

Safe, Equitable and Thriving (SET) Communities
Task Force
May 5, 2016
Meeting Minutes

SET TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gary Hinzman, Paul Hayes, Alphonse O'Bannon, John Tursi, Stacey Walker, Mary Wilczynski, Trace Pickering, Leslie Wright, Rafael Jacobo, Carlos Grant, Akwi Nji, Dale Todd, Dorice Ramsey, Rodrick Dooley

SET TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jenny Schulz, Karl Cassell, Okpara Rice, LaSheila Yates

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON PRESENT:

Susie Weinacht

CITY STAFF LIAISON

Angie Charipar

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Police Chief Wayne Jerman, Sgt. Cristy Hamblin, Administrative Assistant Jean Novak

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Stacey Walker at 7:40 AM. Leslie Wright moved to approve the minutes from April 7, 2016. Rodrick Dooley seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Stacey introduced Angie Charipar, Assistant to the City Manager, who is now the SET Task Force Liaison. She will work with Mary and Stacey assisting in putting the agendas together, getting them things that they need, responding to any questions about the process, and what the City can do to continue to be supportive of the Task Force. If anything is needed, talk with Mary and Stacey, and they will let her know.

Angie discussed the Request for Proposals (RFPs) process that the City of Cedar Rapids will follow in order to hire a consultant for the report writing. The City Purchasing Department has put the RFP together, and it should go out in the next few days. RFPs are always put on the City's website, and once the RFP is out, we are prohibited from having any conversation with anyone about the RFP. The City has a team who will review the RFPs. When the report writer is chosen, the City Contracts Division will get the contract signed. The City, County, and the School District will support the Task Force with reasonable resources, so the cost will be split up in thirds. Our goal is to have someone on board by the end of May or the first of June. They will start putting reports together, and work with the Task Force through the end of time that this Task Force has been put in place.

DISCUSSION OF ROLE OF SET TASK FORCE

Because of recent instances of violence that occurred in the community, a question was posed to the group. What is the role of the Task Force going to be when we have these flare ups of violence? Stacey felt that because of the open meetings law, the group cannot have email conversations of this nature. In order to preserve the integrity of the group, and the open meetings law, any discussion regarding the recent violence needs to occur during the group's meetings.

Angie stated we absolutely have to follow open meetings laws and open records laws, because it's the law. It is absolutely a violation to have a discussion over email.

Stacey said if this group wants to discuss changing the nature of the Task Force to a group that can respond every time there is an incident of violence, then we can discuss it; and if we need to change the resolution, and go back to the City Council and ask for the change. Stacey felt that the Task Force was not designed to be a rapid response mechanism, as opposed to coming up with long-term recommendations to address causes of systemic poverty and gun violence. If you reference our founding documents in the resolution it states our mission is to come up with recommendations to solve problems in the long term. Regarding what we could be doing now, some short term solutions or strategies were discussed in the last Law Enforcement & Public Safety Subcommittee meeting.

Al stated that we could have a daily conversation on some type of violence if we reacted to every incident, and that we barely have time to do what we are currently doing.

Dale felt that we could do both. There is a sensitivity that we have to situations on the streets to respond in a timely fashion, because that helps to develop a strategy in long term goals. If we are not paying attention to that, then we're missing the long term goal of what we're trying to do.

Leslie stated that individual organizations have the most ability to be flexible to initiate something more immediate, because they have authority over their own resources. If we want there to be both an immediate response that also fits within the larger picture of what we're trying to accomplish, we will use up all our resources, personal and otherwise, trying to keep track of all of that and then figure out how it all connects and leads us towards a solution of some significance. We may have the ability to respond, but what's a meaningful response vs. what's a reaction that doesn't in the long run take us anywhere different.

Akwi felt that we could not respond to every shooting that takes place. It's not about responding, it's about what are we doing. What is our plan to shift the culture that is fostering these shootings in the next four months? What can we do so that in the next three or four months, we're preventing that kind of activity from continuing? She doesn't

think that it is realistic to say we need to respond quickly to every shooting that takes place.

