Table Notes from “Let’s Talk Neighborhoods: Neighbors Leading Neighbors”

April 25, 2015

Compiled by Martín Carcasson, Director

CSU Center for Public Deliberation

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes from the introductions (why they came, not details about who they are)** |
| "Head" of HOA, part of smaller neighborhoods, interested in better sense of organization |
| Most came because they were just really involved in their neighborhoods. No HOA members, all just concerned and informed citizens. |
| HOA Leaders (2), Neighborhood Night Out Organizers (2) (Park Lane Neighborhood for one leader). New members to the community (from Texas), Ginny from the CIty of Fort Collins, 1 resident from city park NB. |
| 1 informal neighborhood; 5 formal neighborhoods; 2 retired teachers. People have lived here: 14 years, 2 1/2 years, 3 1/2 years, 49 years, 15 years, 43 years. |
| - Two individuals used to have a neighborhood watch that has since dissolved, now they were having safety problems in their neighborhood - Neighborhood safety - Interested in being more involved in their community - Interested in learning more about how to engage neighbors - How and why do people become engaged |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes from Session 2: Responses to the video/intro** |
| +"Marry Durham"-- (one member had experienced something similar), students, parents, admins, faculty gathered to pledge affection and support to St. Andrews Episcopal church + Fort Collins is near engagement/attachment |
| o Positive: encouraging, uplifting, and doable, what not to love?  o Can identify with the video because of own love for the city, saw fort Collins in many of the examples in the video; tour de fat, bike friendly, fort Collins has a positive culture o Like the marrying the city idea, if I married Fort Collins, would I stay if they mistreated me?  ♣ Policies that put residents at a disadvantage would make me leave o Relationship with the city, the city has to love me back and not abuse me  o More public outreach programs in fort Collins is a proof of the city loving its residents – also personal responsibility o All places demonstrated have gross roots in getting the citizens involved o The city has to have the resources to make this work o It all starts with people- people have to be in on the ideas in order for this relationship to work o Some areas of Fort Collins are as bright and fill of people as Manhattan o Lots of activities in Fort Collins to get citizens involved o Liked the marry analogy if marrying a city  o If things get worse- you stay and fight it out  o The minute the problem comes from somewhere else, you lose interest  o Would you leave your spouse if they got fat? |
| Good reactions, many liked the video. Noted that many cities do a variety of different things. Saw many things mentioned in the video happening in Fort Collins, focusing on the town being inclusive based. New Belgium brewing and other large companies in the area were seen as 'co-creators'. |
| Video presentation inspirational--agreement on this around table. Fort Collins is a lovable city. Need to make neighborhoods lovable.   Good examples of good and bad neighborhoods. Work together to make it all better. Neighborhoods shouldn't be in competition. Learn from each other to improve community and quality. |
| Impressed/appreciate the thoughts I live here half the year, live in a retirement community the other half - bring the fun back into an aging community |
| -city does most of these things --agreements -was a good video -thinking about who to share it with - many would appreciate it, especially related to transportation |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes from Session 2: Question set 2: What do you value in the city/your area of the city/neighborhood? o What are your happy places? Your Fort Collins “love notes”? How and where do you connect with others? What are barriers to physical and social connections in your area of the city? How have you previously shared those barriers with neighbors, neighborhood leaders and/or the City government?** |
| + CSU events (football games) + Bohemian Nights, downtown festivals + Kid-friendly/family community (Water fountains in Old Town, fun, safe) + Balance between kid and adult activities + "World class" Senior center (Should it be named "Community Center" to invite all ages?" +/- Old Town centered city  -Parking/traffic -Isolation (some people live very far from downtown) +MAX -City needs to be more broadened from CSU +/- Love/hate relationship between Fort Collins and CSU -CSU is dominant, people who live here year-round feel like they have no power - Focus around community as a whole rather than just students - Students don't only live on campus, become part of the community, they don't always respect it -City should inform community members of student activities/parties + Invitation to participate/connect people by inviting students to be part of HOA,etc to become more engaged/involved + CSU attracts many people to Fort Collins +Advantages of a University town: better school systems, economics, love of city +City Works  -Should be done more than once per year - Needs proactive participants - Better communication--- getting the word out about meetings + Parks system/Nature in the City connect community +"Play"--places to have fun |
| Common grounds Services and support from neighbors |
| Love Notes: Tour de Fat, 4th of July Parade, New West Fest, Color Run, Cemetery Crawl/Senior Stroll, Poudre River, Foothills, Horsetooth reservoir/rock, Oak street plaza, FoCo Cafe, Museo museum, Downtown at Christmas, summer concerts, museum of discovery.  Value in City/NH: Always something to do, many friendly people, many people engaged in the city/community itself. Fort Collins appears to be a "Destination" (many people moving here from other areas.) People like to take care of each other and help out other "inhabitants" of the city |
