Good Neighbor Agreement Advisory Committee
Draft Community Agreements
"Building a Container for the Work"

Agreements

1. Come prepared, do the pre-reading
2. Pre-reading to be sent five-ten days prior
3. Be on time, be present and engaged during meetings *(Subs are not allowed as you are each specially selected to fulfill membership requirements. You may send someone to participate on the public zoom meeting and fill you in.)*
4. Clarify the "who" you are speaking for – self, larger constituency
5. Seek to understand / Ask questions to clarify perspectives
6. Listen without interrupting
7. Seek to find common ground
8. Practice respect for your colleagues
9. Share air-time
10. If you miss a meeting, please let us know. You/we will make efforts to include your perspective in advance, but will not re-visit decisions made in your absence.
11. GNAAC business will take place during the meetings only *(not on phone, social media, or via email as that would go against the Open Public Meetings Act)*
12. Communication outside of GNAAC meetings –
    a. Meetings are public and minutes will be posted on the city website. You can discuss what we're working on, and you can speak to your own experience. "In my experience…" Do not share information of a confidential or personal nature.
    b. You may share meeting notes after they are posted on the city's website
    c. A repository for documents was created on the City website as a link under each meeting, to minimize email hunts. Project staff will populate these links, and you may also upload documents for each other.
    d. You are not expected to act as outreach or conduit to constituents.
    e. Discussions among the CFH Advisory group may continue as long as there is not a quorum of GNAAC members (8), and GNAAC business is not discussed.
    f. You can send a question directly to Toni or Liz
13. Use consensus decision making. "Consensus is desired but not required".
14. Revisit these agreements at regular intervals to affirm and assess how we're doing

What is Consensus?

1) Consensus is a group discussion where **everyone's opinions are heard and understood**. This is the **best solution the group can achieve at the time** with the aim, but not requirement, of acceptance by all.

2) The root of "consensus" is "consent," which means that even if parties disagree, there is still **overall consent to move forward** in order to settle the issue. This requires **co-operation** among participants with different interests and opinions.

3) Consensus aims to **dismantle all kinds of hierarchy** and replace it with **shared power**. It is based on the values of equality, freedom, co-operation and respect for everyone's needs.

4) Consensus comes when the "**will of the group is clear.**" Consensus is not unanimous.

5) Consensus is most effective when each person who dissents is asked to speak about their dissent. A **sincere attempt to reconcile the dissent** with the majority is made, but consensus does not rest on everyone agreeing. Someone in the majority needs to repeat back to the dissenter(s) their key points and feelings. *Being heard is not the same as getting your way.* Listening to dissenters allows for the wisdom and experience of the dissenter(s) to inform and potentially modify the decision for the benefit of all. Dissenters agree that, having been heard, they can live with, support, and not sabotage, the decision.

6) In consensus **Silence Is Agreement:** We agree that silence on decisions is agreement. The facilitators and other participants cannot read our minds. If it appears that the group is reaching a consensus on an issue, and no one voices disagreement, it is assumed that all are in agreement.

Testing for Consensus with Quick Polling

➢ Thumbs Up: *I am for it and I will support it*

➢ Thumbs Sideways: *I can live with it, or, I have no opinion one way or another*

➢ Thumbs Down: *I don't understand it enough, or, I have concerns, or, I can't support it*

After quick polling, members who give "thumbs down" are asked to speak about their questions or concerns