

Power of We Consortium
Meeting Minutes - January 15, 2010

Present: Peggy Vaughn-Payne, Jon Coleman, Carly Gersch, Kathy Kelly, Ken Sperber, Mary ZumBrunnen, Emily Thompson, Rainer Delgado, Ernesto Mireles, Harmony Gmzel, Janine Sinno, Heather LaFave, Lance Werner, Diana Rouse, Micki Fuhrman, Robin Miner-Swartz, Joan Nelson, Vincent Delgado, Bill Nelton, Ross Yednock, Marian Bryant, Joy Baldwin, Ramona Spencer, Bob Sheehan, Eric Schertzing, Jim Smiertka, Jean Harris, Suzanne Eman-Jaehnig, John Roy Castillo, Marvin Cato, Michelle Nicholson, Olga Hernandez-Patino

I. Welcome, introductions and announcements. Peggy Vaughn-Payne called the meeting to order, welcoming all.

Announcements:

- Jim Smiertka announced and distributed material about new opportunities for youth in Michigan and requested PWC members to spread the word about these opportunities:
 - A new resource: www.InternInMichigan.com . This program connects Michigan Employers to Educated, College Student Talent.
 - Ignite Youth Business Plan Competition for Michigan Students in grades 6 – 12 offering a chance to compete for monetary prizes for those students who submit a business plan. An excerpt from the web page: *“In addition to aiding in the improvement of entrepreneurial education for the kindergarten through twelfth grades, Moving Ideas to Market focuses on the important role that higher education institutions play in driving entrepreneurship and furthering small business development and success”* For further information see web site: www.primacivitas.org .
- Joan Nelson announced and shared material about new community opportunities:
 - Greater Lansing Gardening Cooperative. This organization will provide a years’ worth of workshops, across the city. Joan asked PWC members to please share this information, and contact her if you would like a poster on this new community opportunity. Joan also announced there’s a meeting tomorrow at the garden house re: urban chickens, also a meeting to plan gardens.
 - “The Basics of Buying A Home on Lansing’s Eastside”, a free workshop sponsored by Lana Wagner and Co., and the Allen Neighborhood Center. Location: Foster Community Center, Room 210, 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Advisors will be on hand.
 - “Landscaping Your Sustainable Eastside Home: Garden Design for Home Energy Savings, Water Conservation and Food Production,” a free workshop taught by landscape designer, Matt Smar. Location: Foster Community Center room 213, March 24, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Contact person for registration: Tom Curtis, A.N.C., 517-999-3924, or e-mailing Tomc@allenneighborhoodcenter.org.
 - On Wednesday, January 20th, there will be a gathering of East Side citizens, entrepreneurs, restaurant owners, store owners, etc. to participate in a food forum facilitated by Vincent Delgado.

II. Learning About Our Community Asset Building

Ross H. Yednock, Director of the Asset Building Policy Project at the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (**CEDAM**) and Eric Schertzing, Ingham County Treasurer and Chair of the Asset Independence Coalition, presented to members. Eric reported good news that over \$200 million has been awarded to Michigan for housing development. He noted that this is the largest grant for a State comparable to Michigan. Lansing will utilize its portion on over 300 properties. Eric also shared a marketing sheet for houses available for purchasing in the Lansing area from the Ingham County Land Bank.

Also announced was information about a new banking program resource in Lansing: **Bank on Michigan**, where representatives meet on Saturdays to assist low income families. Next sessions: January 23rd, followed by a February 13th session. MSU's Law School will have involvement in this program. Handout was distributed; contacts: Amy Harmer 676-7239 or John Schlinker 676-7235.

At this time Peggy Vaughn Payne shared a job opening with the Asset Independence Coalition for a part time Coordinator position at twenty hours per week, \$15.00 per hour. Interviews will begin in February. Contact Peggy Vaughn Payne; deadline to submit a cover letter and resume is January 29, 2010.

Ross Yednock, from CEDAM was introduced and provided a PowerPoint presentation. He primarily works with the policy portion of this State-wide organization. He stated that there are about 400 community development groups in the Lansing area helping people build assets. The Industry Report was distributed and can be accessed at: http://dl.dropbox.com/u/691996/CEDAM_Industry_Report.pdf

Asset building is a key resource provided by CEDAM. Ross shared that it is possible that perhaps a quarter of Michigan residents are living at poverty level. He added that the asset building program helps people learn to save, with a recommendation to have six months saved up in case of loss of income. Recipients are taught that *saving, not spending, gets you out of poverty*, in addition to other behavioral economic practices. There are a variety of savings tools that help people build up wealth over time. He added that Peckham is a good example of those who have utilized asset building successfully. Ross also shared free on-line tax software at www.icanfile.org which will complete both Federal and State tax returns. He noted that 98% of low income level residents do not claim the free earned income tax credit.