| Like Christmas lights in Old Town. Old Town is attractive. Bike friendly. Open spaces. How do we build upon all this?  Like the university, community college, PSD community/environment. Increase assets and new ideas. Education is our future. |
| What are the fun places in FoCo? City park Old town - lots of changes, little sense of grief for what was, excitement for what will be, updates on what the renovations will end up looking like would be nice Transformer boxes, pianos Tour de Fat New Belgium and other breweries Business community Lincoln Center First Night: NYE celebration with activities for families Parks and Trails New West Fest Foco MX Simply, the people of the city make it what it is, they are the most important part |
| -parks, trails, bike lanes --lots of parks, always one close --brings people together --3 different skate parks --dirtbike track -utility boxes, pianos --partnership w/ Bohemian Foundation -murals -senior center --classes, nutrition, medical, exercise -South side of town is "lacking" --community garden going in soon -needs better transportation (buses) --24/7 -farmer's markets |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes from Session 2: Question set 3: What are you concerned about preserving, protecting and enhancing? What is important to you in your City? Your neighborhood? Is anything threatening those items/places/things of value? Do you feel that you are in partnership with the city to protect those things? Is it adversarial? How? When?** |
| Parks/places of "play" Art |
| o Income and high prices  o Development and depreciation  o Traffic and transportation  ♣ Busses are always pretty full  o Student housing |
| Concerns to preserve: The history of Fort Collins, many losing memory of important events and people in Fort Collins history.  Threats: Increasing development. Tensions: Stadium, Cost of living, transient populations ("if you build it they will come issue of providing extra housing for these populations.), the train. City partnership: City is not a director, but does not seem like an adversarial relationship. |
| Need to be more inclusive to increase common effort. Want less traffic and trains. Is the car the best approach? Downtown development and connectivity crucial.   Make Old Town area roped off as pedestrian area only. Transportation loop around FoCo.   FoCo is growing--how do we learn to love the growth and keep FoCo lovable with the growth? Can we get the newcomers who come to FoCo to love it? How do we accept newcomers?   One person from San Diego said that a problem there was the challenge of transportation with growth. Cars v. bikes.   Have lost the friendly welcome feel in neighborhoods (the person who comes to welcome newcomers in neighborhoods). |
| Enhancing transportation other than cars - Idea to shut down main streets to cars and open them for biking, walking Growth: the city should focus on the safety of walk and bike programs - Does little good to have lots of bike lanes or places for people to walk when its dangerous to do so Older people want to walk too Walkway over or under College? Have to figure out how to make any solution work for both older and younger individuals - two opposing communities you have to meet in Fort Collins |
| -walkable areas -improve transport -meeting places in neighborhoods --currently meeting in coffee shops, etc. --multi-complex (innovative idea) ---food court, meeting rooms, markets, aquaculture, businesses, housing ---place where more than 10 people can get together - bring food, can copy/print, movie nights, etc. --using clubhouses in some neighborhoods --why can't classrooms/churches, etc. be used? ---they can, but they would need to be repurposed ---who to coordinate with? ---people need to know these places are available -we need to invest in things that make life work for US --helps communities thrive -city park supposed to provide meeting place, but can be "risky bet" when planning event a few days out -newspaper has stopped reporting on some community events, difficult to get exposure |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes from Session 2: Question set 4: Are there tensions between the City and your area/neighborhood in managing problems or responding to issues/concerns? If so, what are they are they related to? What are the primary causes?** |
| o Income: between low and high income areas and the city  ♣ inefficient prices for things |
| Issues/Tensions: Lack of information distribution, rarely do people know of fun/interesting events going on in the city. Often seems like a gap to connect different age groups together or inform groups (such as young people) of events around the city. There are struggles to get older generations involved. Separation of the North and South areas as the South begins to grow and the North remains the center of social activity. |
| CSU needs to figure out housing for its students; neighborhoods shouldn't be responsible for student housing. Students are leaking out into neighborhoods. |
| - Enticing people to use other transportation - Work with disabled people Idea that the city should be sectioned. 3 little towns in 1 big city: old town, mid town, and the south  What makes it worth going to each side of town? Find these and make them events for people to explore - Events that will take you from one part of town to another  The Max is a step towards a more workable transportation plan in Foco, not enough though |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes from Session 2: Question set 5: The City of Fort Collins wants to be in relationship with its citizens, as this book suggests. What does that mean to you and how would you recommend it be done?** |
| o Love fort Collins o Generally a healthy relationship o Fort Collins does a good job taking care of its citizens |
| Engage in spreading information better. Lack of communication between people and city council can be improved.  Provide incentives to increase action Provide public mailings of neighborhood events.  Advertising on bike trails/park benches, etc.  Make the website easier to navigate. (Easier access to permits, provide a 'permits' link. |
