

Transition Amherst Meeting – 5/24/12 – Notes

Present: Molly & Emily (Co-Facilitators), Rick, Gabor, Wendy, Jon K., Betsy, John W, Bernard. Visitor – Ben Brennan. Tina.

Announcements: Regional Phone Call was Weds. 5/23
Next Tuesday 5/29 Second Local Roots Coop meeting at Town Hall

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 7 at 7:00 (no potluck) at John R. White's house – 265 Stanley Street. Wendi will facilitate, assisted by Rick.

Meeting began with check-ins, reading of Mary Oliver poem “The Journey” and a community building exercise where each person shared one strength and one weakness.

The “Great Party” (G.U.): Rick passed around a plan for the G.U. based on meetings of subcommittee. Discussion of title, start time, length of time. Eight hours too long for most people. What is our mission/vision for that day? Who do we think is going to come? If our goal is to attract a large number of people, we may need to tailor length & shape of event.

Our core outcome mission of G. U. is to kick off/ empower working groups to get things going. People have responses to many aspects of the draft. Need to focus rather than jumping around. Do we need to brainstorm or to make decisions? Can subcommittee take comments and rework?

Date needs to be decided by whole group. After looking at dates Sept 22 & 29 which have conflicts and Oct. 6 which is Columbus Day weekend, October 13 looks pretty clear. Tina has another commitment but might be able to juggle. **Group decided to choose October 13 as the date.**

How to proceed next? Emily volunteered to edit proposed G.U. schedule before next meeting. Tina asked if this respects the thinking and work of the group? Emily doesn't need permission to do a draft. Bernard spoke out against referring back to subcommittee. Tina wanted to hear what people are excited about - their passions/ ideas that went into the draft plan.

Discussion on making G.U. be a Half Day. **Group voted to approve proposal that the party be a half day (4 or 5 hours) with two uncertainties.** Better to be shorter, leaving people wanting more. A 5 hour event with a fantastic charge all the way through. Better participation if shorter. Simpler if not lunch. Hold 1 – 5, end with cake?

What are we trying to accomplish at G.U.? Lots of attendees may have never been to a Transition event. Offer people some education, answer their questions. Make it enjoyable. How can we provide education for people in this short time?

What experiences we want people to have? What goals do we want to accomplish? Who is our audience? Pick priorities. Ask if what we are planning will meet goals? Step back, decide which items to include.

Goals for G.U.:
Form working Groups

Education: (Why is Transition important? Why now?)

Celebration

Sense of identity and belonging to this place & community

Invite people into cooperative community leadership.

Empower others to take these ideas and run with them (as co-creators, co-leaders).

When organizing large events, the process is not a straight line. It is okay that we have been talking about this for months. Honor the process we are having where we sometimes agree, sometimes disagree. Keep breathing, keep being flexible.

When organizing big events, helps to state a premise. Attracts people to come. What is our premise? A clear premise is needed for event focus. Q: What is the difference between a premise, an objective, a mission and a goal? A premise states assumptions and beliefs.

G.U is less a conference and more of a celebration, a party. We want to cast the net really wide. Present something about History (Historical Society time line?)/ the Elders (oral histories?)/ Young people (kid art, a band?). Create a festive environment so people will feel good about living in Amherst, will have a sense of belonging to this place/community, will see our community over the span of time. Engage lots of different people and groups to come. Brief presentation about current problems. Perhaps a panel the night before with Big Names to present the dilemmas we are addressing.

The group agreed to continue discussion of G.U. next time.

Regional Phone Call: Last time 6-7 towns. This time 4 towns, lower energy. Longmeadow got corporate support. Raised \$1000 from WMECO (agreed to promote MassSave) Wendell – doing it without an unleashing; has goal of 5 working groups up and going, then dissolve initiating group, a different model. Next Regional Phone Call in July.

All Things Local: Great attendance at first meeting, many key players in Town, an older rooted group. (At earlier meeting at Food For Thought about local food coop, were many folks under 25, including students.) Good small group conversations. How to make it happen – fast moving train. Many people nodding heads, lots of energy in room. Beautifully designed 2 hours. Accomplished lots of things. AV stuff (Wooster people via Skype) and group dialog. Will help get Transition Amherst name out there.

Looking for grants and funding: writing proposals to 3 + funders. Intense politics about location. Which values, bigger vision will we hold to for this project? How local (vs. imported)? Relationship to profit-making? Lots of questions. Hope there will be strong core group with common values and purpose to hold a bigger vision where we keep the values of Earth Care/People Care/ Fair Shares.

Outreach: Emily working on two projects: 1) Diversity and 2) Senior Center oral histories of elders. Gabor mentioned guy from Putney who wants to talk to initiating groups about how much they follow Transition model. He will follow up with those interested to schedule: Rick, Emily, Bernard, Betsy, Tina, Gabor. John W. mentioned ideas of participating in Survival Center Perpetual Food Drive as Transition Amherst, and advertising on Public Radio which costs \$\$.

Outings: Have been small attendance – need more publicity.

Big List of Names: Tina has lots of names from the All Things Local meetings and would love some help entering names on our list. And getting names to/ from John Gerber. Who can do this entering of names on Google Group list? We can all add people. It is not a Data Base from which can pull out names for different characteristics. We also have Google Docs outreach lists, different categories.

Website: Capacity to have different blogs. John Gerber has started. Gabor would like people to start using that, since Gabor can't do it all. John Gerber sent a list to Tina about what would like to include in Website. Daniel H. from Putney website can train other Regions.

Respectfully submitted, Betsy Krogh