

Topic: Raising Public Awareness

Convener: Cory Smith

Room: G

Discussion Summary:

- Getting people to be more aware of these issues. Get people to learn.
- People apathetic and unaware of issues very close to them.
- Hectic schedules, activities, rat race. Understandable: attention is divided today.
- Information overload: e-mails, Internet, etc.
- What do you do to attract people's attention and get them engaged?
- People ignore information; letting themselves get overloaded with information.
- Community activism just not as big as it was. Face-to-face interactions. Get people out of their houses talking to people. One of measures of sustainable communities is density, closeness.
- Online degrees are good examples of limiting face-to-face. We are creating opportunities to limit face-to-face.
- Sometimes you get more intense conversation using technologies because you can hide shame, fear and insecurities. Cannot eliminate options.
- Fear that everything will happen from our own cocoon.
- Direct connection needs to be improved and expanded – bottom line.
- Most communities have access to Internet, information highway. Very important as part of solution.
- How do we organize communities? Structural mechanism related to how we relate. Built environment relates.
- Word-of-mouth. When is the last time you talked to your neighbor, next person in line? Neighborhood connections are not there anymore. Start a conversation, pass on information to people. Try to talk to people and learn about each other. Diverse areas are more likely to connect, interest in each other's uniqueness. Expand our world, parents are very important here.
- Powerful tool is word-of-mouth. Difficult but single greatest tool.
- How do we engage people on a larger issue?
- Raise consciousness: recycling as example or awareness and something becoming art of you.
- Working with government overtime can be important.
- Recycling centers are community centers. People are hungry for this type of connection.
- Eliminate waste in Olathe schools – a great program.
- Leadership of cities and counties – work at local level and a culture.
- Regional initiative to push agenda.
- Sometimes it takes a crisis to effect some change. NIMBY- only time people engage. People don't get it.
- Remember "Is it Good for the Childer?" Look at how that was organized.
- Messages from kids to parents.
- Recycling engagements in KCK (OKCV and Bishop Ward High School) - working through churches.
- Mayors holding public forums? Have mayors present issues that are important to community not just mayor.
- Culture of community to feel that power and talk to community.
- Religious leaders are stewards of community activism. Go where people are already gathered.
- Deffenbaugh will increase their rates by 300 percent - homeowners will feel the burden, get involved.
- We need to get message out to masses or message will not reach people and campaign won't do a bit of good. Identify areas of support. Together we achieve more.
- Sunday morning recycling panel on TV. Change topics, let people learn but not feel like they are being educated.
- Stay focused on our message, crafting it carefully, communicating is clearly to the masses.
- Maintaining public involvement, keeping people is difficult.
- Can't force people to have an interest in something.
- Try to covert someone to look at a site on-line. Convert talk to action. What converts people? Multiple approaches are required – be diversified – know target audiences.
- We have to be listeners, let people talk. You have to identify with people – make connections. Relate.
- Address people where they are at - not where we are.
- We are growing the next generations of attitudes.
- Broad interest in what we are doing – we just need to focus their energy.
- Commercial and industrial programs. They are a large part of our community and they need to be on board. Get them working together. Public needs to know that these good things are happening.
- Get large companies to sponsor, like Harley Davidson.
- It's easier to generate a story about something bad.
- Suggest to large marketer – 10- to15-second PSAs.

Meeting time: Session 2: 10:30 a.m.

Recorder: Karen Clawson