

Topic: Racial and social equity

Convener: Ron Achelpohl

Room: H

Discussion Summary:

Question posed to group: Issues to be considered in this process to make sure we are a more fair and equitable region.

Main discussion points:

One participant stated that the biggest social issue in KC right now is **sewer and stormwater issue**, and 140,000 rate payers in Kansas City are going to pay the bill. These rate payers are disproportionately low-income. Best practices, green practices have been presented to city with evidence that costs would be lowered. These ideas were not welcome and consultants were fired for continually putting ideas forward to engineering firm

Cultural awareness – sustainability must reflect all cultures; eg. Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanic, etc. Cultures may have different views on practices such as keeping a nice lawn (use of pesticides that may end up in stormwater system). This forum is a first step, but discussions must take place within minority community. Convener said the Imagine KC process is expandable, and participants who belong to community groups can bring the discussion to their organizations.

Leadership – Leaders must cut across groups, be willing to advocate beyond their own personal agenda. Another perspective is that WE are the leaders, those of us who are taking part in this process. Congressman Emanuel Cleaver was mentioned as a local elected official who is a leader on environmental issues.

Balance between policy, cultural issues, leadership – Schools and churches are good resources to do this work. Food issues (eg. Community gardens) may also be a good vehicle to work on this balance.

Tone of conversation – Must change from being “sensitive to outside groups” to that we are part of the whole. Get rid of tokenism and convene diverse groups from the beginning of the process. Portland, Seattle, Chicago were cited as examples of cities where inclusiveness is part of policy-making process from beginning.

What are next steps? When you sit down at table to make policy, don't go further until the entire community is represented. **Networking in the community** is another strategy; those of us discussing this now can network within our own communities.

Convener mentioned MORE2 organization – group of churches. Upcoming event Sunday, Oct. 19, Paseo Baptist Group – forum on equitable life in the Metro. Web site is www.more2.org. Diversity Coalition is another organization that meets second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at *KC Star* with columnist Lewis Diuguid.

Sustainability and social equity – Must be connected

Meeting time: Session 1: 9:30 a.m.

Recorder: Marge Gasnick