



## Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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# Minneapolis Community Circle Conversations

## Bryant Square Park Participants / Attendance Agreement

BILL HANNON

Facilitator

AMY GAGSTETTER

Recorder

Commitment to attend all sessions:

10/22 10/29 11/5 11/12 11/19  
(yes) (no) (specific date exceptions)

Cultural Group

Age

NAME

PHONE

55 TIM NOLAN 871-7955

1801 LaSalle Ave #106 55403

YES

European American Male

20's Jen Aspengren 823-5631

5436 Park Ave S.

Yes, I think.

European American Female

40's Kenneth Remick Brown 729-8463

3529 Cedar Ave S #2 55407

ye.

African American Male

Early 60's Penny Ives 822-4921

3840 Elliot Ave S.

Yes, if possible

European American Female

Early 30's Nava Walker 824-4262

3740 3rd Ave S 55409

African American Female

Late 20's Jackie Byers 824-4262

3740 3rd Ave So 55409

African American Female

Early 60's Mary Jo Erdman

17 1st Ave So Apt A309

Mpls, MN 55401

European American Female

MPS Bryant Square  
entered 11-24-99

File folder  
green-

Amy, FYI

Post-it	Date	# of pages
Fax Note	10/27/98	3
To	JOANN NELSON	
Fax#	627-3204	
From	BILL HANNON	
Phone#	429-4147	

Tues am. 10/27

Joann -

Per your phone call yesterday afternoon,  
 here's the 10/22 list —

also including an updated copy of the  
 form I had a chance to tweak (after  
 crashing the first draft shortly before  
 last week's meeting) —

— what do you think! I'll have it  
 with me Thursday in the event we get  
 more participants, or want to redo original  
 with photos

Respectfully  
Bill

330-1649

Jefferson Family and Community Ed.  
627-3202

FAX, FAX, FAX, FAX, FAX

To: Amy Rodquist CB185

From: Joann Nelson, Coordinator  
Jefferson Family and Community Ed.

# of pages including cover 2

Questions? Call 627-3202

Message:

Dick wanted me to gather more info: Age, address, cultural group and gender. I tried to do just that on the form Bill Hanna created. If you have questions, please call me at 627.3202. Joann





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FOR NEW DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES  
FOUNDED 1974

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February 1, 1999

Mr. Dick Little  
Education and Housing Equity Project  
2211 Riverside Avenue  
CB 185  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454

Dear Dick:

Enclosed are our reports summarizing the discussions at Barton Open School and Bryant Square Park. We determined that the final sessions at both places provided a solid overview of the group's conclusions and key thoughts. Consequently, in this envelope the first piece for each site is a report on the final evening session, which serves as a summary report for the site.

If you have any questions about these reports, please give me a call.

Good luck in the next round!

Sincerely yours,

Doug Nethercut  
Executive Director

Community Circles  
Final Session: Making a Difference What is the Community's Responsibility?  
Bryant Square Park  
Thursday, November 19, 1998  
Recorder: Lynette Utez  
Facilitator: Bill Hannon

***The following is the summary from the Community Circles group that met for several weeks, at Bryant Square Park, to examine the challenges surrounding the issues of education, housing, and segregation in the Twin Cities Metro area. The following notes are a summation of the groups' discussions that took place over the weeks.***

**QUESTION:** What were some of the main area of agreement in your discussions over the last few weeks?

1. Busing is not a solution
2. We need to have a positive attitude towards our schools
3. We shouldn't blame the kids. Any child would have troubles if put into the environment some kids live in (i.e. poverty, single parents)

**QUESTION:** In thinking back to the past sessions, what seemed to be the key ingredients of the solutions you chose?

**Session 2:** Consensus was on Viewpoint #3 (Institutional racism in housing, hiring and education leads to inequities) as the biggest factor, although, all viewpoints could be included as *part* of the problems.

**Session 3:** Consensus on viewpoint #4 (Reinvest in the core cities and inner-ring suburbs) although challenged the idea of homeownership as the only means of investing in the core cities.

Also viewpoint #5 (Focus on jobs and transportation). There was discussion around the perception of a contradiction of corporate subsidies and living wages NOT being paid to employees. Wondered if we are allocating our subsidies appropriately in a way that reflects communities needs and values.

