

## ***Power of We Consortium*** **Minutes – September 16, 2011**

**Present:** John Schweitzer, Tiffeny Jimenez, Robin Miner-Swartz, Steve Findley, Susan Pigg, Cassandre Larrieux, Randy Bell, Dominick Quinney, Justin Sheehan, Teresa Kmetz, Brad Patterson, Ivan Love, Angela Austin, Vincent Delgado, Micki Fuhrman, Patricia Hemingway, Bill Nelson, Michelle Marushia, Derrell Slaughter, Harold Pope, Graham Pierce, Laura DeLind, Misozi Houston, Heather Hymes, Heather Rae McAlvey, Joan Nelson, Rex LaMore, Renee Canady, Mary Clark, Debbie Edokpolo, Peggy Roberts.

The meeting was opened by Co-chair Vincent Delgado with a welcome, introductions, and announcements.

### **Dialogue for Collective Impact**

#### ***Defining Prosperity***

*As we work to develop and sustain a prosperous region, it is critical that we step back to think about what constitutes a prosperous region. **What is prosperity? Who has it? How do we know when we have it?** We will engage in dialogue with a panel of individuals invited to provide a variety of perspectives on these questions. Panelists include:*

**Jacquelynne Borden-Conyers** - Principal, Quincy & Associates Inc.

**Tim Daman** - President & CEO, Lansing Regional Chamber <http://www.lansingchamber.org/>

**John Melcher** - Assoc. Dir., MSU's Center for Community and Economic Development  
<http://www.ced.msu.edu/>

**Simón Perazza** - Director of Strategic Communications, ArtServe Michigan  
<http://www.artservemichigan.org/>

**Tremain Phillips** - Chief Program Officer, Prima Civitas Foundation  
<http://www.primacivitas.org/>

Vincent introduced the panel and the dialogue. A handout was provided to the audience listing the panelists bios, contacts, statements about prosperity, and links to articles and books that each believed to be relevant to the topic. Each panelist took up to 5 minutes to talk about their concept of “prosperity” and what it means for our region.

A brief overview of panelist comments includes:

**Tremain Phillips:** Equity must be a part of any discussion about prosperity

**Tim Daman:** Attracting top, creative talent is the key for growing business in our region

**John Melcher:** Distribution of wealth is related to how one defines prosperity. The # of jobs in a region is less important than whether or not those jobs can support us and our families.

**Jacquelynne Borden-Conyers:** Prosperity is a middle class construct and the word needs to be re-defined. Current systems must be upset to work for all.

**Simón Perazza:** A combination of “wealth, health, and happiness” must be included in a definition of prosperity.

Questions from the audience were then gathered on cards and panel members responded.

1. If the disenfranchised are left out, how can we have this discussion? And how can we connect the knowledge economy with true equity?

- Reach deeper, and more intentionally, into the community to find persons to step up, serve and work. If people of the community are not considered qualified to serve their own communities, then there is a problem.
- This country has never been truly equitable
- If wealth = prosperity, how much is enough?
- Quality of the environment must be a part of the conversation
- Current economic system is unsustainable
- We have the assets – just need to connect them to achieve a knowledge economy
- Need to come together as a community to assure training is available, such as the HOPE scholarship and similar programs.

2. What are we going to do right now to move toward this knowledge economy?

- Make tough decisions to improve our schools, which may include closing some
- We need to be more relational across sectors = increased innovation = creativity to solve problems
- Using a Birth to Work concept, improve child development to create healthier adults.
- Involve broad sectors into the conversation
- Think more regionally, as opposed to thinking about individual cities
- More intentionally connect our international residents into the local and regional community, as they can bring their own prosperity and wealth back later.
- We must be self-sustaining and global at the same time to be successful
- Systematize support for local economies: not just buying local foods, but other products and services as well
- “Garden our own residents” into higher education
- More entrepreneurship into the school curriculum
- Art is directly related to science, math, technology = all are critical
- Communications and technology must be infused into all curriculum, not just as separate classes.

Open discussion was then held between the audience and panelists. Comments captured include:

- 12 thousand people are soon to be pulled off public assistance: public policy impacts quality of life
- The Greater Lansing Next concept does not address the issue of equity, but should
- The problem is that the poor don’t vote, so they have no voice
- We must better utilize community organizing for public health and community change
- Foundations control grant funds such that grantees must focus their work on issues that don’t necessarily match the work that is needed. Need a new paradigm: let the communities determine the direction for grant funds and the grantees can step out of the process.
- We must redefine “wealth” from individual wealth to community wealth
- “Coopetition” – new way to work

All the panelists were genuinely thanked for sharing their time and expertise.

## **Action**

### ***Ad Hoc Committee on Power of We Consortium financial campaign***

*In the fall of 2010, the Power of We Consortium membership discussed our changing financial environment and the need to consider a more sustainable plan to support the infrastructure of the Consortium. At its October, 2010 meeting, Consortium members voted to initiate a voluntary member-supported financial contribution campaign. Brad Patterson will lead a conversation regarding the outcome of that campaign. Member volunteers possessing some experience with campaigns will be asked to serve on an ad hoc committee to explore a format for, and provide leadership to, the 2011 campaign.*

Vincent called upon Brad Patterson to discuss the need to re-visit the issue of sustainability of the Power of We Consortium. Brad provided a very brief overview and indicated that members are being requested to join an ad hoc committee to create a format for the next iteration of this campaign. Members were asked to contact the PWC office if interested.

The meeting was adjourned.

**Next meeting of the Power of We Consortium: Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1:30-3:30 pm at Foster Community Center**