Community Visioning and Engagement
Refreshing and Sustaining Implementation

BY MIKE HUGGINS

Local communities in the United States are struggling to adapt to a paradigm shift in democratic governance, one that is altering the traditional roles and responsibilities of citizens, government, civil society organizations, and business and the ways we make public decisions and govern ourselves. Much of the institutional shift at local and state government levels is driven by a pervasive fiscal instability and imbalance that has been building for the past fifteen years and reached crisis proportion during the 2008 housing bubble and financial market collapse. In addition, over the past fifty years, traditional political, education, and community civic institutions became more task and service oriented, with organizational cultures that were increasingly hierarchical, narrow in scope, and expert defined. Local governance and public problem solving became more detached from everyday work environments and local sources of knowledge. This in turn contributed toward more limited and fragmented public roles for citizens, elected officials, and professional staff and greatly diminished the capacities of local communities to take action on challenging issues. Finally, since the early 1970s, local government has operated increasingly within a consumerist and transactional value framework that reinforces an individualist perspective over a community or shared sense of responsibility. This vending machine mentality about the purposes of government has been reinforced by well-funded ideological efforts to diminish the efficacy of government at all levels.

A fundamental challenge facing more and more local communities is the lack of political will to confront and address their more pressing fiscal, social, and political issues. Both the people and their governing institutions seemed to have lost the capacity to come together in public deliberation and problem solving. The lack of political will in this instance is not so much the refusal of local government to act as it is the structural inability of the community governance system (the three-legged stool of government, business, and civil society) to generate timely and responsive public policy decisions and results. In 1994, Francis Moore Lappé and Paul Martin Du Bois observed in their book *The Quickening of America* that the real crisis facing Americans was not the issues that bombard us daily but rather that "we as a people don't know how to come together to solve these problems." Not much has changed in the past twenty years, except that in many ways the crisis in our local communities has worsened.

One proven approach to rebuilding the problem-solving capacities of local communities has been the community visioning and strategic planning process developed by the National Civic League (NCL). For over twenty-five years, the NCL has partnered with local communities through its Community Services Program to conduct citizen-led community planning projects to produce the clear sense of direction, key performance priorities, and specific action steps needed for meaningful community change.

In the forefront of a civic renewal movement that began in the 1990s, the NCL visioning process draws heavily on its Civic Index to assess a community's civic infrastructure as a means of building the understanding and trust needed for community action and also on the recruitment of diverse participants to build the broad community base essential for a compelling vision and effective action. The visioning process most typically includes three key phases: (1) initiating, a preplanning stage to design the overall planning process and coordinate the logistics of the critical stakeholder planning sessions; (2) planning, the facilitation and coordination of the stakeholder meetings that develop the vision and content of the project; and (3) implementation, the ongoing actions to implement the plan and see to the long-term sustainability of the community visioning initiative.

The NCL has partnered with hundreds of local communities over the past twenty-five years in creating

community visions and action plans, and most local efforts have led to significant positive community change. Twin challenges common to all community visioning initiatives, whether guided by the NCL visioning process or comparable community visioning techniques, however, have been how to transition from planning to implementation and how to sustain implementation five to six years after the initial visioning effort.

The experience of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, which initiated a NCL community visioning initiative in 2007, highlights some of the typical challenges to implementation and perhaps points to some strategies to refreshing and sustaining a community implementation process.

Community Visioning 2007–2008

In March 2007, the Eau Claire city manager and Eau Claire County administrator convened an informal meeting of key government, business, and nonprofit organization leaders to discuss daunting challenges in meeting future community services and public facilities needs. Eau Claire's fiscal capacity to support public structure needs of a growing economy and population had eroded steadily since 1995. The State of Wisconsin reductions in state-shared revenue support for local communities had doubled the tax burden on local property taxpayers.

In 1995, state-shared revenue allocations funded approximately 50 percent of local public services, and local property taxes funded approximately 25 percent of these services. By 2008, state funding for municipalities had decreased from 50 to 25 percent while local property tax funding increased from 25 to 50 percent. As a result of the state tax shift, the greater Eau Claire community, encompassing all of Eau Claire County, had experienced reduced public services and maintenance, deferred investment in community facilities and infrastructure, and greatly diminished support for the civic and cultural facilities so essential for future growth and a continued high quality of life.

