

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
OAK PARK LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Approved Minutes
Saturday, May 31, 2014
Oak Park Conservatory
615 Garfield Street
9:00 am-10:30 am

Attendees:

Colette Lueck - Village
Peter Barber – Village
Andrea Ott - Village
Steve Gevinson – D200
Matt Baron – Library
Bruce Samuels - Library
Paul Aeschleman- Parks
Clarmarie Keenan-Township

Absent:

Jim Gates-D97
Denise Sacks - D97
Jeff Weissglass – D200
Victor Guarino-Parks
Ade Onayemi – Township

Others Attending:

Teresa Powell – Village

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 am by Colette Lueck. Ms. Lueck noted that no members of the D97 school board could be present due to a retreat scheduled for this weekend. She welcomed new members Matt Baron and Bruce Samuels of the Library Board and Andrea Ott of the Village Board.

She provided a brief overview of the history of this committee, whose formation is intended to further intergovernmental communication to clarify the tax structure and explore intergovernmental options to reduce taxes or limit tax increases. She noted that staffs of local governments had compiled an impressive list of collaborative efforts already in place to share staff and services.

However, drafting of a “One View” for the Wednesday Journal from explaining the purpose of the group took quite a long time, as changes had to be approved by all six governments. She also noted that the intergovernmental effort by the Village, D97 and Parks to explore shared space has drawn strong negative comment.

Approval of Minutes

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of April 19, 2014. Ms. Lueck noted a correction to the minutes. The minutes were approved as amended.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
OAK PARK LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Structure of Intergovernmental Committee

This topic was postponed to the next meeting, since Jeff Weissglass and Jim Gates, who were leading this discussion, could not be present for this meeting.

Update Regarding Joint Meeting with CFO Presentations

Ms. Lueck noted that there was a desire to move quickly to conduct a discussion among all of the boards, but also a desire to get the details right as Mr. Weissglass has proposed in his comments prepared for the last meeting. She reported that she had discussed this with Mr. Weissglass and he suggested moving ahead with plans.

Mr. Aeschleman noted that he has been part of this committee since its founding and that dialogue sessions have been a focus of discussion; he commended Mr. Weissglass and Mr. Gates for their efforts in this area. He proposed the following: Each government would give a short presentation, followed by small group discussions, rather than formal written questions to the boards. He referenced Mr. Weissglass' three options for discussion: basic facilitated dialogue, world café or open space. Ms. Ott noted the use of the world café model at an initial meeting of the comprehensive planning project and asked how the input was used. Ms. Lueck noted that this drove the structure of the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Lueck suggested that questions be prepared in advance in a world café model, and that individuals move among groups (scrambling original groupings) with each group going into greater depth in their responses as they build on initial comments.

Mr. Baron expressed concern that the number of residents who might attend might make this hard to manage, and wondered how diversity could be assured. Ms. Lueck noted that the collective concern of the group was that too few people would be interested in coming to such a meeting, rather than too many. Mr. Barber noted that only two people attended a community meeting on financial issues. Mr. Aeschleman noted that the same few people tend to come to such events.

Mr. Aeschleman suggested that a fixed set of questions be developed for the groups to discuss. A proposal was made to discuss the impact of a 5% reduction in taxes on each local government. Members of the public could attend and observe the interactions of the members of the boards. He suggested that we might request suggestions from the community, which the I-Gov committee could select from and organize.

Ms. Keenan suggested that it was too early to ask for questions from neighbors and that a world café might be a later project; education of the public could take place by observing the discussion among the members of the boards. She noted that we cannot assume that all members of each board understand the challenges and concerns of all other boards. She proposed that each board provide a basic budget presentation using a template provided to assure ease of comparison among the boards. She recommended visuals (i.e. pie charts, etc.) and a moderator to lead the discussion, leading to a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges.

Mr. Gevinson expressed support for Mr. Aeschleman's proposal but asked what need we are addressing. We need to set an agenda. Mr. Aeschleman noted that the discussion will be valuable even if the public does not attend. Mr. Gevinson noted that the diversity of board opinions would be fascinating. Mr. Aeschleman suggested that this exercise become an annual dialogue.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
OAK PARK LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Mr. Barber responded to Mr. Gevinson's question about the purpose of a meeting, noting that everyone complains about taxes and this meeting will be an opportunity to ask whether the public values the services provided or would rather eliminate them. He asked whether this could really be a discussion or if staff might be defensive about any changes.

