

Marion County Children & Families Commission

December 19, 2019

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Grant Room, Broadway Commons

Commission Members Present: ~~Patrice Altenhofen~~, Phil Blea, Sue Bloom, George Burke, Paige Clarkson, Jayne Downing, Troy Gregg, Lisa Harnisch, Sheriff Joe Kast, Levi Herrera Lopez, Stacy Lake, Kimberly Lemman, Pete McCallum (via phone), ~~Honorable Judge Pellegrini~~, Allan Pollock, ~~Eric Richards~~, Jim Seymour, ~~Sam Skillern~~, Shaney Starr, Commissioner Colm Willis

Guests: Josh Graves, Catholic Community Services; Justin Allen, Neighborly Ventures; Shemaina Miller, Mountain West; Chris Pineda, Mountain West; Rob Bennett, Peoples Church; Kevin Karvandi, Marion County Sheriff's Office; Tricia Ratliff, Community Action Agency

Staff: Tamra Goettsch, Melinda Hautala, Heather Johnson

Meeting Summary Notes by Melinda Hautala

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 11:37 am. Welcome and introductions were made.

HOPE ALIVE

Outward Mindset Exercise

Chris shared a video depicting the "Christmas Truce" that occurred between British and German forces during World War I, illustrating the power of seeing others as fellow humans and reaching out to make personal connections. Following the video, Chris led everyone in an exercise about "Finding an Out-of-the-Box Space", which asked people to consider times they have been aware of being open and outward with others, and times when others had done the same with them, and to consider ways to transfer this behavior to other areas where they might have felt less outward.

East Salem Project

Guests from the Community: Justin Allen of Neighborly Ventures and Rob Bennett of Peoples Church

Tamra recapped the discussion about East Salem thus far, especially the input from the principals who spoke as guests at the November CFC meeting, and explained that the difficulties the principals described underscored the importance of community support and involvement. The CFC is working toward defining a goal so that resources are targeted, to ensure that there is a quantifiable result that can be demonstrated to residents, the county, and other stakeholders who could participate. The CFC understands that the best way to learn what the community needs is to connect with people who live and work there. Entities like Mountain West, Catholic Community Services, and Boys & Girls Club are

already doing work in this neighborhood; the CFC does not seek to replace this work, but to expand, connect, and strengthen it.

Sue described how the Epping family approached Boys & Girls Club about donating their property for the improvement of the neighborhood and how BGC had already begun researching that area. The Epping family also owns a parcel of land next to the location where a Clubhouse might be built. They have expressed a desire to retain ownership of this land, but develop a multi-office facility, next to the Clubhouse, that would house providers of wrap-around services, creating a convenient “one-stop-shopping” experience for families who live in the neighborhood, and acting as a catalyst for further strengthening of the community.

Deputy Chief Burke related his experience working in a police department office that was near a Boys and Girls Club, and the tremendous impact they were able to have by interacting with kids in the neighborhood on a personal level. Sue said that the proposed facility would include offices for local law enforcement, as well as the Marion County Fire Department.

Commissioner Willis added that he has also talked to Gary Epping about this project, and **suggested that the CFC invite Gary Epping** to come to a CFC meeting to join the conversation.

Justin Allen of Neighborly Ventures (connected with Mountain West) said that NV develops multi-family housing, and that they have some properties they will be developing soon in NE Salem. They currently manage Lancaster Terrace, an apartment complex on Lancaster Drive near Hayesville Elementary. Over time, they have realized that it is possible to create much-needed housing yet still have a negative impact on the community. Neighborly Ventures not only develops but also manages the housing blocks that they build, and they are committed to finding ways to engage with the community and be a positive influence.

Shaney suggested to Justin that he contact the principals who had spoken at the November CFC meeting, because they have a wealth of information and insight about the families in the community.

Phil and Shaney both mentioned that one clear improvement for NV’s new apartment complexes would be to have on-site space for outdoor recreation, which not only benefits physical health but also mental health, encouraging families to get to know each other and build personal connections. Making space for these kinds of relationships to form helps residents to have a feeling of pride in their homes and a sense of belonging in the community.

Rob Bennett, a pastor at Peoples Church, not only works in this neighborhood, but also grew up in this neighborhood. He mentioned that the church currently operates outreach programs in partnership with Hayesville Elementary, and principal Halter had approached him about the CFC’s project. Phil suggested that the church could be a valuable resource to share their experience with finding ways to engage the Latinx community, which is very prominent in this neighborhood.

Jim related that Catholic Community Services has organized “Community Cafés” where residents and others can come together and be heard, and that it has been helpful to have a specific draw that encourages people to attend, such as inviting the mayor.

Tricia Ratliff offered that it is crucial to involve residents in the process at every step, not just when we need something from them, because this is what builds trust and authenticity, and makes people want to participate and take ownership.