The citizens, businesses, governmental units, nonprofit organizations, and other entities located in Eau Claire County are facing the daunting task of setting priorities for future investments in critical community facilities and services. And the choices facing this greater Eau Claire community are complex, interconnected, and beyond the capacity of any one jurisdiction or organization to resolve.

The Clear Vision initiative was triggered by a shared concern by local government about how the greater Eau Claire community (including all of Eau Claire County, population 96,000) would be able to fund $400 million in future community facilities needs for schools, performing arts, libraries, courthouse and jail, sewer plant, parks, and community centers. The decentralized and fragmented political and community decision-making process had long inhibited both intergovernmental collaboration and effective civic participation. High local property taxes and declining public services have been accompanied by rising frustration and disengagement by citizens in the political process. Voter turnout in local elections has declined from 36 percent of eligible voters in 1987 to 23 percent in 2008.

At the meeting, Derek Okubo, a senior project facilitator with NCL, presented a proposal for initiating a community visioning and strategic planning process for the greater Eau Claire community, which would include all of Eau Claire County. The initial ad hoc group agreed that an inclusive, citizen-based problem-solving approach was essential and worked to secure $45,000 in joint funding for the first-year planning phase of the initiative. Within three months, commitments were secured, with one-third funding coming from the City of Eau Claire, one-third funding coming from Eau Claire County, and the remaining one-third funding coming from a variety of other organizations, including the City of Altoona, the Eau Claire School District, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Chippewa Valley Technical College, United Way, and the chamber of commerce. The Eau Claire Community Foundation played a critical role by providing administrative and contract oversight, serving as the fiscal agent for the project, and establishing a fund to accept charitable contributions to help offset future expenses.

The Clear Vision Eau Claire community visioning process was designed to bring all sectors of the community together to create a broad community vision and strategic plan, aimed at building a reinvigorated sense of community purpose with clear community priorities for the future. The Clear Vision process did

not replace the formal planning, decision-making, and budgeting processes of the city, county, and school governments but was intended to strengthen the community's civic capacity for effective collaboration by providing an integrated and coherent community perspective essential for action on community problems and improved coordination among government organizations and institutions. The initiative's operating premise was that active and meaningful participation of community residents in building their individual public lives will strengthen and sustain a connected and collaborative community where individuals, families, and businesses thrive and flourish.

Formal planning for the visioning initiative began in June 2007. Working with the NCL project facilitator, the initial group of conveners recruited a fifteen-member Initiating Committee to design the planning process, recruit diverse community participants, and complete the logistical planning for the stakeholder meetings. The Initiating Committee included some of the initial convening leaders as well as eight additional citizens reflecting the geographic and socioeconomic diversity of the community.

The Initiating Committee created work committees to support the planning process and identified 500 Eau Claire community members to be invited to participate as stakeholders. The initial list of potential stakeholders was selected to reflect a cross section of the diversity of the community by gender, age, geographic location, race, employment, and income. The Initiating Committee made particular efforts to recruit participants from underrepresented groups, especially from low-income and minority ethnic groups. The expanded recruitment efforts included meeting directly with members of the Hmong community (a large minority Asian ethnic group in Eau Claire), African American leaders, and local trade unions.

In September 2007, leadership for the visioning effort shifted to a diverse Coordinating Committee, which managed the process but not the content of the stakeholder planning meetings. The Coordinating Committee oversaw the schedule, supervised a part-time project staff, coordinated research and community outreach, raised additional funds and donations, worked directly with the NCL facilitator, and generally kept the project on track. The Coordinating Committee also served as champions and spokespersons of the underlying values of the process: collaboration, consensus, and widespread participation.

A series of ten stakeholder meetings began in October 2007 and continued through May 2008. Meetings were held in the community room of a local religious congregation. The stakeholder meetings were open to the general public, but a group of 150 community residents provided a consistent core of participants. The mix of stakeholders included members of local not-for-profit community organizations, including faith-based groups; environmental and housing activists; health care providers; business groups; neighborhood associations; students; retirees; and a limited number of government professional staff and elected officials. Many stakeholders were not affiliated with any formal organization but participated as individual citizens interested in community issues.