Consensus was also on part of viewpoint #7. They didn't like the title of the viewpoint (let the market regulate itself) but rather liked the last sentence of the description – "If government would stop over-regulating land use and eliminate unnecessary administrative processes for builders, building affordable housing would be more appealing to the private sector and more units would be built. "

Notes  
From  
Bryant Square

Sessions  
2, 3, 4, 5

\* There weren't any  
from Session 1

Comments on viewpoint #6 (Begin a system of mandatory requirements for mixed-income development) focused on the last sentence – “Through mandatory provisions requiring the inclusion of affordable housing units in all new multi-unit developments and providing bonuses to developers who do so, all people will eventually have more housing choices, and neighborhoods will be more diverse racially and socio-economically.” The group felt that multiunit housing in the suburbs was not an effective solution. Communities of color would not necessarily want to move out to a suburb. Affordable housing should be across the metro. Affordable housing should not be limited to the suburbs. **The goal of affordable housing should not be to relocate people from the city to the suburbs.**

#### **Session 4**

There was agreement to disagree with viewpoint #4. The group felt that a free market is **not** as incentive to improve the education system. The last sentence in that description is wrong- “The public education system should not only access the advantages of such a system by offering qualified students vouchers for the private school of their choice or by introducing the services of various contractors into the mainstream public schools, but it will give public school districts an added “incentive” to improve themselves and retain their current students.”

The group discussed viewpoint #8 (Reversing the patterns of de facto residential segregation will truly desegregate schools) and agreed that to deal with de facto segregation we need to **educate** ourselves out the this dilemma.

In response to viewpoint #6 (Culture specific schools, as opposed to integration, increase the educational opportunities of student of color) the group agreed that cultural specific schools are not the answer. Although, they are an option for a few years of education – not the whole K-12.

Some general comments from the group regarding session 4:

1. There are benefits of mixing viewpoint #6 (cultural specific schools) with viewpoint #7 (make current schools more multi-cultural). While cultural specific schools have a role, making the current schools more cultural inclusive has more benefits. There was more agreement around the viewpoint #7.
2. Viewpoint #6 is a special case of #7 and #7 is the answer to #8.
3. There is a false presumption that taking kids of color out to an all white school will give them a good education.

Community Circles  
Second Session: What are the Reasons for Segregation in the Twin Cities?  
Bryant Square Park,  
Wednesday October 19, 1998  
Facilitator: Bill Hannon  
Recorder: Amy Gagstetter

## **What are the reasons for segregation in the Twin Cities?**

### **What were some of the issues of common concern within your group?**

The group felt that a lot of the reasons given for segregation rang true. Some expressed that there was a lack of male role models and that in turn may play a part in the attitudes of young black males in the inner city. There was a common sentiment that parents in poverty are concerned with survival and sometimes the importance/emphasis on education gets put on the back burner. Kids today seem to have a lack of respect for teachers, and respect is not taught in the home. Society has created an evilness that exists in schools and neighborhoods. Education was a concern around the table, and the home life of students attending Mpls. public schools was a concern as well. The members of the group expressed concern and confusion over the fact that people in the city are not willing to vote to raise their property taxes in order to fund education. The issue that people are not willing/able to see the global picture. There was a strong opinion among the group that the "ordinary" citizen's voice was not being heard.

### **What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?**

- View 2 was thought to have been a common view that many have
- When looking at all the all view points, one could pick out pieces of all views.
- The group had a hard time picking one point of view as the view on segregation
- They felt that view #3 was a strongly held view in many communities
- They felt that historical racism was a view that many held and that it was one that was perpetuated most often throughout communities.

### **Did your group have any action ideas?**

- This groups felt that by working on the viewpoint of #3, the institutional racism in housing, hiring, and education leads to inequalities, was one that could be changed. They felt that if individuals were to work on this view that it would be the most productive and positive one to change.

### **Other comments?**

The group felt that it really depended on where one was because each has their own thoughts and views on why racism and segregation exists. They felt that while some may hold each of these views, that it was more likely that there are pieces of each in people's view. They also felt it was hard to pick out only a few concrete reasons as to why these issues exist.