Regarding becoming a rapid response type of team, Gary felt that's the Police Department's job. Our job is to see what we can do to strengthen this community and support the Police Department, the City, the School District, and the County. In the Safety & Law Enforcement Subcommittee's last meeting, they came up with some short term things that we can do now.

Stacey and Mary discussed some of the short-term strategies that were discussed in the last Law Enforcement Public Safety Subcommittee meeting. Some of the things that were discussed:

- Police Chief Jerman mentioned a program called "Alert Montgomery", which is a type of subscription service that alerted individuals in the community to violence or emergencies in the community. The Chief has discussed this with the City IT Director, and he feels that it can be implemented here.
- Foundation II also discussed their mobile crisis dispatch that could be deployed in times of crises in the community.
- Jenny stated that they offer mediation services. With her Kids First organization, they have individuals who are trained in mediating conflict, which could be helpful if you have two families who don't know how to get along, and when these two families interact, there is some sort of violence. She mentioned perhaps working with law enforcement and other agencies to offer a mediation service that could help diffuse some of these situations.
- Emily is going to pull together different organizations and agencies that do have crisis intervention services and connect with police and figure out a plan for implementation this spring and summer.
- Dedric discussed a program that used to exist that was called "Dinner at Our House". This was a program that brought people in different walks of life together to have a meal at an individual's house in a specific neighborhood. It brought together law enforcement and families as a means to get to know each other and maybe hash out differences that might arise.
- Mary will check into working with youth ministers and the faith community.
- Gary stated that there were a myriad of other short-term strategies could be effective.

1 STRONG REQUEST

Regarding the proposal that 1 Strong has made with the CDC, Chief Jerman stated that he has conducted some research, and he has spoken to U.S. Attorney Kevin Techau, who is familiar with programs and studies such as this. Linn County Health Department was called, and there has not been any return from them. Also, the Chief has called the University of Iowa, College of Public Health, and spoke with Dr. Corinne Peek-Asa. She is very interested in partnering with us and this Task Force to research the proposal that 1 Strong has made for the CDC study. Her colleagues who have worked with the City before are Dr. Ramsey, PhD, and Dr. Castell, PhD. Dr. Castell, has worked with the City on a Crime Free Business study, crime issue studies and programs that have been implemented. They are currently pursuing a grant through the National Institute of Justice, relating to aid to children and children who are affected by violence. The University is also familiar with working with the United Way and the Aces Program. Also, the Chief feels that it is important that we do not compare Cedar Rapids with Wilmington, DE. They are two very different communities; however, the common denominator is gun violence. He is waiting to meet with the University of Iowa, and the U.S. Attorney is also very interested in partnering and continuing our relationship to pursue this request from 1 Strong with the CDC study. It is too soon to determine what correction or avenue it will bring.

Dale stated he would rather not spend a lot of time studying, but rather put the emphasis on the resources.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE UPDATE

Trace reported that they met yesterday, and they focused on how do we reflect a community back to itself through stories and narratives, and by giving a voice to the voiceless. The committee really believes that stories create new realities, so that's been their focus, as well as sharing the stories.

- Their purpose statement is: "To help create a safe, equitable, thriving community through sharing stories of the community and giving a voice to the voiceless."
- The condition that they are trying to change: To change the community's dominate narrative of hopelessness and fear to one of hope, possibility, and promoting valuable resources.
- Who is this for? The community and every individual within it.
- How will we make this change happen? By connecting people, through story-telling and conversations and to share with the community the work involved in this community and other entities.

The United Way has started Dinner Table Conversations; organizing people to go out and pull people together in different areas of our community in small groups of 8 – 12

people. They will have a conversation, record that conversation, and take photos if people are willing to have their photos taken. Some sample questions are: What kind of community do you want? What would it look like if we had a safe, equitable and thriving community? What challenges do we face in achieving this? How do these issues affect you personally? What kinds of things can be changed to become safe, equitable, and thriving?

Leslie reported that they're going to reach out to Kirsty Sanchez at the City to try to get to neighborhood associations. They're looking at some of their corporate partners, as well as other organizations, who might be interested in hosting a small conversation. They provide the material and then collect it from people so we can tell those stories back.

