning Committee

- “a voluntary group of business and professional people working together”

- Community Involvement
- Build Partnerships
- Consider Stakeholders
Balance of Membership

- Workers
- Wisdom
- Worriers
- Wealth
- Whole community representation
Who are the Stakeholders in Your Community?

- Pro-growth/No growth Business Representatives
- Old/New Resident Geographic Location
- Age Ethnicity/Race
- Service Provider Income Level
- Education Reformer/Back to Basics
- Elected/Appointed Leadership
- Conservative/Liberal/Moderate
- Single Parent/Dual Parent House
- Institution Type (schools, police, etc.)
- Inside/Outside of Community Boundaries
Successful Programs and Efforts

- Have a clear vision of what the community can become
- Have a willingness to take risks
- Have a committed group of volunteers
- Have collaborative, cooperative working relationships
- Have a commitment to the long haul
Community Outreach Efforts

- Project kick-off is an effective way to communicate to the community as a whole and the media
- Agree to seek feedback from the community
- Utilize surveys – talk to local colleges and universities about assisting
- Focus Groups – small groups with membership intended to represent specific community segments
- Town Meetings – utilized at the point where a vision has been developed and ideas for strategies are sought
- Media must be enlisted to help communicate your message
- Other tools – flyers, Speakers Bureau, Op-ed articles, PSAs, websites/project home page
- Other Special Activities or Events
Defining the Realities of the Community

- You must understand trends, forces and pressures – some will be beyond local control, but their influence must be addressed
- Look at local realities and trends
- Scanning the community – what are our assets and what are our challenges? Community perceptions and survey results must also be accounted for at this point
- Begin to identify areas of strength and those that need improving
- The effort must recognize the community’s likely future should no intervention or change take place
Assessing Community Capacity

- Must identify strengths and weaknesses
- Then structure collaborative solutions to problems
- Helps to build civic capacity and infrastructure to address issues and to solve problems
- Must have a clear sense of your past and develop a shared picture of where you want to go
- Successful communities today understand that government is no longer the sole owner of the public agenda
- Citizens, businesses, non-profit organizations and government jointly hold the public interest
Ingredients of an Effective Community Vision Statement

- Positive, present tense language
- Qualities that provide the reader with a feeling for the community’s uniqueness
- Inclusiveness of the community’s diverse population
- A depiction of the highest standards of excellence and achievement
- A focus on people and quality of life
- Addresses a time period 10, 20, 30 years in the future
- Language that is easily understood by all
Action Planning and Implementation

- Establish structure for implementation
- Goals/desired results are clear
- Criteria is defined to prioritize projects and implement
- Identify key volunteers and/or organizations to champion various projects
- Identify potential barriers and how to address them
- Develop an overall timeline
- Insure all efforts are coordinated with each other
- Continue community outreach
- Always monitor, track and evaluate efforts
A Word on Leadership

- Leadership can be learned through life’s experiences
- It cannot be taught or learned from a book
- Think of Leadership as a verb - an activity. It is not a person
- It is dangerous to exercise leadership by yourself - you are much easier to pick off!
- Exercising good leadership sometimes requires you to exceed your scope of authority
Six Key Relationships in Showing Good Leadership

- Relationships with Partners
- Relationships with the Opposition
- Relationships with Casualties
- Relationships with Senior Authorities
- Relationships with Trouble Makers
- Relationships with Ourselves
Questions & Answers

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