View Points on Segregation

**#1 Racial prejudice and discrimination cause people to live apart.**

- sounded like one of the components for segregation
- extremists on all ends may hold this point of view
- people want to live among people like themselves
- the driving force in this viewpoint is prejudice

**#2 High crime and poor schools drive people away.**

- this is a very detached view
- may be true of the upper middle class
- resources available in the schools are too hard to get at
- need more open communication between schools and parents
- need for an understanding of cultural communication
- some people take advantage of services offered by schools, many do not
- what about parents who can not read themselves? Young parents and parents who can not read or write are not able to help their children at home

**#3 Institutional racism in housing, hiring, and education leads to inequities.**

- perceived as a widely held view
- there is always hope that this will change

**#4 People like to live where they have elbow room**

- wasn't really seen as a cause of segregation
- was seen as a simplistic view of the world
- extreme view
- didn't really fit with the other points of view
- segregation and racism is too hard to understand to be pigeonholed into one view like this
- this view assumed one voice for all

**#5 Public policies and economic trends promote and maintain divisions among people**

- economic divisions to push individualistic attitudes
- showing individuals getting ahead on paper is not always an accurate reflection
- policies and practices on paper attempt to right the wrongs of institutionalized segregation, doesn't really work
- very abstract view

## Community Circles

### Third Session: What Should we do about Housing and Residential Segregation in the Twin Cities?

November 5, 1998

Facilitator: Bill Hannon

Recorder: Keiko Veasey

#### Discussion of Options:

\* Option #1: Enforcement of anti-discrimination laws should be stepped up by agencies already in place.

- This puts the responsibility of those being discriminated against – who may not be capable or able to sue or have the time to work with agencies. They may not have the time, energy, or money that is required for working with the “system.”
- Creates an adversarial environment
- Expensive and contentious
- Agencies are already overloaded.

Option #2: Limit new growth and expansion.

- They're doing some of this already.
- It's one-sided to say that only “white middle-class” are lured out to the suburbs. ALL middle-class are lured.
- How realistic is this option? Is it possible to contain growth and development?
- If you pass the cost of expansion to the developers, it'll work as a disincentive to develop out there.
- Right now, developers are being subsidized by taxpayers (since the cities have to build the infrastructure to support expansion). This isn't fair.
- Public Land Trusts are doing this, but not for the express purpose of reducing segregation, but rather for environmental and growth (reducing sprawl) reasons.

\* Option #3: Exclusionary zoning practices should be eliminated.

- Minneapolis has just as bad zoning practices. It's not just the suburbs.
- If put affordable housing in the suburbs, then the people are stuck out there – isolated, no transportation, jobs, etc...
- Affordable housing doesn't necessarily mean that poor people would be moving out from the city. Some poor people already live out there.

\* Option #4: Reinvest in the core cities and inner-ring suburbs.

- RENTERS
- Being a renter doesn't necessarily mean that you're not invested in your community.
  - This option perpetuates a negative stereotype of renters.
  - Try to involve renters in community in addition to increasing opportunities for home ownership.

- \* • Tax rate is high for renters. (Landlords are taxes, but the cost gets passed on to the renters).
- \* • Stability is a key to students' achievement. Stability leads to increased achievement and improved grades.
  - BUT, can't take away rental properties!
  - It's an "American Value" to aspire to homeownership and lots of space. Holding onto this value encourages people to flee to the suburbs as soon as they can.
- \* • Landlords must keep up building so that people feel comfortable living and *staying* there → for stability. You don't necessarily need home ownership, but rather investment in the community and neighborhood.
- \* • CCHT – a non-profit set up for ownership & renovation of properties. Since a non-profit owns the properties, there are lower taxes and therefore lower rents. Creates affordable rates rather than market rates.
  - Have to build more multi-unit housing in order for rents to go down. Single-family dwellings are not as efficient.
  - Poor upkeep of property doesn't necessarily imply absentee landlords. It could be a homeowner who doesn't really care!
  - Renters have little control over the costs of housing. They are at the mercy of the owner.
- \* • "If you bring in rich people to displace poor people, it doesn't help anyone because their wealth doesn't necessarily trickle over to their neighbors!"
- "Is area more important than people?"

Option #5: Focus on jobs and transportation.

