Resilient Springfield Advisory Council
Minutes
1/20/2021

Present: Antonio Deslesline, Audrey Jenkins, Awilda Sanchez, Beatrice Dewberry, Bill Baker, Bob Hassett, Catherine Ratte, Chrismery Gonzalez, Emily Thibault, Ernesto Cruz, Karon Tyler, Malini Sekhar, Megan Freedman, Molly Shea, Nicole Coakley, Noemi Arguinzoni, Samantha Hamilton, Sarita Hudson, Tanisha Arena, Tina Quagliato, Zulma Rivera.

Mayor Domenic Sarno welcomed the committee members and thanked them for participating for the city.

Samantha Hamilton led the introductions and icebreaker and each participant introduced themselves and why they are participating.

Catherine Ratte and Tina Quagliato gave an overview of the purpose of the project. Catherine noted that the 2017 Municipal Vulnerability workshop identified the need for a better communications strategy to reach residents around climate issues and in particular for dealing with climate emergencies like the tornado. She noted that the overall goal is to improve communication and outreach to most vulnerable residents in area of resilience and preparedness and to improve trust in city government by city residents. The goal is to make the city resilient in the face of the climate crisis and to get actionable suggestions for the city to improve lines of communication. The process will be led by Bloom Works.

Samantha asked “what is the role of residents.” Catherine responded that their role is to find out what residents know, where you get information, what information is needed, how residents are impacted by the climate crisis and what is needed for resilience.

Malini Sekhar from Bloom Works described their role. Their goal is to understand how climate vulnerable get communications, and make Recommendations on strategies for the city to improve communications. The first step is an information gathering/Discovery period that will include interviews as well as whiteboard activities at the Resilient Springfield meetings. They will absorb what residents are willing to share, synthesize what they learn and make recommendations based on this input and best practices. They use a process of iteration, updating findings and recommendations as they learn more and get feedback. They find it is successful when information is generated together.

There was a discussion of the “homework” for residents. The task is to gather this information—where you go to get information, apps that you use to get information from.

Malini asked if it is ok to have individual chats with folks from this meeting. People agreed and Sarita said that she would put together a contact list and let her/Sam know if anyone did not want to have their phone number on the list or participate in an individual call.

Catherine explained the roles of the organizations involved in the meeting. The role of the Public Health Institute of Western MA is to convene the meeting and do the agenda and notes. Way Finders, Neighbor to Neighbor and Arise for Social Justice are bringing residents to participate in the project and will support residents to collect the information that is needed.

Sarita and Sam will share the notes form the meeting and the contact list. Catherine and Malini will write up and share the details for the homework. Everyone agreed to contact at least 5 people for their homework or as many as they are able. Catherine will also share the link to the Strong Healthy Just Climate Action & Resilience reports. Tina said that she would post the meeting notes and agenda on the city’s website and will share the link.

Sam led a “plus/delta” evaluation of the meeting. There were several “thumbs up reactions” on zoom. One person commented that they liked to meet new people not in their circle and found it informative. Another said don’t change anything. Another commented that it was a safe space and made people feel comfortable sharing.