The format of the stakeholder meetings included both small-group settings to encourage discussion and participation and large groups to enhance and coordinate small-group findings. Guiding objectives of the stakeholder process were to use a citizen-focused participatory process to:

- Increase the level of citizen participation in community problem-solving.
- Reverse the sense of disconnectedness commonly voiced by individual citizens.
- Build a community consensus for setting priorities to address community facilities needs.
- Articulating a compelling vision for the greater Eau Claire community.

The stakeholder meetings concluded with a report written by the participants identifying a broad community vision and specific action plans to address community priorities in six areas with a focus on identifying "trend-benders"—strategic actions that will dramatically change the rate and direction of community change and effectiveness. The final action report was presented at a communitywide celebration on July 30, 2008.

The Clear Vision action plan was grounded in three core themes: preserving the quality of life, transforming the local economy, and empowering the individual. This selection of themes vision is based on the belief that active and meaningful citizen involvement in planning the future of the community will result in a greater commitment of community residents to make the desired envisioned future a reality. The plan identified 125 action strategies for six key performance areas (KPAs):

1. Civic engagement
2. Economic development
3. Education
4. Health
5. Quality of life
6. Transportation

Civic engagement was both one of the six community priorities and the underlying strategy for achieving the other five. Common to all KPAs were the twin concepts of building civic problem-solving skills of community residents and embedding collaboration among community networks, governments, organizations, and institutions.

Community Implementation 2008–2012

The NCL community visioning process emphasizes the importance of managing the transition between planning and implementation to ensure that action plans do not lose momentum and continue to move forward to community action and meaningful change. Most community visioning projects either use an existing community organization to oversee implementation or create a new nonprofit or citizens group to serve as the implementation entity.

Eau Claire opted to create an Implementation Committee (IC) to serve as the interim implementation entity. The first meeting of the IC was the same day as the public presentation of the community action. The IC then met twice monthly through the end of 2008 and monthly thereafter.

Over its first four years, Clear Vision has accomplished a number of projects, including:

- Working with community organizations to design and implement a countywide adventure pass to provide access to historical and cultural facilities.
- Establishing a single-site community events calendar.
- Establishing the City of Eau Claire as an official eco-community committed to a framework for sustainability developed by the Natural Step, a network of nonprofits that helps organizations develop such plans.
- Organizing a free book distribution to all second- and third-grade students to encourage reading.
- Creating a Jobs Road Map to identify job assistance and training information for underemployed community residents.
- Developing a civic engagement toolkit to support Clear Vision civic engagement training and work teams.
- Convening and leading a multiyear citizens' group to assess community needs for expanded performance arts facilities, which culminated in an announcement in June 2012 of a future $90 million public–private partnership for performance arts and mixed-use development in downtown Eau Claire.

During this period, Clear Vision also transitioned from an interim IC to an incorporated nonprofit organization with a clear organizational mission and structure. For eighteen months, the IC was focused on a range of start-up implementation issues related to coordinating and supporting the individual KPA work groups, while trying to maintain a clear focus on the stakeholder action plan. Immediate transition issues included:

- How to coordinate meetings once project funding for a half-time staff position ended: Who will take minutes, produce agendas, and provide for meeting locations?
- Restarting the community outreach and public information committee, which had languished during the stakeholder meetings.
- Clarifying the leadership role between the IC and the KPA work groups: Should KPAs get IC approval before acting or simply report activities to the IC?
- Reconstructing a Web site that had been hacked and corrupted by a virus.
- Clarifying whether KPA activities would be funded by the KPAs or through the IC.

- Determining what to do with KPA work groups that had become inactive after the stakeholder meetings.
- How to recruit both new leaders and new participants for both the IC and KPA work groups.
- How to address long-term and sustainable funding for the Clear Vision initiative.

A deeper issue was the continued viability of the stakeholder action plan as a relevant guide to community action. As noted earlier, the July 2008 action plan included 125 specific action steps from the six KPA work groups compiled into a single document. Some recommended actions were audacious and bold, such as creating a medical school as part of the local University of Wisconsin campus. Other recommendations were no more than endorsements of ongoing policies and strategies of existing community organizations. All recommendations did reflect the best efforts of the stakeholder participants in the context of the visioning process.

