

Summary Discussion Notes from “Intro to Collaborative Discussion” Session #5 - **Civic Collaboration** on Wednesday, November 10, 2021

Additional Discussion Practice Tip for this session:

Think both as yourself *and as another*. You already know what *you* want to say. Ask who is missing, and what would they say?

Key Themes or Discussion Questions for this Session:

- What are some of the key civic issues facing your community(ies) that you would like to see moved forward or addressed?
- Who is missing from the conversation? Who are *all* the stakeholders?
- What information is missing from the conversation?
- What are some of the barriers to including the missing persons and information?
- And how can we better ensure that all voices and information are included? What strategies might we employ, or “bridges” might we build, to improve inclusion of people and information?

Two Interrelated “Big Bucket” Civic Issues:

- Becoming a More Integrated Community, generally
 - Addressing a felt lack of inclusivity--for newcomers, for minorities, others
 - Becoming a more inclusive and “welcoming” community for all
 - Being more respectful of difference and disagreement
 - Increasing cooperation and coordination within the community and between its component organizations
 - Cooperating to help care for and meet the changing needs of all residents
- Improving Governance & Communication
 - Leadership training: civility, process, engagement, and more
 - Improving communications; increasing transparency
 - Getting and sharing all needed information
 - Increasing resident engagement

Possible Strategies, or Bridges, to Improve Inclusion of Residents other Stakeholders, and Relevant Information

- Improved communications and publicity--get the word out in easily accessible ways for all residents
- Consider adjusting the time of day for meetings, and/or having multiple meetings at different times.
- Discussion/Meeting format and discussion guidelines:
 - Use discussion guidelines - e.g., everybody speaks once before anyone speaks twice; keep it positive; be generous and patient.
 - Practice Active Listening:
 - Listen to understand, *not necessarily to respond, resolve, or correct*
 - Be conscious of body language
 - Silence is [often] golden (allows for thinking and reflection)
 - Pay attention to what is not said as well.
 - Be curious; ask questions
 - Build on each others' ideas and give credit, add to, or distinguish
 - Summarize, re-phrase clarify
 - Use small-group discussions to increase participation, input, engagement, and develop new ideas.
 - Have facilitators to help guide, orient the discussion
- Focus on the common good
- Focus on developing and promoting common goals on common grounds
- Equitably and inclusively distribute leadership roles and responsibilities
- Promote co-sponsored and multi-sponsored events by and among different organizations and groups
- Focus on building relationships and trust among different organizations and communities
- Consider adding an ombudsman position
- Be attentive: ask who is not in the room? Why? Who is on the edges of the conversation and why?
- Show up
- Ask...what people think, what they want, and why; and listen.