

STATE OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS ADDRESS IV:

"Getting Serious About Neighborhood Capacity"

September 24, 1998

4:30 p.m. - Social Hour

5:30 p.m. - Event

Jefferson Elementary School Auditorium

1200 W. 26th Street

Minneapolis, MN

Purpose 1: Build on our discussion of neighborhood capacity by reviewing activities of the last year

Purpose 2: Distill from those activities an action agenda that enhances neighborhood capacity in Minneapolis

1. Welcome. (Delivered by Rip Rapson)

2 An opportune time to take a critical look at how our neighborhoods are doing

a. Casey Stengel: deja vu all over again

[a] considerable energy dedicated over the last year to mega downtown development projects: stadium, block E, depot, target store, Shubert theater, new office structures – sets the stage for a debate about how neighborhood policy priorities fit;

[b] openings at the top in Planning and MCDA – providing an opportunity to revisit their job descriptions;

[c] departure of arguably the most powerful influence in the city: the traffic engineer – furnishes a window to discuss how to bring neighborhood transportation issues to the table meaningfully;

[d] NRP evaluation in full gear – particularly in the light of the preceding events, gives our community a chance to step back, evaluate, learn, and rechart our course.

b. Thesis: this is a set of opportunities that may well go unrealized unless a clear statement of community direction, operational priorities, and policy adjustments is forthcoming. We propose to do that today, through the prism of neighborhood work.

3. We accordingly propose to accomplish three things in this year's address:

[1] Review events and initiatives that bear on the issues of neighborhood capacity that we explored in last year's address;

[2] Distill from those activities an action agenda that enhances neighborhood capacity in Minneapolis; and

[3] Single out a handful of public sector initiatives to receive the second annual PuPa Awards, which have come to be among the most coveted awards of the political season.

SECTION I (Delivered by Gretchen Nicholls) NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY: ACTIVITIES OF THE LAST YEAR

A. Capacity and its Dimensions

1. Last year: five dimensions of neighborhood capacity

- building social capital
- strengthening physical infrastructure and unique identity
- connecting institutional activity
- sharing information
- creating the basis for collective action: internally and externally

2. Clarifies that:

[1] neighborhood capacity is more than just the ability to keep a neighborhood organization's book-keeping, board, and volunteer management in order;

[2] neighborhood capacity is nested within the broader community's capacity to accomplish shared goals.

B. Events that have highlighted the Importance of Capacity

1. Phillips Audit

a. Narrow question: financial practices of neighborhood organization

b. Broader question: ability to manage complexities of comprehensive plan implementation

c. Enduring implications: lingering suspicion about neighborhood capacity (ie, public officials' statements, Emmet Carson's op ed)

2. LISC's Entry to Minneapolis

a. More than just a funding source - a experienced and sophisticated conduit for support for organizational capacity: economic development and housing

b. Elevating the quality of technical assistance and expertise of neighborhoods - movement toward longer-term systems

3. Minneapolis Foundation's evaluation of its seven Building Better Futures neighborhoods

a. Institute on Race and Poverty has concluded:

4. NRP Evaluation

a. Recognition that it is time to take stock of the most fundamental questions: What was the program intended to accomplish? has it? if not, how can it? and the like

b. Board has initiated discussion of the next ten years

5. The Minneapolis Plan

- a. Attempt to create an overarching statement of community direction - framework for future policy and budget choices
- b. Touch neighborhood work in all its aspects
- c. MCN's analysis: four priority areas that represent significant departures from current practice and policy.

6. The Multi-Family Affordable Housing Initiative

- a. Suggests a dimension of capacity that is rarely assessed: organizing behind a policy shift - one of those called out in MCN's Minneapolis Plan analysis
- b. A second dimension: working across boundaries on goals of city-wide application

C. Initiatives That Have Explored What Can be Done to Enhance Neighborhood Capacity

1. Initiatives at the Center, among neighborhoods, and in the broader community have taken a bead on how we can enhance particular aspects of neighborhood capacity

2. The Minneapolis Neighborhood Assembly [Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods]

- a. Convened last March to assess how we could make sure this neighborhood business had a future
- b. Examined: technical assistance, evaluation, policy changes, and the future of NRP
(1) Keynote explored ways of making connections between communities of faith and neighborhood organizations
- c. Concluded:

3. The Technical Assistance Project [Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods]

- a. Origins:
- b. Conclusions:
- c. Recommendations:
- d. Current status:

