

Workforce and Civic Engagement
Livability Project
Report of February 23, 2010

We've all heard the expression, "two steps forward, one step back." Our committee epitomizes "Two steps back and one step forward." Our "low-hanging fruit" was the recommendation to hold a conference on the challenges and opportunities presented by a changing workforce. A great need going forward!

At our first meeting in December 2009 we began the planning for this event. Missing from the meeting was a representative of the Nashville Chamber of Commerce. This was especially important as the committee was told that the Chamber was planning a related event and was interested in working with us.

In February 2010 several committee representatives and co-chair Patrick Willard met with two members of the Chamber of Commerce staff. At that meeting it was explained that the Chamber event in August 2010 will address changing demographics including the workforce. The audience will come from universities, economic development districts and the Chamber membership. It was pretty clear to those attending that there would NOT be an opportunity to collaborate on this event.

Immediately after this meeting we re-convened with new committee members from the Society of Human Resource Managers and the National Council on Aging's older worker program. At this meeting the committee decided to change our focus for 2010 to the second part of our charge: civic engagement. To that end we have added representatives from Hands on Nashville and the Mayor's Office coordinating the Cities of Service grant.

Regarding our initial plan: the committee sees the possibility of a follow-up to the Chamber event that will provide more hands on tools for employers to utilize older workers as well as assist them with caregiving needs. The Chamber event may very well raise awareness among employers of issues and we can provide the practical tools for education on resources and implementation of workplace change.

So, we are basically back at step 1 of implementation of our new focus—promoting community involvement and volunteerism in the development of new initiatives and civic projects and partnering with faith and nonprofit communities to connect volunteers and projects. Our first step was to get the correct people on board for this new focus. One idea which has initially excited committee members is to conduct a modified "charette" process in one neighborhood. This would involve government, nonprofits and neighborhood members themselves to plan what they would like their neighborhood to look like in the future. This would take into account the aging of the population and their ability to remain in their homes by having access to needed services.

- Next Steps:
1. Involve Hands on Nashville and the Mayor's office through the Cities of Service project
 2. Consult with Nashville Civic Design Center (which has previously conducted charettes.
 3. Meeting March 4 to determine feasibility and begin focus on possible neighborhoods
 4. Identify other possible stakeholders
 5. Look at present models of civic engagement like Discover Nashville
 6. Develop timetable
 7. Seek funding