

**GR Participatory Budget Team
Meeting Agenda
WMCAT-Training Room 3:00
to 5:00pm
July 29, 2021**

Attendees:

Steering Committee Members in attendance:

(1st Ward) Mallory Patterson, Adnoris (Bo) Torres, Michael Scholten (2nd Ward) Dotti Clune, Doug Booth, Lisa Knight, (3rd Ward) LaKiya Jenkins, Pastor Kenneth Hoskins

City Staff: Asante Cain, Lou Canfield, Gricelda Estrada, Doug Matthews, Laura Olson, and Sharra Pencil

1) Welcome

- a. Doug Matthews – Gave brief introduction and explained his role in the process. Participatory budgeting is something that he has wanted to do for years and through the budget and ARPA allocations process, the Manager raised the concept that some funds should be set aside for the wards to distribute. At the same time there was an active conversation about participatory budgeting, the Commission accepted this concept and today is our first step in this process.

2) Introductions

- a. Name
- b. Ward
- c. Connection to community
- d. What do you know about the Participatory Budget?
 - **LaKiya Jenkins - 3rd Ward** resident for her entire life; Director of Operations at LINC Up
 - **Michael Scholten - 1st Ward** resident, lives near Garfield Park; Former Board President of Garfield Park Neighborhood Association, also on Housing Appeals Board
 - **Mallory Patterson - 1st Ward**, born and raised on the Westside, but now lives downtown; Co-Chair for Heartside Neighborhood Association and a part of the quality-of-life process
 - **Dotti Clune - 2nd Ward** resident for 30+ years; Involved in neighborhood association, forestry/tree matters, as well as housing and social issues in the community.
 - **Lisa Knight – 2nd Ward**, born and raised in the Grand Rapids area; Works in different areas in the city
 - **Adnoris (Bo) Torres - 1st Ward (Westside)**; Works with fathers and families
 - **Pastor Kenneth Hoskins - 3rd Ward** lifelong resident; Pastor at Alpha Omega Ministries, and elected to the School Board
 - **Doug Booth – 2nd Ward**; grew up in Grand Rapids; COO HealthNet of Grand Rapids

3) Brief PB overview (see PowerPoint, additional notes below)

- a. The role of Steering Committee
 - i. Question: Mallory – what does ARPA mean?
 1. Doug – American Rescue Plan Act – funds that came to and through local government. Need to follow five defined priorities (see ppt)
 - ii. Priorities are influenced by conversations
- b. Introduce the City Staff

4) STICKY NOTE Activity: What do you hope to get out of this process?

a. What do you want for yourself? (Pink notes)

- i. Examples given: learning the process, expand community building, grow relationships, meet neighbors, engage youth, engage new Americans, get to know ward and neighborhood better, deeper understanding of the Grand Rapids community, deeper understanding of budgeting process, build unity, focus on results, engagement with community
- ii. Verbatim Notes:
 1. I hope to gain a process that is fair and equitable for each ward but more specifically for the 3rd ward (which has historically been marginalized and underfunded).
 2. Unity as a community
 3. Meeting more of my neighbors
 4. To contribute to making the City and my ward a better place for everyone in it
 5. Outlook to New Americans
 6. Youth Engagement
 7. Transparent Authentic Information
 8. Visionary Actions
 9. More connections throughout the community
 10. Get to know my ward/neighborhood better
 11. More engagement with community
 12. Greater understanding and knowledge of budgeting and allocation
 13. Gain a better understanding of the entire ward, not just East Hills
 14. Results that match our goals
 15. Planning for my family and wards future
 16. Greater understanding of the budgeting process
 17. Long term improvement
 18. Learning the PBP process
 19. Deeper understanding of GR community
 20. Expand community building skills
 21. Building new relationship
 22. Results driven
 23. More connections throughout the city

b. What do you want for your Ward? (Yellow notes)

- i. Post it's. Engagement of all residents, transparency, growth, access, authentic resident voice, restored hope, this is the beginning not the end, equity (equalizing the voices in the room)
- ii. Verbatim Notes:
 1. That community members feel they can play a significant role in improving the neighborhood
 2. I'm not looking for anything for myself, however I would like to receive a better understanding of how I can assist with making things more equitable for all.
 3. As I stated earlier, the 3rd ward has been marginally underfunded, I would like to see the 3rd Ward receive its share of funding that would bring us (the 3rd ward) to a place where funding would be adequate enough to advance the 3rd ward residents to a level of equality.
 4. Engagement of all residents

5. Transparency
6. Growth and access
7. Restored home
8. Community involvement and input
9. Authentic resident voice
10. Opportunity to use their voice
11. Increased economic opportunities
12. Trust in city leadership
13. Action and vibrancy
14. Underserved are elevated
15. Sense of ownership and mutual trust with government and community
16. To continue to actively participate in local policy
17. Boost resident leadership
18. Equity
19. Beneficial projects/activities
20. Build bridges/breakdown silos
21. Increase civic engagement through understanding
22. Workforce opportunities
23. Better understand broader community needs

c. This is information that we will be sharing to the PBP and they will be here virtually next week. Their orientation will be based on what we're setting up today.

