

**Willits Economic Localization  
Steering Committee Meeting  
Special Meeting at the Willits Library  
1/23/05**

Present: Brian Weller, Jason Bradford, Annie Weller, Ree Slocum, George Cottrell, Laura Liska, Patrick Burnstad, Diane Smalley, AJ Barrett, Mair Alight, Spring Senerchia, Richard Jergenson, Judi Berdis, Ellen Drell, Madge Strong, Lanny Cotler (filming)

Meeting began: 12:15.

Lanny Cotler solicits support for filming. Will be shooting hundreds of hours as logs.  
Any public showing will be distilled down to one hour or so. Anyone who is in the film can preview it and be removed if they prefer. For those who follow us to learn. Won't be broadcast. Cyndee Logan is applying for a grant for kids to make films.  
Lanny will put something in writing.  
Participative safety is important.

**Group Dynamics, presented by Brian Weller**

Introduction

Boundaries - we are very conditioned to see what is there, not what isn't there.

Explore the possibility of seeing beyond what we know - the essence of creating the future.

The key is: how we create the shift together.

What happens when boundaries are challenged - confusion, resistance, fear, denial, OR inspiration, growth.

FEAR = Future Event Assumed Real.

Unmet expectations lead to upset- it is always good to question assumptions.

Allow ourselves to express dissent.

Models for group dynamics: a coherence graph of self-esteem.

**Forming:** people coming together with a shared interest.

**Storming:** after the initial excitement comes the work where styles and goals may conflict, the group usually reaches a "bottom" after which resolution and forward progress continues. If we are too rigid - losing face becomes an issue, makes getting through the bottom more difficult.

A lot of emotional energy is released in the experience of storming and hitting bottom.

Welcome upsets! facilitate them, use conflict resolution & mentoring.

**Norming:** conflict resolution & getting on track.

**Re-forming:** new energy comes in with the help of scouts who find new avenues of expression.

**Performing:** people are expressing the mission of the group.

Help ourselves and each other in finding our range of preferences/role/styles.

Advocate situational leadership. Let go of the ball when it is not your turn.

Going through the process is a rite of passage. As new members join, they will benefit from documentation of what we have achieved. Not convincing but enrolling, mentoring, hand holding will help but new people will go through their own storm and will bring waves of new transformative ideas to the group.

**Types of POWER** = ability to act, influence.

positional - the job you hold

personal - who you are, drive

collective - ability to work together coherently

2 key zones: our zone of control of ourselves and others.  
empowered: larger zone of influence ("want to help") *versus* oppressed: smaller zone ("have to help").  
As the collective zone of influence grows, the power of the group grows.

The body of the session:

## **CULTURAL CHANGE**

priorities, realities, conditions, vision, decisions, changes, navigation

The **past** exerts an influence on the present. The past has a very important position - fundamentalism, throw backs. We have most control over our memories of the past.

The **present** "here & now", perceived/fantasy/feelings/facts/fears; current reality. Time is the measurement of our perception of change. eg., Inventory process is difficult because it's changing.

The **future** is our vision of (what) (we) (will) (create) (together) - each are key words. Vision is most significant when it is specific. A signpost. More detailed = more motivation.

Detailed enough to know it when you see it. It is like a magnet to pull you into the future. Informs each one of your goals.

Some groups establish their vision first. It is important to do these together. There is a structural tension between what you want and what you've got. Tension resolves toward the more sure area.

Structural or creative tension is at play in all acts of building. This is called the sweet spot of creation. No tension maintains the status quo.

People naturally play different roles such as pushers/pullers/mixers.

**STRATEGY** = General Plan = map

### **structure**

systems of reporting, agreements, communication

staff, goals, milestones,

Plans never work out - just a way to feel comfortable while we move forward. Murphy's Law can be counted on.

Interference - departing from the plan = IMPORTANT GLUE THAT HOLDS PRESENT & FUTURE TOGETHER

outer interference - new information, crises, disasters,

inner interference - loss of motivation, doubt, burnout, questioning

coherence is not agreement but the co-existence of differences in a setting that is supportive

## **MOTIVATION**

3 factors:

**want to:** what is the motivation? Comfort level; take baby steps, build a sense of completion.

**know how to:** knowledge; build skills, get help from experts.

**have the chance to:** opportunity - doorway -opening. "A fair wind blowing you into the harbor of your choice".

Vision/risk/courage; build a sense of hope - comes from norming stage and is especially important to bring to newcomers - a sense of optimism - a sense of personal and group redemption.

In the pit/bottom - when feeling worthless and hopeless; need encouragement

hope is a basic human need.

A full inventory includes

strengths

weakness

opportunities

threats

break

crisis = danger + opportunity

The real magic of discovery lies not in seeking new ideas but of having new eyes. -Marcel Proust

A 4 step process that can be part of our meeting design to guide strategic change (setting goals):

**O S I R:**

**Objectives** = when agreed, provide structure; eg., what to do, by when

**Status** = reporting process to check on current status, measurement; what support/resources

**Issues** = story, what came up/shortfalls, interference/open discussion; report back

**Recommendation** = enrolled proposals, remotivation process/decisions

### **Applying in to the WEL**

Three minutes at the end of our meetings to report on study groups wasn't seeming like enough for some, ok for others.