| Someone had a traffic concern when they put in a new school on Horsetooth and Taft and the city responded and fixed it in a very timely manner.   Need more info so neighbors know who to connect with in the city. Inter-connective activities? More comprehensive grants? |
| -open government to include community organizers -more city involvement in community events: movies in the park, team sports, activities, etc. --helps people get more involved in city ---have you invited city members? ----no - no community interaction w/ city --neighborhood night out: Wade Troxell came --could do activities in neighborhood clubhouse: presentations, learn more about city --involve city in good things, not just issues --doesn't need to be formal - just some sort of interaction --you can invite city members yourself -Poudre fire authority is rigid about using meeting space --separate entity from city: contracted to provide fire services -as homeowners, only heard from city when there are issues; this is it, don't cross the line" can be 'rigid' or 'dictatorial' -Hixons -likes that FC has "big city but small town" feel - want to keep it like that (community, people know each other, etc) - what is city connection to HOAs? how do they communicate? --example: property management companies have city contacts |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes from Session 2: . Question set 6. Do you believe the city is doing enough to nurture citizens that love the city? What else could be done? Can you share an example of a co-creator or anchor persona (perhaps how they have served that function? (mentioned in the video)** |
| o The grants the city gives for events/ cleanups  o The city helps out of love not abuse or threat  o The city is doing a pretty good job ♣ Accessible in many aspects  o CSU has many services to help and support its citizens who need help getting back on their feet or back on track in any way |
| Needs a position that connects citizens with city information, increased transparency/action from the city (or this new position).  Explain better what next door is and how it can be used.  Have the city provide more notices about events/education opportunities. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes from Blue Sky exercise** |
| • Mountains • Music • Beer • Bike friendly • Nature/wildlife • Open space • Houses • Trails  • Old town/alleys  o Christmas lights • Being able to walk from place to place  • Dog friendly  • Max like transportation on all major routes in all directions • Extending the trolley • City needs to pressure railway to improve  • Infrastructure  • Maximum movement for people and control machinery • Pedestrian control  • Stricter on cars • Quality of life  • Infrastructure  • Accessibility |
| Love the river/old town area, growing split between North and South areas. Focus on open space, mountain/nature focus. Noted increased development in the city and a discussion about building heights and height restrictions and how they may change to affect the skyline of Fort Collins in the future. Strong importance of green space. Noted friendliness of citizens here.  Schools and hospitals also pointed out as defining points for a community Strong identification with large local businesses (new Belgium, Otter Box, etc.) who serve as co-creators. Discussion over the rise of chains in the old town area (subway and lule lemon) and their potential negative effect on the community of FC. |
| MAX good start for connectivity. Under or overpasses for railroad tracks running through town? Care package to new babies. Connect neighborhoods through existing HOAs. Keep natural beauty. Water conservation important. |
| -like the people -EV stations -Horsetooth -trees/shady natural spaces -mountains -parks, playgrounds -old town need to expand bike library --can we add this idea to bus stops: get off bus and get on bike? -CSU -races -Bohemian Nights -Tour de Fat -music venues, local music -businesses open to community --some not happy w/ big events because it leads to people coming downtown but not entering stores |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes on Session 3: the Boundaries discussion and/or Session 5: Topic A Boundaries** |
| Group felt that more coverage from local channels and newspapers would be a good way to inform people. They proposed the idea of newsletters but all agreed a newsletter is not the most effective way of communicating either. the big question was how do we get most people into meetings so they can participate and get their voice heard. The group agreed that people will become invested in the topics they love or hate. One participant mentioned quarterly meetings held to keep them consistent and well known. |
| • Split on Lomis does not make sense • Neighborhood isn’t even on the map –Mantz isn’t on there: What else is missing? • Not a good idea to cut off neighborhoods around university • University north needs improvement  • Neighborhood regions should be smaller o Don’t care about other neighborhoods in the colored areas • The bigger it is, the less important or less impact there is • Some neighborhoods have more people in it than others |
| Difficult exercise, few understood it. No one at the table was on next door so that had to be broken down first.  Noted the Parkwood area should gain its own NB distinction.  Difficult to define a neighborhood (Tennyson Heights marked a sa subdivision, bet less of a formal NB).  Old Town West NB seen as too large.  Most members identified with North and West areas.  Want to add Parkline Towers as a NB.  Discussion about use of air b and b and problems with other renting their house to unwanted guest in the NB. Parkwood NB has responded by requiring that all homes must be owner occupied.   Topic A Moderate amount of connection/officers could be beneficial. They could address conflict between the city and people allowing a 'point person' to calm conflict. Only want a little more structure, understanding that some NBs like being individuals. |
