



## Envision Arlington Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2019

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room

Present: Juli Brazile, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Sue Doctrow, Greg Christiana, Kelly Lynema

Absent: Scott Lever, Cindy Starks, Jen Toole

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### 1. **Introductions and Announcements**

### 2. **Approve January minutes**

Approved unanimously.

### 3. **Budget Review – new task group requests**

Juli introduced the FY 2019 budget, explaining that there were several new items for discussion, including banners and displays, transcription services for the Fiscal Resources Task Group, money for a speaker series for the Diversity Task Group, and printing for Sustainable Arlington and the Reservoir Committee. Additionally, the group needed to have a larger conversation about the plan for precinct meetings.

#### Banners and Displays

Elisabeth estimated that \$350 should be budgeted for tablecloths, a fabric banner, two six-foot banners, and a town-day banner for the Envision Arlington tent. All present approved the expense.

#### Fiscal Resources Task Group

This group is conducting interviews with town officials and requesting money for a professional transcription service. All present approved the request.

#### Diversity Task Group

This group had originally requested \$1500 for a speaker series. Juli said she will speak with the group about getting partial funding from other sources. All present agreed that if they can do an event in the \$500 range, they should. If they are actively planning a larger event or series, Juli will ask the comptroller to allow us to set aside additional funding for the next fiscal year, and will work with Michaiiah to develop a plan for such funding in FY2020.

#### Environment

Money is always set aside for printing Reservoir brochures. The Standing Committee agreed to set aside another \$200 for Sustainable Arlington, for a tablecloth banner produced for EcoFest.

#### Governance

Greg described his work to date on outreach to Town Meeting Members via email. Working with Len Diggins, they have collected publicly available Town Meeting Member email addresses, which members of the Standing Committee have added to, for private use by the Standing Committee for Town Meeting Member outreach initiatives. Some TMMs had requested that their email be kept confidential; the Standing Committee determined that since this database is not being shared publicly, those email addresses could be added to the list. In all, 196 email addresses were collected.

Greg loaded the list onto MailChimp and sent an introductory test email to the group describing the Standing Committee's ideas for Precinct Meetings. Of the 196 email addresses, 190 successfully received the message, and 60% had opened the email to date.

The response thus far has generally been positive. Greg has received 34+ replies, many indicating that they either want to organize or participate in a precinct meeting or requesting Envision Arlington's assistance in planning such a meeting. Others shared their location preferences or how they see a precinct meeting working out.

Next steps:

- Juli will talk to the scheduling assistant in the school department to see if she is willing to help TMMs select meeting dates and verify that if a precinct meeting is held on the same date another meeting is scheduled for a school location, the location fee is waived for the TMMs.
- Juli suggested that TMMs who are interested in holding a precinct meeting need to share the word with their constituents.
- Kelly said that DPCD has created guides to the various amendments affiliated with the department and can share those packages with TMMs for precinct meetings if that would be helpful; Juli indicated that she is happy to talk with precincts about the polystyrene ban proposal.
- Greg will pull TMM replies into a spreadsheet that the rest of the Standing Committee can review.
- Sue and Juli will start to assemble a guide to holding a precinct meeting (e.g. getting meeting space, setting an agenda, food, etc.)
- John Leone said he is happy to use his TMM listserv to help promote what Envision Arlington is doing to support precinct meetings

After this conversation, all in attendance approved setting aside \$200 for printing materials for precinct meeting handouts as necessary.

#### Committee Support

Juli discussed how the Standing Committee had decided in prior meetings to pull out all the stops to promote the online Annual Town Survey this year. In support of this effort, the group, with assistance by Joan Roman, will be doing a series of boosted Facebook posts, which will cost a total of \$100. Greg mentioned that we can see the analytics on this to gauge effectiveness of the promotion and determine if this is a method we want to use next year as well. All present approved the expense.

A final budget of \$3486.12 was approved unanimously.

#### **4. New logo, new banners**

Juli asked the group for feedback on the Envision Arlington tagline: "Your voice shapes Arlington's future." All in attendance approved.

