

MDI TOMORROW Community Health Workgroup

Minutes from May 23, 2002, 3-4:30 p.m.

Attending: Jeanne Fortier, Barbara Peppey, Michael Anderson, Doug Michael, Gayle Gaynor

Welcome & Introductions

Discussion of the MDI Tomorrow initiative for the new members present.

One of the roles of this workgroup is to prepare information to be included in the MDI Tomorrow State of the Island report, which is being developed for release later this summer/early fall. We also have an opportunity to identify health related questions that will be included in that survey.

Discussion ensued on the roles & goals of this workgroup. Discussion included prioritizing a list and how we can link together with other groups to serve as a clearinghouse.

What is our Role & Goal as a workgroup?

Goals identified:

- Improve the health standards of the community
- Linkages with other issue groups to ensure non-duplication
- Inclusive of all community members, takes into account varying needs of all community members.
- Gaps can be identified and bridged.
- Allow creative possibilities from various alternative sources. Great things can happen from a ground swell.
- Allow possibility for wonderful things to happen spontaneously.
- View goals not only from a traditional healthcare perspective. Identify what is "health". We need to have more info from the larger group.

We identified opportunities to see what we can do to fill gaps and utilize linkages, possibly create "something" versus strictly a planning process.

Questions were raised about how do we position ourselves to stay ahead of the issues? What challenges or opportunities are coming up in the next 5years? 10 years? Do we want to pick a particular topic to focus on or not?

The next meeting of the full MDI Tomorrow initiative will be a panel discussion format with members from each workgroup on the panel.. The question for the panel discussion is:

"What are the intersections you see of Community design & land use, Community health, Economic prosperity, Housing, Transportation & Youth?" Each panelist will give 1 or 2 examples of intersections or linkages identified by their workgroup. The intent is to then illicit additional response from the members at large. There will also be a photo display on what we value & what concerns us.

How do Community Health Issues & opportunities relate to the other issue groups?

- Community Design & Land use – group felt sprawl impacted many areas:
 - Walkable communities
 - Bike lanes
 - Automobile dependence (cross intersects with Transportation)
 - Pollution from emissions
 - Increases in summer due to increase in traffic
 - Decrease physical activity

- Mental health – social isolation or cocooning (cross intersects community health, youth)
- Limited access to health care and other services
 - Island Explorer should be available year round
- Impact on youth
 - Unequal opportunities depending on where you live
 - Can't get to activities at High School or Youth centers
- Economic prosperity - SEASONALITY” of work (cross intersects with most workgroups)
 - Increased stress due to intense hours – summer hrs vs. winter hrs
 - Fast paced lifestyle
 - Lack of benefits, health insurance, etc.
- Livable wage
- High cost of living
- Affordable housing (cross intersects with housing)
- Health insurance
 - High cost
 - Not available with seasonal jobs
- Youth (cross intersects with community design, economic prosperity, community health, and transportation). We tend to focus on the negatives not the positive.
 - Dissociated community culture
 - Diminished family supports
 - Substance abuse: we tend to focus on youth when in reality this problem crosses all age, gender and socioeconomic strata. We need to identify what is the cause/missing component that causes kids to use drugs.

Which issues/opportunities would be best addressed by the MDI Tomorrow Process?

The group considered the greatest opportunities to impact community health through the MDI tomorrow process might be the “systems issues” (intersections with community design, transportation seasonality etc.) identified above.

(NOTE: time did not allow for a complete discussion of this question; how can we shape the MDI Tomorrow process address these systems issues?)

Next steps: Gayle was chosen to represent this group at the panel discussion on **June 4th from 3-5 p.m. at the Somerville Fire Station.**

Michael volunteered to do the photo-journalist piece and will get the film to Carolyn Pryor either as actual photos or send them by e-mail to her before the June 4th meeting.

The next meeting of this group will be June 13th at 3:30 p.m. Location TBA.