

Neighborhoods 2020 Lunch Conversation

**October 17th, 2017
Elected and Staff**

BACKGROUND

As part of NCR's robust engagement surrounding the Neighborhoods 2020 project, there were two lunch conversations held in City Hall in October. The first conversation was on October 17th with City Council and Mayor staff. The second conversation was on October 30th from various City staff who work with Neighborhood Organizations on a regular basis. This is a summary of the October 17th Conversations.

How do you interact with Neighborhoods?

- NOs in ward, goes to meetings and gives a city update monthly, use as a sounding board on developments that are coming to council, will ask NOs to help promote events or issue mtgs.
- Host meetings with NOs about developments and field concerns from residents, check websites and promote NO events. Most NOs get newsbites and promote city activities that way.
- Field community concerns, got 50k for community policing working with VV and PWNO, Worked with CRNRP on Opportunity Center.
- 1 org not functioning, goes to boards/committees monthly, asks them to take a position. Directs residents or developers to NOs to get input or support.
- Engage orgs on public liquor license hearings (for example).
- Co-hosting meetings with Public Works and NOs (success varies).
- Day- field lots of questions at ward office from really engaged orgs.
- All-encourage people to engage with the NOs (lots of affirmation to this).

How do Neighborhood Orgs add value to your work?

- They are independent of government, for those who distrust government that can help.
- Sending information to NOs is due diligence to have a broad network to reach.
- NOs can be Lobbying arm with the county (for example), they are also a reality check if one is right on the community pulse on an issue.
- Not sure if they are ever door-knocking, there are people missing. Made up only of those who self-select, not those who are encouraged to join. Barriers to engagement (transportation, kids, language, food, etc.), sometimes includes those who are currently involved being hostile.
- They've done their own mailings to ensure they reach all residents rather than just rely on NOs.
- Door-knocked their areas rather than rely on NOs.
- NOs aren't the same everywhere.
- NOs help build relationships with the ward office, build strong connections to residents.
- Example: Problem property, meeting held with owner and NOs and the NOs added credibility to city decision that everything had been tried previously.

- NOs can deliver the message a lot better than the city at times.
- NOs bring values (housing justice with renters), advocate on issues.

What would you change to improve the value of your relationship and / or the current neighborhood system?

- Political opposition is president of board can cause issues. How the org is utilized for political purposes can be problematic (serving as pawn).
- Sitting council shouldn't intimidate, pressure, etc.
- LHENA had bylaws about resigning if running for elected office.
- NOs vary, do they take a position on an issue or a development? Some stay far away from it. Clarity on best practices and standardizing could be helpful.
- Best practices to implement, functionality of NOs varies, legal advice on their role.
- Longfellow works well grouping 4 orgs, more money, platform and consistency.
- Longfellow is sometimes too big to address small issues (like an individual housing lot/development).
- What is the balance and who should decide? We should have a floor of expectations and they need to be clearly enforced.
- Meeting protocol is important, city staff at an evening meeting being shouted down by board members is not helpful.
- Protocol for engagement with city, sometimes overwhelmed by contacts at Ward office about an issue.
- Accountability for funding received.
- Palmisano Ward Summit was great but there was no follow-up from the city.
- Some NOs are concerned about who is being highlighted (as in one neighborhood featured more than others)
- Some have storefronts and others don't, could the city facilitate more of those spaces?
- Each should be funded to support a staff person.