Mr. Aeschleman noted that board members lack information about the full scope of services provided by all of our boards and that this type of discussion could be thought-provoking. Ms. Lueck noted that this could accomplish the goal of budget transparency if the CFOs can distill budgets to key concepts and budget drivers. For example, are budget drivers the same or unique for each budget? How does this create potential for intergovernmental cooperation/shared personnel?

Ms. Lueck noted that this committee will set the tone and purpose of such a meeting, put the CFOs at ease so that they can present well. Ms. Keenan noted that this would operate as a tutorial for local government officials.

Mr. Barber noted the challenge: "What can't we give up?" and mentioned state-mandated fire and police pensions as a key driver for the Village. "What can we do without and what are we stuck with?"

Mr. Gevinson noted that Oak Park routinely provides services not available in adjacent communities, and mentioned the high school swimming pool as an example of a service given up elsewhere. "What are we, and what do we want to buy?"

Ms. Lueck asked, "Who are we as a community?" Accurate information is needed, including an accurate comparison of taxes and services, such as police and fire emergency response... a rapid response is what we pay for. She asked what the tradeoffs and tipping points would be. She proposed a series of meetings, starting with a mutual understanding by public officials and then leading to community education.

Mr. Aeschleman suggested a series of questions and a template for presentations: a world café with all local public officials. I-Gov would organize and facilitate the meeting and establish topics for discussion, which would be distributed to the boards. He proposed that this meeting be video-recorded by the Village for future viewing.

Ms. Ott asked if budget cycles vary; schools use July-June, others are calendar year budgets. Ms. Lueck noted that the first step will be to propose this idea to each local board; a written proposal from I-Gov is needed. Mr. Baron suggested calling it an Intergovernmental meeting (on "steroids") with a Saturday time and possibly make it an annual event.

Ms. Lueck asked Mr. Aeschleman to draft a proposal to present to boards. Mr. Barber suggested moving ahead by fall, avoiding next year's local elections. Topics were discussed; Ms. Keenan proposed a culture of dialogue, others mentioned that budgets could be included or not.

Mr. Gevinson proposing that the idea of this meeting be presented to the boards, not topics; and asked that each board be asked for five topics to include. I-Gov will prepare the final organization. Ms. Keenan asked that every board provide their mission statement as a point of reference.

Ms. Lueck noted several areas of current collaboration: Early Childhood Collaborative (CEC), Success of All Youth, Youth Interventionist, as examples of a common mission in support of the community. Mr.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
OAK PARK LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Aeschleman noted that economic development impacts all governments and noted anticipated hot dog sales at Day In Our Village. He added that the CEC is a national role model.

Mr. Aeschleman suggested including COO's. Mr. Baron asked how they would participate. Mr. Aeschleman noted that CFOs would likely respond to budget questions.

Further discussion on the proposal led to a request that all boards be advised and consulted before the end of June, if possible and that I-Gov meet by mid-July to move ahead with plans. The likely meeting date would be Saturday, October 24 or November 1, 9 am to noon, probably at one of the middle schools. A detailed agenda should be ready by September. Mr. Barber recommended a facilitator, Ms. Ott recommended that goals be clearly presented for the meeting. It was proposed that all six governments share any costs associated with this meeting.

Reports from Taxing Bodies

Mr. Baron reminded all present of the June 1 Day In Our Village and encouraged all to attend.

Mr. Aeschleman invited everyone to attend the grand reopening of Ridgeland Commons on June 14. He noted that Stevenson Park improvements are being made cooperatively between Parks and the Village; conversations on cooperative use of real estate and staff continue with D97 and the Village.

Mr. Gevinson reminded everyone of the high school graduation on June 1.

Next Meeting

Ms. Powell will send a doodle for the next meeting, tentatively scheduled for July.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

SUBMITTED AND RECORDED IN THE OFFICE OF:

Teresa Powell, Village Clerk