

# NOTES

## POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

555 N. Wabasha Street  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Boardroom  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102  
**8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.**

555 N. Wabasha St., Suite 240  
St. Paul, MN 55102  
Phone: (651) 293-0575  
Fax: (651) 293-0576  
Email: [info@citizensleague.org](mailto:info@citizensleague.org)  
Web: [www.citizensleague.org](http://www.citizensleague.org)

*Members present: John Adams, Adam Chelseth, John DeSantis, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Dianne Krizan, Nick Leitheiser, Britta Orr, Scott Halstead, Aaron Pearson, Mary Pickard (co-chair), Greg Strong, Paul Taylor, Donna Zimmerman (co-chair)*

*Staff present: Bob DeBoer, Sean Kershaw, Stacy Becker, Bill Johnston*

### **Purpose:**

- Learn the findings from MAP 150 and get ideas from the committee on how to integrate it in our work.

### **1. Introductions**

### **2. Review and approve agenda and outcomes**

### **3. Minnesota Anniversary Project (MAP 150) findings**

Stacy Becker, MAP 150 project director, presented the findings of the project (see attached power point presentation).

MAP 150 started with Journalist interviews in summer 2006. We sent out graduate journalism students into all eight Congressional districts with video cameras. These students hung out where people were – shopping centers, soccer games, parks – and interviewed them.

Statewide scientific survey was conducted in the fall of 2006. Drop rate was only 4 percent. Both the journalists' work and the scientific survey showed that the population is not apathetic, they just don't have good ways to get involved.

Stacy discussed each of the four MAP 150 projects (Aging Services, Students Speak Out, Property Taxes and Redistricting). The

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development of CitiZing as a policy engagement tool has also come out of MAP 150.

#### Lessons from MAP 150:

- Citizens do care and will be involved in meaningful processes.
- Citizens want to know that their input/time will make a difference, that they will be listened to, and how their input will be used.
- There is considerable reluctance to involve citizens integrally in decision-making processes.
- Citizens are not recognized for their value-added. They bring these assets to policy-making: 1) their values; 2) information; and 3) capacity for action.
- One of the most powerful roles for citizens may be framing problems
- There is a set of skills necessary to make productive use of citizens' viewpoints and experiences, and for the most part, these skills are missing.
  - Asking the right questions
  - Moderating in person and online discussions to challenge assumptions and bias, foster productive dialogue, and reach shared understandings;
  - Listening for insights and not ideas and with a mind not cluttered by all of the "rules";
  - Recognizing common themes and common ground (not just report what was said);
  - Connecting insights up to policy

#### **Discussion:**

How can Citizens League meetings teach and use these skills?

- People have different ideas of the problem that needs to be solved.
- A moderator must have the right questions to tease out a common idea of the problem to be solved.
- Values must be exposed and must be agreed upon

Looking at the handout on the Citizens League policy structure, committee members said that a key question going forward is how the findings from MAP150 should influence the current processes that we already have, such as study committees.

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It was noted that success in this work is not necessarily about large numbers of people taking part, but was more about drawing in people of different opinions.

We always have to ask, “What is it that we want to know from people?” to get good outcomes from our engagement processes. Getting everyone to focus on the citizen approach in the process and understand that this can lead to more valid results in a more “citizen-centric” public process.

We don’t citizens to be policy experts, but we do need to gather their values. This ties in with the idea of the Citizens League as a “civic utility” – offering our process as a product that can apply to any number of situations.

The difference in outcome of a MAP 150 process is that we get an agreement amongst ourselves on what we should do vs. focusing on what someone else should do.

Special interests can still run roughshod over this even if the process is great. I don’t see that dynamic represented in the work.

That is a current vacuum. We think these process findings show promise for better outcomes, but will have to demonstrate that.

The question now is what is the framework to pull out the promise in these process points? Staff will start an “evergreen” document for this committee to work with in developing use of the MAP 150 findings.

#### **4. Evaluate whether outcomes were achieved**

Average of the evaluations was 4.4. One comment was that it is a struggle to integrate all of this into our work.

#### **Upcoming Meetings**

Tuesday, July 14 from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 11 from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, September 8 from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

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