5) Breakout Session 1: What do you feel you will need to be successful in your role? What concerns do you have? (10 mins.)

a. Regroup & Report

- i. 1st Ward – What are the limitations (Legal and process)? What is the problem that we are trying to solve? Are the dollars restricted across the group or can we pool resources? Can we leverage outside funding? Who are the nonresident stakeholders we need to engage (Example: GRPS). Concerns around communication and engagement: do we have the appropriate funds to engage with the neighbors? Issues with language/tech barriers, lack of access. Don't want the same results as the normal process. Need accessibility, open communication to those who cannot normally come to meetings, also concerned about how we deal with ongoing maintenance, reoccurring costs
- ii. 2nd Ward – Clarity on the process. Need community involvement at every level - need to make sure that we are accessing all of the voices. Don't want things to be rushed so that we can be authentic. What kind of supports do we have to engage community, considering our timeline? Concerned about conflict with people's choices being shot down by commission, do not want that to be an underlying factor.
 1. Lisa: When you said that this was something that we need to engage with folks on but there are 5 buckets are these guiding points? Do we have to use that? If we have to use that then it is not really community choice.
 2. Doug –Great question, it is one that I will need to take back. These are the conditions that we have to put on the funding. Are there ways to work on that, maybe. It's a good question.
 3. Pastor Hoskins – It's kind of misleading, it (slide) says these are to guide engagement and solicitation. When I hear that it's guiding me, that says I don't

necessarily have to do it.

4. Lisa – But anytime when you put something up like that, you are priming my mind. Is this something we're primed on or community voice led?

Continued 2nd Ward thoughts: Shouldn't be dependent on government funding. Should feel that they (the community) are able to participate, including the younger voices. Not one of the same old "swoop in to save you" initiatives where everyone walks away. Equality and quality are not the same and making sure that we understand the differences and that equity is what we go back to as guiding principle. How do we get as many voices as possible to the table with a short timeline? Feels more like a quick fix with the timeline.

5. Doug - If you all say September doesn't work, or even October or November, it's my job to take it back and have the conversation. The promise that I make to you all is that whatever you give me to take it back, I will stand by it. The principles of the concept here is that you all are in charge and I will remind them of that, even if it is messy or inconvenient.

- iii. 3rd Ward – Does each ward have funds for coordination of engagement (fliers, dinners, etc.)? Don't want to cut into the money that has already been promised to community. Concerned about the timeline. People have been hit hard by the pandemic, there is historic marginalization in the 3rd ward as well as a lack of trust in government, so we need to rebuild trust. Understand that the residents come to the table with a wide variety of ideas that will not fit into the list - how can we address the ideas and honor them still? Hope is that this is more than a one-time thing and hope that this is something that the City does in the future. Voice matters – need engagement to uplift voice, support from Commissioners and City staff as well as guidance on what the budget is about.

1. Doug – I had a supervisor in Clearwater, FL and they said with the right amount of time and money you can do anything. You all have legitimate concerns.
2. Pastor Hoskins – For the funds, you mentioned \$400,000. Where did that come from?
3. Doug - That was the Durham amount. They started this in 2018 and they allocated that funding for additional support.

6) Breakout Session 2: How do you want to be organized as a group? How can we help? (10 mins.)

- a. For example: By subgroups (budgeting, marketing), collectively, by ward, etc.

b. Regroup & Report

- i. 1st Ward – This is a "both and" (hybrid like ward 2). Feedback and responding, any graphic that goes out to the community, they need to be able to give feedback on (for example: tear offs on door hangers). How will we do voting? What is the problem statement for the ward specifically? Bring ward into the process to go through plans that have been in development. Look at ASP and MP, (for example: water infrastructure). Looking at tasks to be able to make sure that things happening. Much of what the other groups said. Looking at other city plans, utilizing what we have as wards in the spaces that already exist.
- ii. 2nd Ward – This is a "yes and." Bounce ideas of each other, information gathering from within each ward, consensus in each ward but then as an entire committee see if there is consensus. How to help: more clarity, funding split determinations, best practices for this process, where will budgetary guidance come from? (ex: if a

proposal comes in that is very expensive, where is the budgetary expertise?)

