



**Visioneering
Unified Legislative Agenda Meeting
June 3, 2005
Meeting Notes**

Attendees: John Lay, Jeff Porter, Rep. Judith Loganbill, Jim Grier, Bill Buchanan, Forrest Gossett, Roger Douthett, Trista Curzydlo, Sharon Sudduth, Robert Davis, Bob Courtney, John Waltner, Clay Bastian, Natalie Bright, Jim Means, Allen Bell, Keith DeHaven, Diane Gjerstad, Les Depperschmidt, Deb Voth, Connie Dietz, Rep. Faust-Goudeau, Larry White, Fran Jackson, Bev Dunning, Travis Smith, Bill Pickert, Greg Meissen, Eric Sexton, Rebecca Ladd, Mavis Mooberry, Jim Ward, Mike Pepoon, Walter Thiessen, Perry Schuckman, Scott Schneider, Brenda Landwehr, Andy Schlapp, Bess Roberts, Keith Lawing, Trix Niernberger, Mary Ellen Conlee,

Resource Team: Keith Lawing, Eric Sexton, Bernie Koch

Next Unified Legislative Agenda Meeting: July 15, 8:30 am, WSU Hughes Metro Center

Minutes from April 18th, 2005 alliance meeting were accepted and approved.

The Purpose of the Unified Legislative Alliance meeting:

To provide a clear picture of the future direction of the Unified Legislative Alliance, including hopes and concerns for the process of developing a unified legislative agenda, identifying what participants have successfully done in the past, and what other communities have done in developing a unified legislative agenda. The alliance will create a set of guiding principles that will guide the actions and development of a unified legislative agenda and to determine who else is needed to participate in the Unified Legislative Alliance.

I. Initial Discussions

The Leadership Team participated in the following discussions to start the meeting.

- Suzie Ahlstrand presented the history of Visioneering Wichita MSA, common terms, structure, and Vision Partners.
- Eric Sexton revisited the Legislative Alliance Benchmark. The Benchmark will be considered as a "draft" benchmark until further insights can be explored to assess whether or not it is a feasible benchmark.
- Keith Lawing reviewed recent examples from other communities who have successfully collaborated around a unified legislative agenda.

II. Small Group Breakouts to Identify "What Works"

Participants worked in small groups identifying experiences where a group, organization, or community had successfully worked together to address a local issue. Small groups identified what made these efforts successful and called them out to the larger group. The following is the list of call-outs of what made efforts successful in the past:

Participants' Ideas for What Makes
Similar Efforts Successful

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Recognized value and need | • Leadership in private and public sectors |
| • Presented as complete package | • Group coming together |
| • Widespread community, grassroots support | • Timing |
| • Communication and information provided (community education) | • Emphasize those things that we can agree upon |
| • Issue and goals were well defined | • Ability to compromise (especially of the big players) |
| • Recognized local climate | • True leadership which is consistent and sticks with it |
| • Plenty of planning so can be well-organized | |
| • Flexible, allow change | |

- Commitment to the public and keeping them involved
- A lot of effort on multiple levels
- Hospitality, neighborly
- An issue that is compelling, product that sells itself
- Organization of the effort, bringing new ideas and people together
- People being willing to step across boundaries
- Realizing importance of core area of Wichita
- Repeat what is successful - use history
- Respect of the past
- Community pride important, spiritually, creates a sense of community
- If you give Kansans a forum they will respond and volunteer
- Sometimes things have to get worse before they get better
- One person can really make a difference

III. Identification of Hopes and Concerns and Guiding Principles for the Process

Participants worked in one of four small groups where they identified hopes and concerns for the process in the near future (2005/2006) and hopes and concerns for beyond. A complete list of the small groups' hopes and fears is provided below in the Appendix. Small groups called their top hopes and concerns to the larger group in a value-added process. These are provided below.