Trace also reported that Courtney Ball with Corridor Characters is going out and finding people in the community, and helping them share their stories to get a better understanding of the people that are in this community and the unity they bring to it. Another effort is Humans of CR, which is a student project. This is a take-off of the Humans of New York idea, and they have been working with Susie's group, CR Youth. The kids walk the streets in various neighborhoods until they see someone and engage them into conversation about what's great about Cedar Rapids? What's troubling you about Cedar Rapids? They open up a conversation and let the person talk. They record the conversation verbatim exactly what they said, and they also narrate it word for word in text as well. One of the students is an amazing artist who draws people's portraits on doors. They are going to be putting these portraits in Greene Square Park during the Farmer's Markets, and their ultimate goal is to move around to different parts throughout the city so that as people gather, they can take a moment, see a portrait, and read the story about that person. Also, Akwi's work with The Hook provides another opportunity for telling the community's stories and giving a voice at planned venue events. Through Metro Theatre, Mary has the students tell their own story, in a spoken word performance. They also have been working with the Gazette about how they might take some of these stories and start sharing them. They talked about high school English and Journalism classes throughout the city and engaging more students in adding stories to this on-going narrative. Also, they are talking to Liz Shot about seeing if the Gazette can build a simple portal, to listen and see the stories of our community. Rather than re-tell those stories, use links to the Humans of CR corridor characters. Using a Facebook page was also mentioned.

Akwi stated that the concept of story-telling within a community, is one that is supported by quite a lot of research. Science tells us that when people tell their personal stories, whether they are writing it out, talking about it, or individual art or music from it, when people create and tell their own stories, their mental, physical, and emotional health improves over time. It's as much about the story-teller as it is also about the audience receiving the stories. Science also shows us that an audience who receives that story and story teller are seen in a more humanized version.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Carlos reported that they have met twice, and they have not yet finalized their purpose statement. Also, he distributed and discussed a handout with the following information:

Targeted Population

- High School Students
- Underemployed Adults
- Out of School Youth (age 18-25)

Conditions to Change

- Employment opportunities exist, but there is a struggle in filling positions with qualified candidates
- Current disconnect with job placement efforts, despite high wage options
- Barrier with getting potential candidates through the initial screening processes
- Teachers and school counselors are not familiar with the KPACE (Kirkwood Pathways for Academic Career Education and Employment) and/or Industry Sector Boards

How will we change?

- Extreme focus on high level math and reading instruction (K-12)
- School Board and school leaders embracing career trades and community college as viable pathways to prosperity
 - Include in school district's Theory of Action
 - Include in school's mission and vision statements
 - Include in professional development planning
 - Help educate parents to impact a perception change and mind shift
- Extreme focus on "Preparation to Graduation" opportunities in grades 9-12
 - Develop youth pre-apprenticeships
 - Non-profit and for profit job shadowing opportunities
 - Systemic recruitment of students as a pipeline for sustained workforce in Non-profit and for-profit
- Encourage Human Resource systems to be streamlined for "tagged" individuals
- Communication with the masses
 - Connect the wide variety of resources
 - Produce advertisement material that make it easier for citizens to understand the connections
 - Market and share this material
- Sector Board Open Houses
 - Move to central locations within communities and neighborhoods
 - Clergy
 - Schools
 - Community Centers

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Paul reported the Education Committee's purpose statement: "To assist children and families in navigating and benefiting from the education and other systems as a means of engaging or re-engaging them in quality learning experiences, both in school and in the community."

A condition that they want to change is:

- Some children and their families are disconnected from educational community based support systems. Accessibility, awareness and assistance with navigating these systems appear to be lacking. The Education Subcommittee wants to remove the barriers that keep children and families from accessing and benefitting from the systems that are designed to support them.

They have had a lot of discussions about the protective factors and the barriers that get in the way of people accessing the systems that are available to them. They are going to be taking a look next at what are those things we know exist to help engage families, and how can we leverage existing resources or look to create additional resources to help that engagement process.