The group discussed a possible future expense of a backdrop for indoor events (e.g. at the Senior Center or library). Juli said that we need to confirm whether we want the Envision Arlington budget to remain at \$3,000, or we will need to ask for more money from FinCom. The group agreed to hold the budget at its current amount.

#### **5. New business**

##### EcoFest – Sunday, March 3

Brucie Moulton, co-chair of Sustainable Arlington, had asked if the Standing Committee would like to staff a table at EcoFest. She suggested that although Envision Arlington isn't directly connected to this year's theme of "power", the message would be that a resilient, connected community becomes that way because they have groups like Envision Arlington who get people involved in their communities. Those in attendance felt that while the event is a beneficial community event, Envision Arlington doesn't have anything specific to share at the moment. The Standing Committee will reconsider for the upcoming EcoFest Week (April) and next year's EcoFest.

#### **6. Survey update**

Thus far, the survey has more than 3600 responses, nearly 20% of Arlington households. The town is doing boosted Facebook posts this week and the week before the survey closes.

Juli asked if there were any other ideas for additional promotion. Elisabeth said that the article in the Advocate had helped, particularly in reminding individuals to submit paper surveys. Those in attendance said they would share the survey link with their networks, possibly with a link to the Advocate article explaining the survey and how it informs town decisions.

Juli shared that the offline kiosk version of Survey Monkey only works with an enterprise level subscription, which we don't have. Although we haven't had any calls for volunteers to help administer the survey, we need to test this option out early next fall if we are going to offer it again; we need to make sure we can deliver on our promise.

#### March 2 to-do list

The survey closes on March 1. Juli asked for a volunteer to pull the paper surveys and signs from the libraries and the Senior Center on March 2; Elisabeth volunteered to see if the Senior Center is open on March 2, and offered help. Juli will turn off the Survey Monkey link on March 2.

#### **7. Next steps in 2019**

Jen Toole is working on a plan for updating the vision statements. Juli reported that we need a clearer understanding on how the vision statements get refreshed during the course of town business. For example, how should planning processes get incorporated into Envision Arlington's vision statements? What is our process for expanding or changing the statements?

The original Town Meeting vote establishing Vision 2020 mandated that the vision statements be updated every year. The statements were created in 1993 and some include problematic language; others do not represent recent planning processes. Sue suggested that instead of updating, which may not be feasible, they should be reevaluated every year.

Juli asked if Envision Arlington should create one giant report, edit it, and then report each year to Town Meeting on what has changed. Elisabeth, Sue, and Kelly suggested that this may be too big a task to accomplish on an annual basis; Elisabeth pointed to the amount of work that goes into creating the Envision Arlington text for the town's annual report as an example of how much work maintaining a larger report would require.

Greg asked whether this was a question of what we are required to do or how we want to be accountable and transparent. The Standing Committee charge is to create and maintain the vision/process. This could include incorporating work by reference when other departments have completed major projects or planning processes.

The group generally agreed that we cannot change the existing nine vision statements top down; it requires community input. Sue suggested that we report the nine vision statements to Town Meeting, report what vision statement Envision Arlington would be working on for the coming year, and ask Town Meeting to accept that report.

Kelly added that the Committee could look at what plans have been completed with substantial public process that could serve as updated vision statements, and then report to Town Meeting that Envision Arlington is adopting those statements as updates (endorsements) of the plans and ask Town Meeting to accept that. We could also address problematic language immediately and ask for Town Meeting to accept those revisions. We could then develop a plan for how to address the remaining visions over the next few years and ask Town Meeting to accept that plan.

Juli suggested that some of the Envision Arlington groups should convene around the vision statements that most closely pertain to their work:

- Sustainable Arlington, Reservoir Committee and Spy Pond Committee could address energy and sustainability and natural resources (and perhaps recreation)
- The Diversity Task Group could address the statement on diversity

These groups could then report the following back to the Standing Committee:

- 1) Whether the vision statement still applies or if it needs to be updated
- 2) The group's suggested update OR a process for engaging stakeholders and the public around updating the language

Juli offered to draft a memo to the committees and task groups to request their assistance.

*Submitted by Kelly Lynema*