The challenge was that after nearly a year of active work in the stakeholder meetings, many participants reduced their participation in follow-up implementation or withdrew altogether. Some action plan priorities did not reflect the interests of community residents who were drawn to the Clear Vision initiative but had not participated in the stakeholder process. New priorities and alternative action strategies emerged as work groups tested stakeholder brainstorming assumptions with the richness and depth of actual community relationships and resident knowledge. The IC struggled both with what should be done to update and refresh the original stakeholder action plan and what the IC's role should be in refreshing the plan. The concept that the IC's role was merely to coordinate worked only so far as the action plan remained a reliable statement of both what was needed to be done and how to do it.

As Clear Vision moved into its third year, the IC acknowledged that the pressing implementation challenge was not simply coordination of quasi-independent and sometimes faltering KPAs but long-term and sustainable organizational leadership. For two years, the IC had met and functioned as a board of directors grappling with internal operational policies and procedures and external efforts to add distinctive value for community change. The implementation focus shifted from trying to cope through an ad hoc and interim structure to formalizing a sustainable organizational leadership structure embedded into the network of community organizations.

In March 2010, a strategic planner and professional facilitator for the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire led the IC through an in-depth organizational strategic planning process that produced a five-year strategic plan calling for formal incorporation of the IC as the Clear Vision Board of Directors, with a succinct vision, mission, statement of core values, and strategic priorities clarifying the leadership role of the board in its support of KPA activities. Building on the core concept of the 2008 action plan to "engage our community for the common good," the stated purpose of the Clear Vision Board would be "to convene, nurture and support diverse groups of community members for civic work that addresses the needs identified in the Clear Vision Eau Claire plan."

A key goal in the new organizational strategic plan was creating a sustainable organization through incorporation as a nonprofit organization, resolving administrative support concerns, developing ongoing funding, planning for leadership succession, and conducting a major reconvening of community stakeholders to refresh the Clear Vision community change initiative. While the Clear Vision Board meetings continued to address coordination and support issues of individual KPAs, the board also focused on working through the organization development goals: writing bylaws, filing articles of incorporation, writing and submitting an application for 501(c)3 tax status, preparing grant applications for funding, and planning for a major reconvening of community residents.

The first Board of Directors, consisting of essentially the same members of the former IC, was elected in May 2010. The board adopted bylaws in August 2010. In January 2011, articles of incorporation for Clear Vision Eau Claire, Inc. were submitted and approved by the State of Wisconsin. Initial grant applications funding were developed and submitted to regional foundations. In July 2012, the Clear Vision Eau Claire, Inc. became a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. While seemingly mundane, the process of writing bylaws, grants, and tax status applications

compelled the board to think through, refine, and express in writing its understanding of how best to organize and operate for successful implementation of the Clear Vision community vision. Beginning with the March 2010 strategic planning process, the board's ongoing process of organizational reflection also crystallized the Clear Vision focus on civic engagement as the unique value added that Clear Vision brought to community problem solving and became the third major influence shaping the Clear Vision approach to implementation.

The 2008 stakeholder action plan had identified civic engagement both as one of the key community priorities and as the underlying strategy by which the other priorities would be addressed. By the fall of 2008, Civic Engagement KPA had developed a working partnership with the Center for Democracy and Citizenship (CDC) (then located at the University of Minnesota Hubert Humphrey School of Public Affairs, and now at Augsburg College, St. Paul) to develop a civic problem-solving training curriculum to build the civic agency skills of everyday people to be co-creators of their communities. Drawing on the relational organizing techniques of the public achievement model the CDC developed in the 1990s to educate youth to become effective civic and political actors, CDC organizer and trainer Dennis Donovan conducted multiple "Public Work 101" training sessions for Eau Claire residents from 2008 through 2011.

In 2009, Clear Vision began experimenting with convening small civic work groups of fifteen to twenty community residents to be trained in core civic problem-solving skills and then to take action on specific community issues of interest to them. Initial civic work groups focused on issues of jobs for the underemployed, funding public park improvements, collaborative education, and regional transit. Later work groups addressed issues on use of a county exposition center, infrastructure investments for a public swimming pool, neighborhood revitalization, and organizing a community association for the growing Latina/Latino population.

From this work emerged the concept of civic organizing as a conceptual framework that integrates active civic engagement into everyday environments for the purpose of solving public problems and developing the broad civic base necessary to govern effectively in a democracy. In this framework, civic engagement is viewed as those individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern by naming and solving problems, discussing alternatives, and making trade-offs. The Clear Vision civic organizing model emphasizes civic training, developing joint public leadership, and realigning the institutions and spaces where people do public work with more participatory approaches. The underlying rationale is that effective and enduring civic engagement will require that citizens learn and practice effective public problem-solving skills and that community institutions create opportunities and public spaces for active citizenship by sparking involvement, equipping engagement, and embedding collaboration.

