

Inclusive Community Task Force
April 9, 2008
Minutes

Present: Amber Corrieri, Cheyrl Inyang, Linda Butler, Chris Rehmann, Debbie Lee, Randy Podhaski, GP Foote, Mary Kitchell, Barbara Woods, Jane Acker, and Denise Denton.

Absent: Bobby Hunter, Cherie Wandling, and Betsy Hoffman.

Minutes of the March 26 meeting were approved.

The group discussed the input received at the April 3 and 5 public input sessions.

Observations:

- Most of those who spoke were generally affirming of the contents of the report.
- Many liked the phrase “neighborhood ambassadors” to describe a needed role in neighborhoods—someone who greets newcomers and helps them connect to the community on a friendly, person-to-person basis.
- Many of those who spoke supported the idea of a large multicultural festival. Several points related to this were raised:
 - How would this differ from the FACES festival, which was held recently and was not extremely well attended?
 - Typically, such festivals celebrate the various ethnic groups which form a community. How would the diverse socioeconomic groups in Ames be represented or included? Issues affecting welcome and inclusion on this basis seem to be more significant in Ames right now.
 - There is an important distinction between *events*, such as a festival, and *processes* which lead to change. Events can help stimulate awareness and appreciation, but don’t always lead to much “mixing.”
 - Sioux City has a large and very successful festival sponsored by the Diversity Coalition which includes a wide variety of ethnic and religious groups sharing music, dance, food, as well as educational elements.
- Problems have arisen because of the lack of experience of many in Ames with people of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Inexperience leads to fear of embarrassment, anxiety about how to interact, uncertainty about how to talk to each other. Did the task force miss the boat in addressing these issues more directly?
- Should the report include “recommendations” to highlight points we’d like to emphasize and publicize?
- Many of the opportunities cited in the report concern life change and attitude change, which could be considered to be the province of the faith community. How can we encourage that group to take action?
- Task force members are welcome to write minority reports to be attached to the majority report when it is submitted to the City Council on May 13.
- Debbie Lee’s personal statement will be attached as an appendix to the report as an illustration of the challenges and opportunities which face our community.
- Explanations of “responsive classroom” and “community conversations” will be added for the sake of clarity.

NEXT STEPS:

- All task force members are asked to review the minutes and comments from the April 3 and 5 public input sessions. Please note any points that you feel were overlooked in the draft report and should be included. Be specific with the language that you feel should be added, and where the material should be inserted.
- If you would like to add a recommendation section, include other points, etc., this is the time!
- These revisions should be sent to Jane (acker19@mchsi.com) by noon on Wednesday, April 16. She and Barbara will incorporate them into a new draft of the report, which will be circulated to all task force members before the April 23 meeting. We will hope to get it to a preview group (Mary, Betsy, Denise) first.
- At the April 23 meeting, revisions and additions will be reviewed and voted on by all task force members present. What we have at the end of that meeting is the report we'll submit.
- **NEXT AND FINAL MEETING: APRIL 23, 4:30 PM, AMES PUBLIC LIBRARY**
- All task force members are encouraged to be present when we present the final report to the Mayor and City Council on **Tuesday, May 13.**