4. The Neighborhood Funding Analysis [Lyndale Neighborhood Ass'n/MCN]

- a. Arose from concern about the patterns of philanthropic funding to neighborhoods
- b. Observations:

5. The Success Measures Project [MCN/Development Leadership Network]

- a. Animating purposes
- b. Tie-in to national conversation about community development
- c. Process:
- d. Preliminary conclusions:

6. The Neighborhood Indicators Project [Minneapolis /MCN]

- a. Attempt to create benchmarks of evaluation and cross-neighborhood learnings

b. Selected neighborhoods - status

7. The Minneapolis Foundation's Conference last month on Neighborhood Capacity

- a. Purposes: (1) cross-neighborhood information sharing through workshops
(2) prioritization of actions that could enhance capacity

b. Outcomes:

- (1) Primacy to two NRP goals:

- 1.
- 2.

- (2) Commitment to a continued conversation about these issues.

SECTION II (Delivered by Joe Barisonzi)

NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY: AN ACTION AGENDA

A. What are the Commonalities Among the Discrete Initiatives?

1. This is a great deal of activity. Each initiative appears to move on an independent track. If distilled, what does the aggregate of activity suggest needs to be done?

2. Three primary threads:

- [1] Creating a Coherent Picture of What the Community Wants to Accomplish
- [2] Providing Structural Support for Enhancing Neighborhoods Capacity
- [3] Bringing Public Policy into Alignment with Key Neighborhood Priorities

3. That these three things have not been done does not suggest malice or subversion. There is too much going on for that to be the case. But a continued absence of direction in the face of these activities would be a serious failure of political commitment, for which people and institutional players need to be held accountable.

a. We are being so bold, therefore, as to suggest what can be done on each of these three fronts to activate a neighborhood capacity agenda.

B. Bringing Into Focus a Coherent, Integrated Picture of a Revitalized Community

1. What does this mean?

• More than "vision," this means clarifying roles and responsibilities - who will take which pieces of the multiple strands and start moving them forward

a. Greater clarity about how CDC's work with neighborhoods [Success Measures]

b. Greater clarity about how the private sector can be drawn more fully into neighborhood work [MCN Roundtables; LISC; NRP evaluation]

c. Greater clarity about how the public sector can support the neighborhood work

d. Greater focus on issues of concentrations of race and class

e. New definition of neighborhoods' role:

[1] place to complain v. place to get work done

[2] evaluation and advice v. partner in implementation

[3] citizen participation v. programmatic innovation

2. What should we produce?

- A Community Development Framework that integrates the mulCDC discussion (Success Measures, LISC), the future of NRP discussion (NRP evaluation), and the neighborhoods discussion.

3. Who will take the lead?

- The Foundation Community

a. Convening

b. Defining the tasks and keeping people's feet to the fire

c. A systematic, sustained community synthesis Putting in Place for Enhancing Neighborhood Capacity

C. Putting in Place Structural Support for Enhancing Neighborhood Capacity

1. What does this mean?

a. Nuts and bolts support: what will it take to sustain neighborhood work in all its dimensions

2. What should we produce?

a. Office of Technical Assistance - description of key elements

b. Ongoing commitment to decentralized community staffing

c. Reorganized neighborhood support teams combining the unique skills of Planning, MCDA, NRP, and selected government agencies

3. Who will take the lead?

- Neighborhoods themselves, including the Minneapolis Center for Neighborhoods

D. Aligning Public Policy with Key Neighborhood Priorities

1. What does this mean?

- What are the unrealized programmatic priorities emerging from neighborhood work?

- What practices and policies need to be adjusted to activate them?

a. MCN's four issue areas: multi-family housing, rehab, transportation, neighborhood-based economic development + community schools, community policing

b. An example: reframing downtown priorities according to neighborhood principles

(1) Scale: Block E v. neighborhood parks

(2) Working with what's there: Target Store / Jitters & chaotic incrementalism - connected small pieces

(c) Equity: housing principles v. Low-income housing task force

2. What should we produce?

a. Job descriptions for Planning, MCDA, Transportation

[1] role they need to play

[2] priorities they need to pursue

b. Heat - similar to Multi-Family task force debate

3. Who will take the lead?

- Public Officials

SECTION III

WHERE WE NEED TO GO

1. Neighborhoods need to become more politically active: how? what do we want neighborhoods to do?

- a. Neighborhoods 2001 - mother of the Neighborhood Primer
- b. Community Development Framework

SECTION IV (Delivered by Betsy Sohn)

THE PUPA AWARDS

In Betsy we trust.