Participants' Hopes and Concerns for the Process

Hopes

- Meet the benchmark
- One issue to be successful on
- Ability to engage in process every year
- Its ok to disagree, take venom out of the public debate
- Regionally develop broad themes
- Use foundations of other alliances
- Energize the public
- Agenda stays focused, narrowly defined
- Regional, more than Wichita
- Recognition of importance of Wichita MSA
- Legislators' commitment
- Elected local officials/legislators see this as a resource
- Develop trust and commitment
- Region is not MSA, region is beyond MSA
- Accountability with legislators
- Establish a win - make something happen
- Recognition of changing demographics

Concerns

- Short term focus
- Timing concerns
- Polarizing/Personal issues
- Lack of closure agenda
- Already a done deal
- Lack of flexibility
- Watered down agenda
- Lack of public understanding
- Too narrow focus
- Lack of understanding by citizens at large
- Lack of media coverage
- Perceived as Wichita only issue
- Lack of clarity agenda
- Burn out, long term

Following this "call-out" a set of guiding principles was developed for how the group would work together in the future.

Guiding Principles for Developing a Unified Legislative Agenda

- Identify the "pros and cons" of ideas so that we can make well informed decisions
- Elected officials represent the community's will
- Respectful of everyone's opinions, recognizing there are multiple viewpoints
- Need to agree how to communicate the decisions of the alliance, both within the alliance and to external partners (i.e., media)
- Maintain a regional focus
- Address other Visioneering benchmarks
- Focus on issues not personalities
- Inclusiveness

IV. Who Else Needs to be Involved.

The meeting came to a close with the identification of other individuals, groups, and organizations that should be invited to future unified legislative alliance meetings. The following list was developed. Those who have contact with these individuals, groups, and organizations are asked to invite them to future alliance meetings.

Who Else Needs to be
Involved in Legislative Alliance?

- Urban league
- NAACP
- Utilities
- Education leadership
- Local elected officials
- Representatives from other alliances
- Media
- Teachers
- Hispanic chamber
- Community organizations
- City managers
- Church leadership- regional
- Council of elders
- PALS
- Youth
- Labor Unions

V. Next Steps

- Next meeting will be July 15, 2005 at ??? from 8:30 am - ???.
- Please invite people who need to be "at the table". Remember to consider the guiding principles of Visioneering.

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Appendix
Unified Legislative Alliance
Small Group Hopes and Concerns

Note: Not every small group addressed each of the four questions, therefore headings are not identical.

Small Group #1

Hopes

- Regional
- Can prioritize
- Broad themes
- Develop a workable process for reaching consensus
- Seek input from all Visioneering foundations
- Becoming a unified alliance
- Education-of issues
- Not personal
- Consensus process
- Regional reach
- Prioritize issues
- Identification of themes - broad based
- Agreement on themes
- Increase communication among delegation members
- Engage city, county govts
- Communication
 - Written
 - E-mail
 - Personal contacts
- Education
- Marketing-selling buy in
- Establish process for communication
- Chamber-helping with communication coalition
- REAP- improved communication
- Visioneering will bring more to table
- More than MSA area, but a regional view

Concerns

- Polarized issues
- Talk and no action
- Us vs. them
- Perception
- Individual vs. group agenda
- Average length of bill is 3-5 years
- Not enough \$\$ - need to prioritize
- Need to grow economy

Small Group #2

Hopes for 2005

- Set up realistic timing of issues, may not happen this year
- Addressing one particular issue, show the general public a win
- Start identifying issues
- Identify issues that have broad support
- Lets get specific about what we're talking about

- Build upon the good foundation and recent session
- Broad impact, issues that impact the changing demographics, population
- Legislators represent will of the people, recognizing the minority with compromise
- Legislators comfortable with the Visioneering process
- Finding those things that we can agree upon
- Spread the word about being a Visioneering partner, especially those outside Sedgwick county
- Communicate the issues
- Recognize what is realistic, not a panacea

Hopes for beyond

- Recognition of Wichita MSA
- Continue education of general public, benefits of a Wichita msa
- We are all in this together
- Regular respected agenda process up and running and on annual process
- When go to Topeka have a solid agenda based on the region
- Continued communication, bringing in stakeholders from all communities
- Bring our delegation together, recognizing differences
- They meet weekly during session
- Coming together around issues that delegation can agree upon, continues success story
- Well organized, open process to allow discussion of the issues
- Decided upon a level of agreement for what constitutes a unified agenda
- What is compromise?