Ross also mentioned two legislative bills he's working on: employer notification act, which will require employers to provide information for employees about income tax credit, and a waiver for citizens while they are collecting unemployment. Contact: RYednok@cedam.org

Eric commended the asset building projects, and added that his group (Asset Independence Coalition – with a tri-county focus) is expanding, and conducts their monthly meeting on the first Thursday at 11:00 a.m. at the Human Service building – Conf. Rm. C. Eric welcomes new members.

III. Action

Consortium Membership and Leadership for 2010.

The Consortium considered the recommendations of the Nominations Committee for Consortium Co-chair, Community Partners, and Community Representatives. Joan Nelson, member of the committee, made the presentations.

A. Co-chair

Renee Canady's term of service ended December 31, 2009 while Peggy Vaughn Payne has one more year. Jon Coleman was presented as the nominee for Co-chair for the next two years to replace Renee Canady. Joan provided a summary of Jon's extensive experience and roles in the community. **Jon Roy Castillo moved to accept the nomination. Michelle Nicholson supported the motion. The motion carried unanimously.** Jon accepted the Co-Chair position and expressed gratitude for the opportunity.

B. Community Partners

Since the 1990's the Power of We Consortium has grown from the 15 founding members to the current large number of members. Joan expressed that this is an outstanding example of community effort, and yet we are still growing. **John Roy moved to approve the continued membership of these organizations, supported by Michelle Nicholson. A motion was carried unanimously** however, it was noted that the Capital Area Youth Alliance is no longer in operation.

Joan presented the slate of nominees for new Community Partners: **Jon Coleman moved to accept the nomination. Olga Hernandez-Patino supported the nomination. The motion carried unanimously** to offer PWC membership to:

1. Capital Area District Library
2. Xicano Development Center

CADL's Executive Director, Lance Werner accepted the membership offer, as did XDC's Executive Director Rainer Delgado.

C. Community Representatives

The Nominations Committee recommended that the Consortium invite the following Community Representatives to continue their membership with the Consortium: Lonnie Johnson, Marcus McKissic, David Wiener, and Laura Ray. **Michelle Nicholson moved to continue their membership. John Roy Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

The Nominations Committee recommended that the Consortium expand its Community Representative membership through the following invitations to: Marvin Cato, Vincent Delgado, and Lynne Martinez. **Olga Hernandez-Patino moved to approve the nominations. John Roy Castillo supported the motion. The motion carried unanimously.** Welcome to our new Community Representatives.

Peggy Vaughn Payne thanked the nominations committee for their work this year, and noted they continue to be a committee that is consistently helpful.

IV. Dialogue and Updates:

Land Use and Health Resource Team

Janine Sinno (Ingham County Health Department) and Harmony Gmazel (Tri County Regional Planning Commission) were introduced and provided a PowerPoint program. Harmony shared that Jon Coleman is also the Chair of the Land Use and Health Resource Team, an organization that was started a few years ago by Bob Glandon, Bob Godbold, and Jon Coleman. The collaborative's mission statement was shared along with a summary of environmental change through their grant, and recent work through their program called, "Building Healthy Communities."

For program development tools see www.myhealthfoods.org

Noted also were the school policies and the lack of sidewalks to schools which has hindered children from walking/biking to school. The Land Use and Health Resource Team is working with MDOT (where funding is available) towards improvements by schools. They are also increasing access to healthy food for residents who live more than half mile from produce grocers.

Quality Dairy was cited as a resource in communities where locally obtained produce can now be purchased at reasonable prices. Community gardens are targeting youth and seniors. Local farmers' markets accept the bridge card. They are also changing the environment with new benches and pathways.

Harmony shared that over 200 people met at the Lansing Center recently where they identified over 30 issues related to public health and land use and defined four key areas: air quality, water quality, healthy food access, and transportation. Draft policy briefs were developed from that event. A food conference, chaired by Randy Bell, is planned for this March. A flier was distributed for the program, "The Greening of Mid Michigan", which will host a regional visioning workshop planned for Feb. 18th, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Hannah Community Center with dinner provided. Highlights include presenters from Oakland County and Michigan Natural Feature Inventory. RSVP to Harmony Gmazel at hgmazel@mitcrpc.org

A program promoting walking with group challenges and awards began in 2007. The 2010 cycle will begin this Sunday. Refer to www.Bikelansing.org or wwwcph@lansing.org

Group discussions provided information and suggestions:

- Detroit has been awarded a significant grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
- The City of Lansing has a master plan relevant to these issues and there is support from citizens; we anticipate continued growth and change.
- AmeriCorp and VISTA were noted as resources.
- Comprehensive trail maps with designated parking areas along the trails was suggested.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: February 19th, at the HSB building, Conference Room A.