Paul discussed the development of a mental health resource management team, which engages all of the community partners that served youth in that area of mental health to provide mental health services. He stated that they are trying to get a handle on what's the best model for them as a school district. There's no end to people who want access to students during the school day to provide services to them. Therefore, they are working with the service providers to try to create a model that doesn't remove them from the classroom to get the services they need, but how can they still provide access to those necessary services in leveraging those resources.

HOUSING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Dale reported that their group will be meeting tomorrow morning. It's a tough, complicated issue. They discussed the impact of Section 8 vouchers on neighborhoods, and if there is a correlation between crime or not. They have learned that concentrations of poverty are disbursed throughout the city.

Issues that impact the stability of neighborhoods are foreclosed houses and nuisance abatement to make sure neighborhoods are strong and safe. There are issues of access. People get out of the system and they have the black box issue, or they can't get housing because they've had a strike. There have been some changes, but at the same time, how do we increase the quality of houses in the neighborhoods?

PROGRAMS COMMITTEE UPDATE

John reported that they have met one time, and they will work on their purpose statement. They have been working on identifying the many programs, and they have started to develop some lists. Also, they have identified various populations that need help.

SAFETY & LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Gary reported that they are still working on their purpose statement.

Also, Gary felt that there are a lot of resources in the community, but they are not necessarily connected. One of the big goals of this Task Force is to identify who can really deliver what, and what we need to do is find the pathway to enhance safety and reduce violence, and then ask everyone what can you contribute to this? When we get to a point that someone doesn't have anything to contribute, then that's where we've identified a resource gap. We can then ask other community members how we might be able to fill the void. Who is going to help fund it? Are there grants that are available for it? One of their goals is how to re-build trust between law enforcement and the community.

Chief Jerman stated that the entire subcommittee has a copy of the 21st Century Task Force Report that was put out by the President, and that's the number one pillar of the six pillars in establishing trust in the community and legitimizing police procedures. We have been focused for a long time in building trust, and we have seen success and progress. The other areas that the Committee has worked on is obtaining reports from the NAACP and their programs, the Unsnapping program that targets anger issues of African American males and females, both youth and adults. During the last meeting, Chris Wyatt from Juvenile Justice provided information on what his agency is doing, Bruce Vander Sanden with DOC and the U.S. Attorney is working with Dr. Alan Heistercamp and the school system on a violence mitigation program that was very successful in Sioux City. This program is also in place currently at Prairie in College Community School District. Dr. Heistercamp is a professor with the University of Northern Iowa, and his program presentation is going to be held on June 20th. We have met with Dr. Buck and others and presented information regarding the program to them. The Chief is very familiar with the program goals, and he feels it will be a good fit for Cedar Rapids. This is a work in progress and, he doesn't think we're going to be able to implement something this large of a scale in a short window. The Cedar Rapids Police Department has implemented the PCAT team, they are working with the Boys and Girls Club, and other outreach efforts, helping to establish and build the trust between the Police Department and the community.

Gary reiterated that at each meeting, they try to have one of the organizations at the table give a review of their services, so we all have a better understanding.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mary asked the subcommittees to send their meeting notices to the entire task force.

Al asked if the group has a budget so that flyers could be copied and handed out. Stacey stated that we don't have a budget, but he will check with our Liaison to see about ways we can get the word out.

Mary stated when we meet again on June 2nd each subcommittee needs to have their purpose statement prepared and also have answers to those first three questions on the chart.

Angie reminded everyone when the subcommittees are meeting and you have a quorum of this task force at the subcommittee participating, then it is subject to open meetings. If you are going to be attending and you have a quorum, you want to make sure you are separating yourself from that subcommittee and you are sitting and not discussing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bernard Clayton provided various comments, including the following:

- In favor of ban the box on employment questionnaires
- Marion has ordinance that you cannot discriminate because of source of income
- School district needs to develop a non-violence curriculum
- Do not need to go through U of I to get to the CDC
- CDC is not to be used as a law enforcement tool
- Unfavorable comment published in Gazette from PCAT commander

Carletta Knox-Seymor provided various comments, including the following:

- The need for the unions to sponsor internships for people of color
- The need for City Council to include people of color
- Supports having the CDC come into our community

Dale Todd moved to adjourn. Trace Pickering seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Novak