



# ENERGIZED – THE POWER OF DIVERSITY

APRIL 2021

# THANK YOU FOR JOINING

“We are a community of possibilities, not a community of problems. Community exists for the sake of belonging and takes its identity from the gifts, generosity, and accountability of its citizens. It is not defined by its fears or isolation. We currently have all the capacity, expertise, programs, leaders...to create an alternative future.”

- Peter Block

*Community: The Structure of Belonging*

# INTRODUCTIONS

- What we mean by diversity: the who and the how.
- Name + how do you currently engage with your neighborhood/neighborhood association?

# INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY

- Write down some ways your neighborhood association currently works to engage as many neighbors as possible.

# DISCUSSION

# HOW TO ENGAGE – TACTICAL

- Put it on the agenda: set aside part of or an entire meeting to discuss your neighborhood association's engagement goals.
  - Who is at the table? Who is missing?
  - Who finds it easy to join and participate? What makes it challenging for others?
  - What's our motivation? How much effort are we willing to put into this?
  - What are our priorities?
  - What are some (2-3) realistic actions we can work on now?
- Offer childcare.
- Offer translation services for folks who may need it at the meetings.

# HOW TO ENGAGE – TACTICAL, CONT'd

- Share information about the NA through flyers, translated into various languages, if needed.
- Meet on different days and at different times to accommodate school schedules, work schedules, etc.
- Vary meeting locations – parks, libraries, etc.
- Focus on shared values rather than focusing on issues.
- Provide various ways for people to share their thoughts (not everyone feels comfortable speaking in a group)
  - Pair discussions
  - Written comments on note cards
  - Whiteboard

# CANADA EXAMPLE

- Edmonton, Alberta shifted focus from organizing to build and manage hockey and other facilities to training volunteers to have conversations with neighbors.
- Abundant Communities Initiative: city's effort to strengthen the social fabric of its neighborhoods



# WHAT'S THE CONVERSATION WE WANT TO HAVE?

- Knowing that diverse voices make for a richer community, who do we want in the room at your next neighborhood meeting?
  - What are some new ways we can engage various community members?

# DISCUSSION

# TIPS TO CONSIDER

- Leadership is convening and held to two tasks:
  - Shift the context within which people gather
  - Listen rather than advocate, defend, or provide answers
- Break down silos – participate in other community events, neighborhood gatherings, etc. to build relationships.
- Identify how your NA can be of assistance to others.
- Mobilize your NA to work on community projects identified to be important by diverse voices, i.e. people of color, youth, renters.

# POWER OF A SMALL GROUP

- The small group is the unit of transformation.
- Large-scale transformation occurs when enough small groups shift in harmony toward the larger change. The small group produces power when diversity of thinking and dissent are given space, commitments are made without barter, and the gifts of each person and our community are acknowledged and valued.

# GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR YOUR NEXT MEETING

- How valuable an experience (or project, or community) do you plan for this to be?
- How much risk are you willing to take?
- How participative do you plan to be?
- To what extent are you invested in the well-being of the whole?

*From: Community: The Structure of Belonging by Peter Block*

**THANK YOU!**