

Weinland Park Collaborative

Summary of Meeting of April 19, 2017

Steve Sterrett called the meeting to order shortly after 9 a.m. in the Schoenbaum Family Center.

Communications plan. Mr. Sterrett introduced Jaya Yoo, senior vice president, and Wendy Schwantes, senior account executive, with Paul Werth Associates, one of Columbus's leading public relations firms. On behalf of the Weinland Park Collaborative (WPC), The Columbus Foundation has engaged the firm to develop and to help implement a strategic communications plan for the collaborative work done in the Weinland Park neighborhood. A communications steering committee composed of Michael Wilkos, Erin Prosser, Mr. Sterrett, and Tanya Long (representing the Weinland Park Community Civic Association) has met periodically over the past few months with Paul Werth Associates to guide development of the communications plan.

Ms. Yoo and Ms. Schwantes presented elements of the communications plan and facilitated a discussion to obtain advice from the WPC members. One of Paul Werth Associates' first assignments is to help with the public release of the Weinland Park neighborhood survey conducted by the Kirwan Institute, but there are a number of other activities envisioned. The discussion focused on four major questions and the responses from WPC members:

1. What does Paul Werth Associates need to know about the nature of the work in Weinland Park?
 - The value of collaboration among the partner agencies, institutions and associations.
 - The diversity of the Weinland Park neighborhood.
 - The neighborhood work takes time and planning.

2. The communications plan suggests four primary audiences: neighborhood residents, policymakers, Ohio State University administrators and faculty, and Ohio State University students. What advice do WPC members have for reaching these audiences?
 - Empower residents to tell the story of Weinland Park in ways that recognize the various cultures and clusters. (The recent survey developed a more nuanced portrait of the neighborhood by identifying five clusters of residents based on various demographic factors.)
 - Be clear about the contributions that the university has made to the work.
 - Identify the work that remains to be done.
 - Don't overlook the young people in Weinland Park who are part of the story and can be storytellers, too.

3. How do we know if we succeed in our communications?
 - Strengthened relationships among all of the stakeholders.
 - Everyone would have a deeper understanding of what's happened in Weinland Park and why.
 - An honest account of the work will illustrate the struggles and challenges and make the successes more credible.

- Lessons from Weinland Park are applied elsewhere.
 - Due to the complexity and time needed for success, people must realize patience is a useful tool in community development.
 - Success is evolution – the ability to continue to dialogue and to refocus.
 - A resident feels the neighborhood is supportive of his or her success.
 - Pride in the neighborhood can be enhanced when there are opportunities to bring diverse groups of residents together in a setting to interact with major stakeholders.
4. What additional communication activities should be part of the plan?
- Communication with resident leaders.
 - A media strategy to generate positive stories involving neighbors.
 - WPC should be prepared to communicate a set of policy proposals based on the work in Weinland Park.
 - The WPC e-newsletter for policy-makers should be well-written journalism, rather than a series of bullets. The e-newsletter also should make good use of visual elements, such as photographs that are more illustrative than a line-up of dignitaries.

WPC’s evolution. Mr. Sterrett reported the Weinland Park funders group had discussed the potential evolution of the collaborative. Such an evolution would not be an “exit strategy” from Weinland Park because a number of key partners, such as The Ohio State University, Community Properties of Ohio, Godman Guild Association, and Columbus City Schools, will continue to be part of the neighborhood. Mr. Sterrett suggested an outside facilitator could be engaged to lead a planning process for the WPC this fall. The Weinland Park Community Civic Association could be invited to be part of the process because the time may have come for residents to have greater responsibility for driving direction and priorities.

Next WPC meeting. Mr. Sterrett is working with Jane Wiechel to prepare a panel presentation on the successes and challenges of early childhood education and kindergarten readiness in Weinland Park. The presentation will be the primary agenda item at the WPC meeting on May 17.

Mr. Sterrett adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Meeting summary prepared by Steve Sterrett.