The Clear Vision engagement process emphasizes both reframing of language about the public work of everyday people and integration of participatory problem-solving practices into the work of community residents in public settings. Some of the central terms include:

- **Public life:** The roles that people take at work, at schools, and in the community (apart from private and family relationships) where they act on diverse self-interests to solve common problems. The success of democracy depends on how people live their public lives.
- **Public work:** The sustained and visible efforts by a mix of people that creates material or cultural things of lasting civic impact, while developing civic learning and capacity in the process. Public work involves the move from seeing citizens as consumers to producers and shifting from reliance on groups of experts to broad collaborations that draw on diverse energies and skills.
- **Politics:** From the Greek *politikos*, meaning "the work of citizens." It includes the customs, habits, power structures, and the formal and informal rules we use to make decisions where we live and work.
- **Power:** From the Latin *poder*, meaning "to be able; the capacity to act in and influence our world." Power exists in a give-and-take, two-way relationship. Power is derived from many sources: relationships, knowledge, experience, organization, perseverance, and moral persuasion.

- **Self-interest:** The product of our personal history, motivation, and experience, understanding and reflection who we are and what we care most about in the context of relationships to others. Our self-interest cannot be defined for us by others. We can define our own interests only by interacting with others and achieve our interests only by considering the interests of others.
- **Diversity:** In the context of public problem solving, diversity refers to the different skills, knowledge, and interests of participants as well as their ethnic, racial, religious, and economic backgrounds. Diversity is essential for effective public problem solving.
- **Mediating institutions:** The institutions, associations, and groups that provide the spaces where people do public work and govern society. Mediating institutions range from service clubs to unions, from churches to schools, from the places people volunteer to the places people work.

Important problem-solving practices and skills include:

- Conducting house values meetings to identify and discuss the core civic values and concerns.
- Doing one-to-one interviews to identify interests, issues, and connections and to build public relationships.
- Drawing power maps of the stakeholders, connections, and power relationships influencing an issue or action.
- Conducting public evaluations to debrief work meetings, clarify roles and expectations, prevent misunderstandings, and assess progress.

As Clear Vision moved into its fourth year of implementation, the board continued to grapple with how to conduct a major reconvening of community residents. Simply repeating the original stakeholder visioning process and going back to square one might ignore what had been learned about civic engagement and community problem solving as well as the success in building a sustainable organization. The challenge was how to build on what had been learned and accomplished while creating ongoing strategies for involving new participants, expanding the diversity of participation, and moving participants more quickly into taking action on issues that interested them.

The idea light bulb went on in January 2012 when Clear Vision was invited to send a community team to participate in the inaugural Community Engagement Leadership Institute in Los Angeles. Coordinated by Community Partners, funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, and held in conjunction with the twentieth anniversary of the Los Angeles Empowerment Congress, the Leadership Institute brought together seven community teams from across the country to learn about the Empowerment Congress and share best practices about community engagement and how to help ordinary citizens engage more fully with local and state government.

In February 2012, Clear Vision began planning for a Fall Empowerment Summit that would bring together diverse community members, prioritize a new round of community issues, organize and train issue work groups in core civic problem-solving concepts and practices, draft initial action plans, and then launch the groups in January 2013. The summit will consist of five community meetings from October through November. The summit includes four phases.

Phase 1. Initiating

Phase 1 is a preplanning stage to design the overall stakeholder meetings, coordinate meeting logistics, and broaden the diversity of community participation. A diverse Recruitment and Planning Committee is conducting one-to-one interviews and using power mapping to identify strategic stakeholder groups and interests, potential obstacles to participation, and strategies for recruiting frequently underrepresented perspectives in public participation activities, including Hmong, Latina/o, African American, LGBT, youth/Millennials, rural, veterans, low-income, and special needs families.

Phase 2. Issue Development

The Planning Committee and Clear Vision Board of Directors conduct one-to-one interviews and use online and social media, along with face-to-face conversations with community associations and groups, to identify potential community issues for action in 2013. The Eau Claire community online forum, hosted through E-Democracy.org, will be used as a major venue for identifying and building community conversations about potential issues. A standardized Summit Issue Summary form will be used to record

issues generated by community members and to post on the Clear Vision Web site and the online community forum for discussion, dialogue, and review.