Encourage everyone to get info onto the website.

Tailor the template to each study group.

Small groups purpose:

Defining "present"

Managing complexity

Start discussion between community members/interaction/outreach/network

Raising consciousness/awareness

ACHIEVING GOALS

When to let people get into actions - will that break up the group?

If a group goes off to a project, they need to report back. These are the "scouts".

A lot of time goes into talking about projects/solutions.

Measurement problems, hard to keep the group focused on committee work.

Not enough time to complete the task.

Check out boundaries based on personal preferences. Don't stick too rigidly to the path.

OK to let people go, end up with more territory explored, more info on what motivates people, more ahah's & insights, fills out the vision. Where people get excited and network.

Setting an agenda, group process, helps stay on task, make adjustments as you go. There needs to be a "1st base". Wasted time is the main reason people leave. Not a good experience = waste of time.

### **Time to begin articulating the vision.**

general: values & principles that are fairly grounded.

specifics: the form, how-to, examples.

Successful cultural change occurs when the vision is articulated early enough and includes all.

Current phase is to identify the scale of the problem. This will inform a realistic vision.

Not a linear process. In the context of being informed, take small steps, brings more awareness and empowerment.

If Expectation = Outcome - feel good

If Expectations are High and Outcome is Low - feel bad due to the gap between

If Expectations are reachable and Outcome meets or exceeds the expectation leads to more confidence and forward movement.

We need to acknowledge the different levels of peoples status/willingness.

Short term experiments, one hour/one day/ one week projects.  
Allow plurality. Solicit visions from people.

Many people are demanding that the leaders set up/allow others to go off and do projects.

### **Accountability = zones of control.**

Everyone has a zone of control. To what extent is the group looking at the whole enterprise that there are leaders and followers. A center control. If there is a middle, outer folks won't act without checking with the middle.

An essential part of the vision is how we function as a community. (What we want to be doing is secondary.)

Each cell functions as a center. Each part sees itself as the whole as well as part of the whole.

Get rid of the old leadership model. Upstairs/downstairs.

He or she has a bright idea carries it out, try it themselves. Honor the idea and suggest support/ask them what they would need to follow up on it. This is a reiterative process.

Keep track of ideas for when some one with that skill comes along.

Let's have a directory of people so that we know who to speak with.

Bulletin board.

Name tags at steering meetings.

Typical behavior: always look to the person that's overworked because they are the doers.

Write down ideas to enrich group process.

### **VISION**

Let's pretend that it's 3 years down the road and celebrate what we have achieved and your contribution feels right and the community is working well/the whole picture.

Proposal: Handout of a guide for meeting leadership roles. NCO teaches facilitation.

Vision describes the shared future we will create. (The who, what, why)

Includes:

Mission(s) - the vision in physical concrete terms; projects

Values - fairness, thrift; expressed as behaviors

Interests - expressed as goals

Aspirations - desires/ ambitions.

converting the vision to strategy (goals/milestones) using OSIR

outcome indicator: act of creation that includes systems and qualities

400 acres of farmland/50% of households have gardens

Farmer's Market becomes 5-day/week and is year-round.

Mair's building is purchased by a non-profit - healing/spirit center

Solar on all public bldgs

Recycle/resource center that reuses everything - distributes

No household needs more than one car/city-owned shared cars/trucks

Transportation hubs installed through the area.

Network to Covelo, outlying areas.

Energy conservation plan that reduces

People's attitude realizes that we have access to all with out needing unlimited choices

We are a source of life/shift toward stewardship

Healing Center

New Hospital

Re-inhabiting Willits

Rail Villages - link to town transport

Co-housing, blocks of housing that have group gardens, wells/cisterns  
Children will have recreation that is healthy, learn about plant and animal, all living skills in a new high school.

Civics that include the reframed values.

Non-violent communication is our language - a consciousness of self-owning/responsibility/acknowledgement of others worth.

People spend much time growing and preparing food with rich, fulfilled social interactions.

Healthy living leads to healthy children/meaning/mattering/purpose.

Economic system based on real goods that can be traded, eg worm farms

Governance is watershed-wide and reflects diversity of all communities. Inclusive/proportional representation.

An apparatus for showing other communities to duplicated our efforts.

Willits becomes an example for this process and

Willits has at least 5 examples of new methods - transportation, education, governance, etc.

Eco-Village

Ordinances for energy efficiency, require solar

People learn to talk and work together so that they are productive.

Giving and receiving help, mutually. Especially elders who need help gardening their land.

Heartful work, not working for the money, but what feeds your soul.

The new hospital is a legacy project of green building.

Healing herbs planted in strategic places to be carried by the wind

Natural laws are appreciated and included in all decisions and plans.

Honor the balance of work rest & play, including hot springs

People who study Willits, come by rail and stay for awhile

High quality

We all talked about how long we have been in Willits.

Each community member is encouraged to have input on the vision.

Let's have rolling boards for people to put their ideas down.

Wrap up with feedback.

Willits projects should be on the website

Valuable work that needs to be spread and networked with other groups doing the same thing.

Peter Russell

Meeting ended at 6 pm

**Notes by Diane Smalley**