Concerns for 2005

- Unified agenda is too broad, too many issues
- Too watered down issues and don't address the hard, tough issues
- Lack of courage
- Issues are so specific that they end up being divisive
- Going to the lowest common denominator
- Lack of recognition of what legislators face
- No continued public awareness
- Public doesn't understand that Topeka is important
- No or lack of recognition of the regional concerns

Small Group #3

Hopes for 2005

- Get Visioneering really going so not to tire folks out
- Focused/Narrowly defined
- Clearly regional
- We can agree, really be unified
- Compromises
- More inclusion beyond usual suspects
- Got legislative and buy in early
- Face to face relationships critical
- Email is great but not enough
- Lets get organized and move forward, lets not just meet
- Get a plan and timeline
- When can we go to legislature?
- Efforts recognized and going somewhere
- At least one win
- Something to tell the Eagle
- Lets not forget that we have elections coming including the government
- Getting together now regionally

- Energize the public around agenda
- Pros and cons known
- Only unified items are taken seriously
- Some individual issues not taken seriously
- Several mixed signals
- Lets not do parking lot re-agendas
- Lots of forces to tear down, process if my agenda not on list
- Personal agendas will not all be on the list

Hopes for Beyond

- Meet our benchmarks
- More money for the region
- Recognized by our success
- Public and beyond
- Some folks might need to move on, hold legislature accountable
- Know who to vote for and against
- Solid long-term relationships
- More of one mind
- Finding and supporting good candidates
- More money raised for candidates from region
- More involvement beyond Wichita and Sedgwick county
- Improved lifestyles
- Increased community attachment
- This group is still working together, ongoing
- Mechanism to evolve with the issues
- Better economy

Concerns for 2005

- No follow-through on unified agendas
- Get individuals not just lobbyists involved
- Don't forget that legislators listen to and are elected by citizens
- Small business leaders and others do not have time to reach out to legislation
- Must be unified by consensus and not all things
- Cannot block others from pursuing their special issues
- How to deal with litmus test people
- No room for compromise
- Like no tax period
- We do all this work and legislature groups say hell no
- Accountably missing and reported to the public
- Keep legislatures we deserve
- Agenda has already been set and we just don't know
- Has chamber already decided the agenda?
- Already have strong opinions and agendas
- Not broad base
- We forget consensus
- We got to narrow in issues and people involved
- Lets not be united by exclusion

Concerns for Beyond

- We get discouraged
- We get tired
- We get divided
- Becomes one and done
- Bring in next generation
- 2024 is too long to wait, five years

- What about evening and weekend times to include others

Small Group #4

Hopes for 2005 (really 2006)

- Have at least one issue the legislative caucus can be successful on
- Determine common ground, compromise
- That this group is able to communicate unified agenda
- Others look at this as a resource, viewed as something to help us do our jobs
- Engage in this process every year, ongoing
- Sort out conflict
- Allow people to plug into the process, new input
- Developing trust and commitment
- Expanding trust and commitment into regional areas outside of Wichita
- Take venom out of public debate by putting issues on the table, its ok to disagree
- Have legislators involved, have them at the table, early buy in
- No matter the differences, we have to come together in the end

Concerns for 2005 (really 2006)

- Difficult financial situation
- Governors race, it's an election year
- Single issue special interests groups
- Look long term, unintended consequences
- Urban vs rural interest, what's good for metro might not be good for small town
- Lack of regional engagement, balance interest
- Ability to explain identified issues, be able to answer why
- More legislators involved in this process
- Lack of public input
- Wichita MSA is largely a political, not involved except for single issue
- Help people feel their input is valuable
- Balance of businesses and meeting needs of family and children
- Media, communication is key
- More than usual suspects
- Public journalism