Phase 3. Action Planning

Four stakeholder planning meetings plus a coaches' training work session will be held in October and November. While stakeholder recruitment will focus on expanding participant diversity, all meetings are open to the public. The first two meetings will review the Clear Vision engagement process and achievements, review and select potential community issues for 2013, form issue work groups, and select coaches for each work group. In early November, coaches will be trained in facilitation and group problem skills. In the final two meetings, all work group participants will be trained in core problem-solving concepts and skills and will develop action plans and meeting schedules for each work group.

Phase 4. Implementation

Ten to fifteen community work groups will be launched in early January 2013. Each group will consist of ten to twenty participants from the summit stakeholder meetings as well as additional community members that may be recruited for each work group. The work groups will be reconvened in March 2013 to share initial status and results, review core civic skills, and coordinate future action plans. The Clear Vision Board of Directors will provide overall coordination and communication among the work groups as well as technical assistance and support to work group coaches. Work groups will be reconvened in the fall of 2013 to celebrate accomplishments and to launch a new round of issue work groups.

Conclusions

This article began with an observation that overcoming the lack of political will by government to take effective action on critical social, economic, and political issues may be the most serious challenge we face in our local communities for some time to come. Anecdotal evidence suggests a gap between the political capacity of government to come to judgment in a timely fashion and the growing technical capacity of public sector employees to address specific problems. But this discrepancy contains an expanding opportunity for community members to come together to bridge that gap by creating public spaces, building the trust, and doing meaningful public work of lasting significance.

Local democracy begins with the conversations that community members have about their collective interests and the choices they choose to make about the kind of community they desire. Effective civic action depends on ordinary people thinking of themselves as productive people who can build things and do things; people who come up with ideas and resources; and people who are bold and people who are accountable. The problem in many communities is that there are few places where people can develop their civic capacities and their public lives.

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In Eau Claire, Wisconsin, the civic engagement approach developed through the NCL community visioning initiative is proving to be an effective strategy for building the civic problem-solving skills of community residents and the capacity of the community to take action.

Some final observations:

- The NCL community visioning process, as experienced in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, is an effective approach for involving community members in an inclusive planning process with tangible outcomes, action plans, and an implementation strategy. The NCL emphasis on actively recruiting diverse participation, assessing civic infrastructure, building from the grassroots, and strengthening collaborative relationships builds the capacity of local communities to begin closing the political will gap and implementing meaningful change
- The traditional NCL process would benefit by a refinement of the planning schedule to reduce the time to move from visioning and planning to implementation. In the context of tightening schedule conflicts for many individuals and households, it is ever more difficult to retain strong

and consistent participation by community residents in planning projects that may extend for ten to twelve months. Extended planning periods also make it more difficult to involve community members already facing access, transportation, or scheduling challenges. In addition, a lengthy community planning process reduces the interest of many planning participants in making the transition to implementation.

- The Clear Vision implementation experience suggests that two keys to effective implementation of action plans may be ensuring that the drafters of the action plan are also the implementers and that action plans reflect more accurately the relational mapping and self-interests of community stakeholder and power relationships. Action plans that reflect only the consensus of a KPA planning group may quickly lose relevance with the realities of community relationships and networks.

- Contemporary community planning and visioning initiatives must integrate both online and face-to-face engagements practices and venues. The changes to online and social media technologies, as well as facilitation techniques, have been dramatic even in the past several years. In the past two years, all local governments in the Eau Claire area have implemented Facebook, Twitter, online surveys, and electronic news formats to disseminate information and engage community residents in ongoing conversation about services and activities. Eau Claire also has an online community forum (hosted through E-Democracy.org) that in effect serves as an electronic backyard fence where residents share information, promote events, and discuss community issues.

- Finally, the Clear Vision experience with civic training suggests that implementation may be more successful if some attention is given to strengthening the skills of participants to be more effective problem solvers. Clear Vision has been successful in using relatively simple relational organizing skills to improve both individual and group effectiveness. It may be that long-term success in bringing about citizen-centered community change may be less about the initial priorities and action plans and more about equipping community members to work collaboratively on their own issues of interest.

Reference

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