

**CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES  
NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES – MARCH 26, 2009**

Members Present: Winona Francis, Rachel Tower, Ryan Baniszewski, Geoff King, Mike Stebe, and David Carlson

Special Guest: Richard Goll, Mark Pellegrini

Mr. Goll gave members an update on the overall Children, Youth and Families master planning process. He noted all of the groups are thinking about a neighborhood focus or approach to their particular topic areas. He said the Mayor and General Manager are firmly behind the process and are very supportive of the work the committees have done to date. He shared with the committee that the General Manager has recommended shifting a position out of the Park & Recreation Department and creating an Office of Neighborhoods & Families which would be staffed by Chris Silver and a part-time administrative assistant. Mr. Goll said this is an important step to help ensure the process would continue and the recommendations coming out of the various committees would be carried out.

The committee members then shared their ideas on how to improve physical or social connections in Manchester. This was a brainstorming exercise where members shared all of their ideas. The ideas are listed below:

***Physical Connections***

- Invest in a trolley that could connect various neighborhoods to important community places and each other.
- Community bikes: a system where bicycles would be available free of charge to residents to help them travel through the community.
- A multi-purpose indoor sports facility that would provide a venue and gathering place for the community.
- Prioritize pedestrian links on arterial collector streets and find ways to fund those sidewalk extensions to create a more complete network.
- Provide bike racks and bike lanes in key locations and in front of key community facilities to encourage and improve accessibility.
- Expand and upgrade the skate park.
- Provide increased lighting levels for the main connectors in the community.

- Identify locations for neighborhood centers that would be staffed by both volunteers and professionals.
- Find a location for a coffee house/cyber café that would be communal, fun, and provide a diverse range of activities and serve a diverse population.
- Apply the mobile library concept to other community services to ensure all neighborhoods have access to all Town services.
- Create/find a safe gathering space(s) and promote it. Possible locations include Center Memorial Park, Manchester Community College, movie theaters, downtown Manchester, the Parkade area, or the Buckland Hills mall.
- Identify neighborhood learning center locations to serve all neighborhoods.

### ***Social Connections***

- Recruit and train “youth ambassadors” who could be stationed at identified community gathering spaces or safe spaces. They can serve as information sources, guides, and greeters to encourage social interaction, provide entertainment (e.g. musicians, singing, juggling, etc.) to add life to public spaces.
- Brand and promote Manchester’s assets as a way to encourage more community involvement and pride.
- Work with the Downtown Special Services District to promote the downtown and to get people downtown (e.g. youth ambassadors, promoting events, etc.).
- Encourage and support block parties in neighborhoods.
- Identify “safe houses” in all neighborhoods, getting residents to know who their helpful neighbors are and especially where children can feel they can go in an emergency.
- Plan and carry out a “go next door” campaign encouraging and helping residents to go out and meet their neighbors. (See Ambassadors?)
- Promote local hero stories (seek out small acts of great courage). Perhaps this could be a segment on MHS News, Channel 16, and other media.
- Organize intergenerational scavenger hunts with intergenerational teams.
- Share what is “hot” in Manchester through various Manchester and other media.
- Identify neighbors-in-need and identify ways to rally around them.
- Take the Government Academy or the Police Academy concept and expand it for neighborhood and community issues.

- Use all Manchester and other media available to promote Town events and share information on activities, Town news, etc. Media include using the School Bell school publication, e-mail lists, posters in school offices, and student activity offices, neighborhood shops, stores, groceries, etc.; distribute of flyers; channel 16/MHS News; etc.
- Seek out and form youth/adult partnerships. Examples include ensuring that youth are involved in event planning such as the Manchester Road Race, 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, arts in the park, etc. Another possibility would be creating youth and adult partnerships to identify community service projects, organize them, and carry them out.

This is the rough list of all the ideas generated at the meeting. The next step will be to try and refine the list, and establish one or two that we wish to advance as our main recommendation.