

Le Sueur River Watershed Network

March 24, 2014 - Waldorf Community Center Meeting Notes

Agenda

5:30-6:15 Potluck

6:30-7:00 Amboy Community Club and Amboy Video, Anne Queenan

7-7:30 Watershed Group Case Studies, Patrick Moore

7:30-8:15 Small Group Discussion question #1: What type of watershed organization should we create? What type are you leaning towards?

Small Group Discussion question #2: What questions do you need answered?

8:15-8:30 Wrap Up

“The Ask” to the group:

- Come learn and talk about different types of options there are for the newly forming -group. We want your advice about what type of watershed organization we should create. We can learn from representatives from other groups about benefits and weaknesses of various ways to organize, structure this group.
- Who wants to join a smaller group, steering team, to decide on group structure and clarify group mission and purpose?

Amboy Community Club

- Showed a new video by Anne Queenan about the community of Amboy for Off 90, KMSQ
- Leaders of the Amboy group talked about how they have been able to accomplish a lot and reinvigorate this small town. The group has been around since WWII.
- The Community Club is a tremendously productive group.
- They promote each other and lift each other up.
- Amboy is a nonprofit. The status is helpful for donations and tax exemption. Certain grants are only open to nonprofits. When developing, they hired an attorney who wrote up the papers.
- Everyone is a volunteer, 6-8 board members. There is a hard core group in the middle. A small board is helpful because decisions are easier. Loose bylaws can be useful as well. Council of nonprofits is a helpful resource.

- Citizen leader passion is infectious.
- They meet once a month at a public library, publicize events in the Red Cow Gazette.
- Set long term vision and goals and short term goals.
- They said that they continue to make baby steps and keep constant pressure, ratcheting up.
- They don't allow the "dump and run" approach... if you're willing to lead it, we'll help you. They have found that what they do depends on where the passion is.
- Café is a central meeting place where people convene and discuss (over pie) talk about common interests.

Non Profit

What are the pros and cons of becoming a non-profit?

Pros: You can solicit funds, there might be a financial advantage with donations, Tax Exempt status can help with donors and purchases such as can get materials cheaper.

Cons: You need a committed core group, can be cumbersome

Do we need nonprofit structure?

If we do a nonprofit later, connecting with an attorney (pro bono) will be key

General Perspectives/Consensus

General consensus is let's see where we are going. We need to better define our purpose and mission.

Be careful not to have too large and cumbersome board, really need an attorney and financial person.

- Not part of JPA-Joint Powers
- Maybe 501c 3 later
- Start with steering committee momentum, get steering committee going
- Get mission clear, gain passion and commitment
- Create a tone and climate of FUN and purposeful
- Loose form and partner with agencies
- Learning, forming, and getting to know each other
- Who has passion, rise up?
- Maybe we will get to a point to start an organization
- Autonomy is a good thing. There is a place for citizen action that can't be replicated by government.

Simple structure Initially

Club- president, dues

GBERBA- lots of potential to work together with this group

How do we relate to other orgs already there?

Maybe we take 1 year to nonprofit?

Set up treasurer right away and have our own money, and decide how it's spent

CURE – Patrick Moore

- CURE started with a Fisherman and farmer talking and saying we have to do something to clean up the river.
- Their motto was we'll do anything but you need to help
- Networking was key and started with 40-60 names
- They have been in existence for 20 years. They have a mission and a steering committee. They always have a High School Student on the board
- Held a contest for Name: AQUA, CURE (couldn't decide at the meeting)
- Decided to make decisions by consensus, everybody agrees
- A priority is to have fun - Have music, food and outings
- Speak truth to power
- If not us, who? If not now, when?
- They became a non profit 501c3. Rely a lot on social media to get the word out.
- Now they have 4 employees
- Celebration at river, huge annual meetings, canoe trips, clean ups, invite local people for entertainment
- They have learned that citizens want to do stuff

Emerging consensus from the Group Discussion

- Keep walking down the road
- Form a Steering Committee
- This committee will help to plan the next meeting, Decide what to do next
- The goal is to move from staff to citizen leaders
- Meet once a month (1-2 hours)
- Work on things in between
- Who will do what? Did you do it?
- Keep it simple
- Create a Mission Statement, get clear about our purpose and goals
- Figure out our Governance and Structure
- Preference for now is not being part of a Joint Powers Agreement
- Start getting work done, use the recommendations as a framework
- Show that you can get results with passion and commitment from landowners

Steering Committee

Mark Bosacker Gene Scheffert, Becky Waskosky, Don Waskosky, Tina Stueber, Paul Davis, Ozzie Arndt, Leon Schoenrock