- Even with an increase in suburban jobs, there are still more jobs available in the city.
- Busing in the city is bad. Is it possible to think that adequate transportation to the suburbs is possible? Start with improving the public transportation in the city!
- \* • Does this encourage development of jobs outside the city? Why should the city provide workers to suburban areas? Why not encourage development of living wage jobs in the city?
- Do need to clean up old steel areas in the city, and the riverfront area as well.
- What about investing in EDUCATION?? (e.g. public schools in the city!)
- \* • Some companies (e.g. Abbott, Honeywell) are building employee housing near to their locations. BUT, destroyed multi-unit housing in order to build single family housing – that has ended up being for moderate to upper incomes, not low income housing.

Option #6: Begin a system of mandatory requirements for mixed-income development.

- Economic barrier prevent people from living where they want.
- Do minorities even want to live in the suburbs?

- Agree with mandating mixed housing developments, but not at the expense of affordable housing in the city.
- \* • Need to consider the conditions of the community of houses that are built or refurbished. (Habitat for Humanity). Need to invest in the neighborhoods, not just in the house, or the residents will not be happy!

Option #7: Let the market regulate itself.

- Create market incentives for investing and developing affordable housing in the city.
- Maintain and improve current housing stock rather than demolish and build new.
- \* • Inclusionary Zoning – to create an incentive so that developers can still make money while building/developing housing that includes affordable housing.

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**General Discussion:**

- “To focus on only one option would be foolish!”
- “Each option has pros and cons.”
- One person likes #7 because can actually motivate people to do it. It’s realistic and shows promise.
- Always question statistics. Often statistics are used to perpetuate fear. Look at what’s behind the statistic.
- “There isn’t one solution. The values behind the solutions need to be examined.” (and look at how they fit in with different cultural values!)
- “Notice options where value is placed on people not on areas and space.” Not just who is where, but who is who!
- \* • With the phrase “poverty concentration” – shouldn’t just be concerned with “concentration” but with the existence of poverty in general!
- \* • Invest in people and community → put money into school and living wage jobs rather than into perpetuating fear of the cities.
- One believes that option #1 is a good starting point because we are such a legal society. “Even though it is very long and difficult, it is a good starting point.”
- But, you can’t legislate change...

BS 4 Doug

**Education and Housing Equity Project**

Recorder: Doug

**Bryant Square Park Group -- November 12, 1998**

**Session Four -- What should we do about unequal opportunity and achievement in schools?**

6 People, including one School Board member, plus Bill (moderator)

Participants viewed video on housing issues and then shared their reactions.

interest in transportation challenges -- many jobs far away from affordable housing, lousy transportation services available to travel long distances

concern that light rail to the airport will put taxi drivers out of business

Board member -- desegregation should come through changes in housing patterns, not through schools. Board want to see full integration.

Woman --likes community schools

Woman -- when people talk, they make it sound like kids of color cannot achieve.

\* Woman -- her black nieces in Richfield hang out only with other black kids; lots of racism in suburbs. She remembers when Maple Grove was going to allow 19 units of low income housing -- locals made very racist comments in opposition.

\* Man -- spending 34 million dollars to bus kids in Mpls is a waste -- that money should be spent on education, not bussing. It is not true that integration will help education.

\* People liked option number 7 - page 12 of discussion guide "Focus on making schools multi-culturally inclusive.

Woman -- multicultural education needs to be done in all schools, even if no people of color in school.

Need to rewrite text books to make them more friendly or positive to all cultures

\* Black kids sometimes see only white teachers and books full of white people -- they don't see themselves.

Stereotypes of all groups is very strong.

Man -- kids need culturally specific school. Too many schools are culturally void.

"Most kids of color cannot learn under traditional education"

Three people did not like option 4 - "Create a variety of school choice options for students and a system of incentives for educators"

School Bd member thought voucher programs would create competition among schools and thereby decrease cooperation among schools. Thought schools need collaboration, not competition.

Woman -- we need to acknowledge that we live in a racist society and we need to talk with people in the community about what they want to do.

- \* Some concern about how option 8 would be done "Reversing patterns of de facto residential segregation will truly desegregate schools." People thought we need to increase affordable housing options all over, need to increase living wage jobs

Only a small percentage of people will always be poor

- \* Role models used to live in black neighborhoods -- doctors, insurance agents. Now this is not true. Successful blacks move to other areas.

No one solution -- we need a mix of strategies

key -- the importance for all people to learn about other cultures

Need adult ed. on this as well, not just kids

# # #