Shaney urged the CFC to talk to principal Halter before trying to plan any kind of public meeting, to get a sense of what is the best way to reach families there. She and Paige recalled how principal Halter had said that it's difficult for families in this neighborhood to attend traditional-style parent-teacher association meetings. Obstacles like work schedules, high levels of stress, lack of transportation, lack of child care, etc. make it far more productive for Halter to go to the families and meet them where they are. Troy suggested that they need to think of new and innovative ways to do this work, which may mean providing solutions for more common obstacles.

Levi said that reaching out to Latinx families through the schools has been the most successful approach in his experience. He added that outreach via churches can also be effective, but care must be taken to realize that not all parishioners of a given church are also residents of the neighborhood where the church is located.

Levi also cautioned the CFC to remember that when approaching the residents of this neighborhood, they must ask those residents to be very clear and specific about what it is that they need, while at the same time being very open and honest about the fact that there are no promises or guarantees that all of these ideas will come to fruition. He explained that in the past, he has noticed that families are urged to attend public meetings, and told how important it is that they show up, but then no progress is made and there is no follow-up for very long periods of time, if at all. When changes do come to the neighborhoods, they are unrelated to what residents said they needed, or things that were going to be done anyway. These past frustrations have made some families reluctant to participate in public meetings.

Chris Pineda said it is often crucial to connect with people on a personal level before trying to talk with them about their challenges, because there may be a lot of tension around those subjects. For example, it might be difficult in some neighborhoods to bring together kids and law enforcement, but they might come to a sports clinic or a music workshop and interact in a way that builds relationships. Tricia Ratliff added that she had seen similar effects at their teen drop-in, where kids can interact with police officers who are not in uniform, breaking down a barrier where there may be distrust. Deputy Chief Burke also mentioned a summer camp where non-uniformed police officers interact with kids and have an easier time connecting.

Commissioner Willis said that he does a lot of work with youth soccer programs, and it is often a challenge to find a suitable field, so it is worth considering including space for that in a new development.

Tamra suggested that the CFC needs to find a way to build relationships with the residents, business owners, and others connected with the neighborhood, so that the CFC is invited to participate in community-building, rather than the CFC coming in from outside to offer solutions.

Commissioner Willis asked if the CFC should try to hold a community meeting at Hayesville Elementary. Sue referred to Levi's comment and said that whatever will be developed on the Epping property is about three years away, so the CFC needs to be mindful about the timing of these meetings.

Jim related that when CCS has neighborhood meetings, they ensure that attendees walk away having received something, whether it is a meal or something else, but either way, the meeting had some benefit to them. This would be a useful outreach effort, even if no specifics about the building are discussed yet. Commissioner Willis returned to the idea of hosting a soccer clinic; Sue mentioned that there are fields at Chemeketa that could be used, and in that location, they could probably also use classroom space to hold a meeting with parents while kids are enjoying the soccer clinic. She added that there are numerous local soccer resources that might want to participate, including the community soccer program and also the Timbers-affiliated program.

Shaney asked Josh how long it takes CCS to organize a Community Café. Josh said it is mostly a matter of focusing on a specific topic and finding facilitators to speak about that topic, and generally it takes about six weeks. Josh added that the Café is meant to be an ongoing process, rather than a one-time event, because its aim is to engage people and bring them together. The Café is designed around a civic engagement model, with a lot of Outward Mindset and motivational interviewing, starting with open-ended ambiguous questions, which draw people into a dialogue. The idea is to gather wisdom from people, not lead them down a pre-determined path, and this method helps make room for everyone to speak, not just the two or three people who usually speak.

Tamra said that as we learn more from the community, both the CFC meetings and community meetings are likely to change focus and possibly format, and the Commission needs to remain flexible.

Shaney asked the group to take a moment to consider next steps, asking Sue what the CFC could do to help with the BGC project, and asking Josh if he might talk about the Community Café process in more detail at the next meeting. Josh said he would bring the request to the Fostering Hope Executive Council, noting that the Cafés are usually conducted by FHI-certified community health workers. Sue said that she was still working with DHS to create an updated map with the data that was presented by some of the CFC organizations at the November meeting. She also said she would reach out to Gary Epping about coming to the January CFC meeting, and to Collin Box, the director of the Timbers-affiliated Capital Futbol Club about participating in a soccer clinic.

Shaney asked everyone to think about how they would explain the CFC's "why" to Gary Epping, and communicate to him that they are as passionate about the neighborhood as he is.

Tamra pointed out that what Sue and Josh are describing about whom they will contact is the "outside triangles" idea from the Outward Mindset training. She added that the Commission cannot wait until each monthly meeting to talk about this; everyone should use the time between meetings to go back over discussions to find what matters to them and what is "in their wheelhouse" to bring forward. Members were encouraged to invite others to meetings (just let Community Services staff know).

Approval of November 21 Meeting Summary Notes

Troy motioned to approve the meeting summary notes. Sue seconded the motion. All were in favor of accepting the meeting summary notes. **Motion:** Approved

Meeting adjourned at 1:05 pm.