1. Doug - That is something that staff would be engaged with. To provide clarity PBP has provided a book that is a beginning to end guide of doing this kind of work. We are not just bringing them on to do an orientation, they will be doing technical work as well and they will provide guidance along the way. We'll be closer in focus next week, establish what our goals are, what the structures be, and how will we interact with each other. Want to make sure that there is time for this.

iii. 3rd Ward – Should be organized by ward - want to be individualized and represent the voice of the 3rd ward. In the past they have been marginalized and underrepresented, so we want to make sure that the ward is represented well. Want to get ideas from each other but want to keep it specific. Bring in trusted individuals and entities. How can you help us: Give latitude and liberty to express opinions. Take back ideas and advocate on our behalf - don't cut through what we have proposed. Consistency and stay the course (3rd ward has been promised things before that don't go through with). Let the voice of the community be the guide. Follow through.

7) Breakout Session 3: What questions and concerns do you have? Questions for PBP? (10 min)

a. Write all questions and concerns

b. Regroup & Report

i. Doug – Can we discuss together?

ii. Lisa – When the larger populace decides what projects are done, will we be engaged in the implementation? Is there a choice process? Who gets to do that?

iii. Doug – There are two tracks on that and one of the challenges that I have run into many times is the desire to hire X to do Y which often makes sense, but can sometimes be against the law. In these circumstances we have to define the scope and do an RFP.

iv. Lisa – I hear you, but it always is the usual suspects at the table. When you are trying to engage the community to serve and benefit them, and they should have a part in the vendor selection, needing to be equitable and allowing community to have hands in that work.

v. Doug – We do have programs to encourage diverse member representation. Also have program to build capacity with vendors. That is a good question to ask them next week.

vi. Pastor Hoskins – Does this still all come back to the City Commission for a vote?

vii. Doug – It is still public money coming out so it has to follow a process.

viii. Pastor Hoskins – What if we recommend someone and they vote it down?

ix. Doug – There is accountability there: (1) Voting to advance the project (2) What does that look like for implementation? Two decisions for the Commission.

x. Lisa – These are the things that I live with and work with all the time and that is my biggest fear. What happens is, we are the faces that are out there doing this work and they trust our voice. We are putting ourselves and our word out there.

xi. Michael – Just because we are a part of the process doesn't mean that you can't oppose the results

xii. Lisa – I hear you, but we have to be able to build a bridge to bring the community together.

xiii. Asante – The thorn you'd identifying is that the work could be done by the

community and then not accepted?

- xiv. Lisa - This has happened in a number of leadership entities in the community and the people in power don't accept it.
 - xv. Pastor Hoskins – Living in Boston square / Oakdale neighborhood, and I'm on the Board for Process for Amplify. Been pushing for \$500,000 loans that people can get for minority or women owned business is Boston Square Together. Got a CPA and community partnership agreement. The loan for those businesses, they are giving it out without consulting the neighborhood associations. We were told it wasn't going to happen and now it is. I'm dedicated to this work and continue the work, but we need assurances that they will be authentic in these efforts.
 - xvi. Mallory - Something that we talked about was not only are we in this position where we are learning the process, we are creating a roadmap for the process in the future. What role and accountability will the City play in transparency and communication? What expectation do the Commissioners have of the process?
 - xvii. Doug – That may be something that we want to circle back around and talk about. Each of you, it might make sense to go back and have this conversation with your Commissioners that are in the ward, in the space that is most comfortable for you.
 - xviii. Michael – need to sell this to the Commissioners.
 - xix. Mallory – What is the red tape and the conditions? We have to explain these politics to the community (permits, etc. just read it as another no). Much educating that needs to take place in this.
 - xx. Pastor Hoskins – Will some of that be in the manual?
 - xxi. Doug – I'm not sure specifically.
 - xxii. Mallory – For example, the City and County don't play well together (Wi-Fi in parks example) there are different parameters no matter who you talk to, many layers of people. Learning as we go, and we need to communicate as we go.
 - xxiii. Doug – Do we need to ask before we ask for ideas?
 - xxiv. Mallory – Yes, about the five things that they need to fit into.
 - xxv. Bo – When you have an idea, and like you said, you need money and time, how do you support that?
 - xxvi. Michael – We should come up with an end-to-end process to try and think through as much as we can to make sure that we can affect it. Need to plan, should be public.
 - xxvii. Doug – Should there be a website, separate from the City's?
- c. Compile list of questions to share with PBP in advance of orientation

8) Next Week/Next Steps

- a. Next meeting -Thursday August 5th orientation with PBP
 - i. Meeting Dates & Location
- b. Homework: Things to consider/works on for next week
 - i. Familiarize self with PBP Manual.
 - ii. Think about:
 - 1. How do you go about Educating the Community of the PB process?
 - 2. How do you go about soliciting their ideas and engagement?
 - Doug – don't attach cost considerations
- c. Contact list -distribution