| City Council boundary on map we wrote on way too big; needs to be split up more. Unique college differences. NE too big, huge disparities between the neighborhood areas there. Need commonalities to create communication between neighborhoods. More meaningful to citizens vs. just structure for city usage. CSU on-campus stadium--how can citizens be heard? Lots of tensions between CSU's plan and rest of citizens; this is a shared need between neighbors.   Clear ideas on developing goals?  Concerns about losing trees, retaining natural growth. Should develop a list of needs. Neighborhood organization should help organize leadership groups together. City needs to be specific--identify 12-15 neighborhoods districts; bring them things to identify some of those issues. |
| Neighborhoods don't have set boundaries, they fluctuate and overlap based on particular identities i.e. Drake really divides my neighborhood; Drake is such a busy road that I never cross it on foot, so I don't know anyone on the other side of it Bike lanes should be more about transportation and less about recreation |
| -school district boundaries --agreement -most people don't cross major roads --college, etc. -different boundaries serve different functions --HOAs, city council districts, etc. -demographics depending on area have different needs --students, families, k-12 kids, seniors -find central area and develop boundaries: trying to find common ways to unite communities --lakes, schools, etc. -elementary school vs middle school boundaries -boundaries already kind of developed by wealth --individual homeowners --multi-family associations --students -one individual has many wealth demographics within one school boundary |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes on Session 5: Topic B: • Communication between City and Association** |
| most people currently contact the city through phone or website. the group felt like the website was an amazing and quick resource although not everyone has access to it, it connects to 90% of the people. The group liked the concept of knowing your representative or liaison for their area.  they felt like some of the communities have a trickle down information system where the larger neighborhood informs them through the bigger one and they feel negative about that and it is timely.  One participant mentioned the access Fort Collins app where you can address a problem through picture and location to get it fixed. however there is not much awareness of the app and its usage. |
| o Formalized communication system will take care of a lot of the problems neighborhoods are facing o Need activity in order for this to work  o Websites now a days o Unclear nowadays  o Formality = continuity  o Email lists with a least 50% of households o Likes the citizen liaison rather than government to monitor o Nextdoor, facebook- but not everyone uses social media  o There are other communication outlets o Bring back city neighborhood copying  o Training sessions on communications  o Restructuring of neighborhood communication systems o Survey neighborhoods |
| Residents struggle to gather groups together to address the city council. If no group is assembled, they feel like they will not be able to have that much of an impact. |
| HOAs already existent, have structure, just need venue for leaders to come to neighborhoods.  Barriers between city/neighborhoods: Too concerned with neighborhood problems to reach out. Does city council meeting listening sessions help?--effective?; some people not aware of it; online posts for all city notices/problems/new issues.  Improve info connections: put on buses, self registration system, management groups--good contact for city to use, common places people gather: info kiosk in Old Town, bike trail signs near neighborhoods, library, MAX, mall opening, senior center, athletic clubs, city events (New West Fest, Lagoon Series, Tour de Fat, etc). |
| Barriers - People have to engage What makes it difficult for people to engage? Personality, life priorities, time - We would invite city personnel to our neighborhood meetings Role of the older people to work on the city, and whoever else has the gree time - Generational learning between neighbors is huge, leads to skill transfer Finding commonalities between neighbors and individuals at the city could lead to success |
| (where is session 4: "geographic engagement" on this notes page? the following notes are for this section): -where does FC fall on continuum? -don't know what FC does not --more informal --represented by districts --no real official communication -like the idea of grouping neighborhoods and having a couple liasons --agreement with this -one individuals says that people rarely come to board meetings -one individuals says police came and did presentation, people were very receptive -problem: dealing w/ peoples' time, people are very busy --how do you get people interested? --old + young together: telling stories -people show up for activities - that's how you start getting people involved --dog walking ---physically connecting --engaging w/ neighbors --pools ---people still come at different times, don't always connect --letting people play with dogs -will always be divisions: school districts, pools, etc -how specific do we want to be about boundaries? --major roads --one individual says that their neighborhood is very different --difficult to cross major arteries in order to stay connected |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes on Session 5: Topic C: Contact Points within city government.** |
| A lot of members felt Amanda is a great resource but not all people know they can call her up. Some of the group members put others in contact with her and feel like a middle man even though they don't need to be or are not responsible. People primarily use informal contact and felt like a liaison could help for specific issues. |
