

## NIDAT MINUTES FOR September 10, 2008

The North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team (NIDAT) met on Wednesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008, in the second floor conference room at the City Hall in Mason City. Those in attendance included: Libby Lemke, Dan Gapinski, Jane Ginapp, Robert Walker, Aimee Kern, Marshall Huffman, Mary Lopez, Diane Wilson, Rev. Jack Gannett, Linda Woodcock, Lahoma Counts, Steve Wendt, Hal Minear, Barry TerHark, Steve Tynan, Jennifer Andrade, E. Valdez, Darshini Jayawardena, Melissa Wexner, Elaine Olson, Joy Drennen, and Darcy Skellenger.

Jane called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. A sign-up sheet for the Lunch by Central Park event was distributed for set-up and tear-down. Jane introduced Aimee Kern to facilitate the Strategic Planning session. Following are the notes from this session:

### Strategic Planning Discussion 9/10/2008

**NIDAT Mission** – *To work to inspire and empower the diverse population of North Iowa to recognize, value and respect all people.*

Discussion: Does this statement capture the reason for the team's existence?

- Key points are inspire and empower
- Question: Does the City Council of Mason City see our mission/purpose as current and viable?
- Suggest 'welcoming'
- Suggest 'embrace'

Decision: keep current mission statement.

**NIDAT Vision** – *To be an integral partner in the success of the community.*

Discussion: Does this statement capture what the team is striving to achieve?

- Does not mention diversity
- Is simple and easy to remember, should not be too lengthy
- Suggest 'embracing'

Decision: add the words, 'embracing diversity' at the end of the statement.

**NIDAT Environment** –

Discussion: What is the service area?

- Mason City and surrounding area
  - Cerro Gordo and surrounding counties
  - North Iowa
- Question: does grant or city funding limit or dictate our service area?
- Research may need to be done to assess what makes sense for service area in the future
  - Example: Mason City/Cerro Gordo are in Iowa Region #2 which consists of eight counties

Decision: Continue to refer to North Iowa area as service area. Group will readdress in future after strategic objectives are defined.

Discussion: What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of our current environment?

- Strengths
  - Caring people
  - Small town environment, less anonymity, problems bubble up and get noticed
  - Newcomers feel North Iowa is peaceful and safe
  - Available resources are more readily available than in larger cities
  - Easy access to people, opportunities to network
  - Educational facilities
  - Demographics, we have diversity
- Weaknesses/opportunities
  - Resistance to new ideas
  - Resistance to new people
  - Small numbers within diverse populations, can be isolation
  - Communication about groups and events is poor
  - Language barriers
  - Undocumented newcomers can be fearful
  - Community members can be resentful and make assumptions about the status of others
  - Program cutbacks, limited funding, limited people resources
- Threats
  - Information about outside hate groups targeting Iowa

**Strategies:** *What are the teams objectives or goals for the next 1-5 years?*

Suggestions made:

- Address City Council of Mason City
  - Define connection to council
  - Define role in city (town hall meetings, react to events)
- Define structure of NIDAT team
  - Flush out by-laws
  - Procedures
  - Committee structure (eg. committees for fund development, events)
  - Terms and elections for officer positions
  - Development of membership
- Look for opportunities for networking and partnering
  - Developing a welcoming committee partnering with area schools, companies, medical facilities, retail community
- Look for ways to assist with facilitating communication of needs new comers
- Develop a plan for communication of purpose and strategies of NIDAT
  - Utilize media
  - Celebrate successes
  - Highlight individuals or businesses
  - Role in town hall meetings
  - Define role in responding to events related to diversity and inclusion
- Develop an award system

- Provide or sponsor speakers/presenters to go out in the community to educate and raise awareness
  - Cultural sensitivity
  - Diversity and inclusion
  - Focus on younger generation
  - Partner with schools
- Look at current NIDAT events
  - Decide whether to continue with the two annual events
  - Change or enhance two annual events
  - Add events or frequency of events
  - Consider an annual event or educational opportunity for a selected grade level for school children
- Institutional memory – develop a structured way to stay out in front of groups
- Follow up on recent town hall meeting on race relations
- Explore possibility of developing study circles
- Partner with law enforcement to explore ways team can contribute

#### Next Steps:

- Review suggested strategies:
  - Do they:
    - Address environment?
    - Fit within Mission?
    - Work towards achieving Vision?
- Prioritize strategies
  - What are the most important goals for the team for the next 1-5 years
- Select strategies using team consensus
- Finalize strategies by clearly defining and recording them in a plan
  - Do the strategies pass the SMARTS test?
    - Specific
    - Measurable
    - Attainable
    - Results oriented
    - Timely
    - Stretch
- Define tactics which will be needed in order to achieve strategies
- Assign accountability for each strategy and/or tactic
- Regularly review and revise plan

Respectfully submitted.

Aimee Kern

The meeting adjourned about 5:15 pm. The next meeting will be held on October 8<sup>th</sup>.