

Montpelier Social Justice and Economic Justice Committee

January 15, 2019

5:30 PM, City Council Chambers, City Hall

Present: Sigrid Olson, Neville Berle, Lalitha Mailwaganam, Julia Chafets, Sidney Collier

Guests: Ginny Burley, Bob Gowans

Committee reviewed Principles of Emergent Strategy, and took note of these:

- Useful work has to be based on the quality of relationships between individuals.
- There is always enough time for the right work.
- What you pay attention to grows.
- Change is constant. If you accept this, change doesn't seem as overwhelming.

A suggestion was made to start each meeting with a short and shared reading, video, etc. to ground the committee in something that will be inspiring, informing, and build trust among members. Committee members will rotate this responsibility. Neville Berle will bring a reading for next meeting.

Discussion around the living wage ordinance: Group felt like it needed a specific, smaller question to answer and guide the work as opposed to the very large task of researching living wage ordinances as a whole.

Questions generated:

- Why is the cost of living so high in Montpelier?
- What is the good a living wage can do? What is the harm?
- What has been the effect on other cities that have instituted a living wage? (both positive and negative)
- What is the most expensive / burdensome thing about living in Montpelier?

Ear to the ground: If the committee was going to focus on doing research about the social and economic situation in Montpelier, what would it do?

- Collect data / research that already exists.
- Collect qualitative data of our own.
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- Table on Town Meeting Day
- Information on Front Porch Forum

After much discussion, the committee decided to table the living wage issue and focus on data collection.

Task: Committee members should review the charge before the next meeting to make sure it still resonates with this decision. New draft charge: “For the next 12 months, the committee will articulate the state of social and economic justice in Montpelier, and use this information to articulate a vision for the future based on community input.”

Task: Sigrid Olson and Julia Chafets will design a process for the committee to create a timeline of work for the coming year.

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