| o Who would you trust more? o Depends on you philosophy o Don’t believe in bureaucracy for neighborhoods o Who takes the lead?  o Let the city be the bad guys  o Not enforceable o Formal structure in neighborhoods works better trying to utilize resources o A neighborhood should be allowed to have some direction about development o City is good when there are issues in a neighborhood  ♣ Takes conflicts out of neighborhoods |
| They also request that the city identify the correct people to go to when they have a problem. (ex be directed to the right department) so that they can quickly address the problems at hand.   Want to be able utilize 'Access FC', but could use more awareness for using the online platform. They ask to continue to promote the app. Maybe information could be included with utility bills. It needs another marketing push.   Could advertise on refrigerator magnets to be distributed at neighborhood night outs.   Make the FC website easier to navigate. |
| Have council member know these HOA/organization contact lists.   Manageable to city but intimate to citizens?  Create subset to be easier to access, online, central signage? |
| Neighborhood watch neighborhood meetings Leaders in neighborhood being in communication with city personnel Responsibilities of neighborhood leaders include: - being the voice of the community - representing community - keeping people connected |
| Facilitator: liaisons? how would that work? -integrate climate action plan - needs to involve neighborhoods -"who you gonna call?": liaison should be able to help individuals navigate issues -just HAVING someone is huge - interface with, know about events, help with issues --one point of contact --show up to events so people know who to contact --knowing city is here to help --could let neighborhood know about city things i.e. construction, event that impact neighborhood, etc. -formalizing current system -education for neighborhood: water, etc. -co-creators w/ neighborhood: coaching, help w/ project funding -city does a lot for FC, but people just aren't aware of services -identify common issues cross-neighborhood Facilitator: what would be the role of leaders with bigger neighborhoods? -invite people into process --oversee communications, networking - not directing -would be a big job/responsibility --big turnover rate -lots of retirees take on board positions --many other demographics not represented --focus can be outdated/not current -make scope bigger = not as concerned w/ own area, dealing w/ other issues, can't deal with own community issues - don't like this idea -contacts via HOAs -communication facilitation skills need to be known -long process - know community, then combine from there |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes on Session 5:• Topic D: Geographic Designee** |
| the group liked the ideas of liaisons for specific problems and how they could contact other neighborhoods to see how they dealt with the issue. The group questioned the formality of the role and mentioned how formal roles that are elected take time but gain more awareness of their position. they said voluntary roles can work well but less people know or are aware who it is and what their role is that they play. |
| Did not cover this area |
| Request a city presence at NB night outs.   'Block captains' could help NB awareness, could walk to each house to distribute information personally.   Could be NB watch leader, connected to LETA for emergency notifications. |
| Leaders: identify needs/roles, identify assistance and support. Need expertise planner. Volunteers, possible elections. Look at other cities' examples. Possibly pool together HOA organizations: they have history, commonalities; city can coordinate meetings between several neighborhood HOAs/HOA presidents/representatives. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Any comments on the powerpoint questions?** |
| People did not like the questions and thought they were framed for certain outcomes and support. They said some of the questions should have been on the point ranking like the one question was. |
| Some of the questions had some odd wording, little feedback on next door questions. |
| Q1: we don't necessarily want another social media tool - perhaps meetup is not the right tool, or not the only tool to use |

|  |
| --- |
| **Any additional notes from the initial discussion?** |
| o Need smaller groups to start these things like neighborhood night out  o Frustrated with the city but on the flip side, Fort Collins has one of the best websites and support systems for the city and is better off than many cities across the nation |
| Citizens can have a big role if they go directly to their city council member. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Any other notes that didn't fit anywhere else?** |
| Initial reactions to Session #5 o Good idea  o What is the outcome and what are we trying to achieve?  o What is so wrong that we need to change?  o Formality isn’t going to change the dynamic much  o Too much formality is a bad thing o What has lead to this discussion? Why are we here? If it’s not broken don’t fix it  o HOA’s work fine o HOAs have a lot of power in controlling what residents can and can’t do  o Would be impossible to insert an HOA into existing neighborhoods that don’t have one o City is growing, were getting to big, so the city is saying we need more structure in the government to keep it under control |
| One guy made a suggestion to host a neighborhood clean-up event as a way to increase engagement in a neighborhood - He suggested that a neighborhood could clean up private and community property and work together which would help them form strong bonds |
| -trains are an issue for one individual --wait times, traffic -should be able to interact w/ people from out neighborhoods at events like this one |