

Family Engagement Meeting Minutes
April 24, 2007

Present: Red Petrovs, Barbara Bacon, Angie Moon de Avila, Julie Meehan, Jeff Lukich, Mike Hackett, Ray Beck, Monica Knight, Tim Johnson, Melissa Kurtz, Jim Geiser

Red opened the meeting and had everyone introduce themselves.

The first item of business was to discuss the concept of a Family Resource Center. Red shared the model at Drew Charter School and the East Lake Community. He shared the relationship that the school had with the YMCA, as well as the mixed income housing that had been built surrounding the facility.

Jim provided a hand-out to the group showing different family resource center models. The various models provided community resources such as early childhood programs, health and social services, adult education, etc. The concept of these resource center models was to provide family support to provide access to a variety of services needed by families.

The model that the group is seeking is “in progress”. The group brainstormed some ideas on what the model might look like. Some of that brainstorming included:

- The vision for the model that we are seeking to develop has the components of a family engagement center as is currently defined by the school system, as well as a comprehensive family resource center with increased access to such programs as early childhood, health, adult education, etc. It was also emphasized that the vision actually goes beyond this to include a “Family Teaching Center”. The group agreed that whatever was developed needed to be more than simply providing services. This “center” would need to provide something that is not provided now.
- The vision must be comprehensive and holistic. Each participating organization would focus on what they do well.
- The model would provide some sort of Family Mentoring.
- The model that is developed would need to have community ownership with a shared governance model.
- The model would go beyond the school, and any additional facilities; it is actually about neighborhood revitalization.
- The Boys and Girls Club is building a 22,000 sq. ft. facility near the Fourth Street campus; joint planning is going on between the two groups.
- On-site child care could support families in the community as well as serve as a recruitment tool to get good teachers.
- The Miriam Moore Community Center has an array of programs that could be linked to the community.

- The idea of a shuttle bus was suggested as one means to connect people to the various services in the community.
- Contact Carol Naughton and Charles Knapp with the East Lake Foundation to see how they might help us.
- Do a comprehensive needs assessment. One question may be, “If you have an economic crisis where would you go first?”
- Perhaps the center’s name could be the OneAthens Center.

Some questions that the group brainstormed include:

1. What is the mission and vision of this initiative?
2. What are our facility needs? Are we talking about adding facilities: expanding facilities? Is the “resource center” school based? Does it go beyond the school? Could the old Dept. of Labor space be of use?
3. How do we go to the families and find out their real needs? What do they want?
4. Is Fourth Street the right site? Do we include Fowler Drive? What about the two new schools?
5. What is already going on at Fourth Street?
6. How do we bring together the school system and community organizations into a shared governance model?
7. Is it possible for Boys and Girls Club, or another group to provide on-site child care? Can child care be an income producing source for the center?
8. How will we know if we are successful? What will be our indicators?
9. What role could the Athens Land Trust play in this effort?
10. How do we engage HED more effectively?
11. How could the resources at the Miriam Moore Community Center support this initiative?
12. Are there some learnings from Garnett Ridge that could help us as we move forward with this community? Craig Stansberry was mentioned as a possible resource.
13. How do we better engage the community; in particular single males and the elderly?

Some other groups to possibly include in some way:

- a. Public Health
- b. Juvenile Justice/Juvenile Court
- c. Teen pregnancy prevention initiative
- d. Families and Students from the neighborhood
- e. Community person/ministers/churches
- f. Athens Tech
- g. Catholic charities

The next meeting was scheduled for May 7 from 9:00-10:30 at DFCS. At this meeting short presentations by the Family Engagement specialists at Fourth Street and Coile would inform the group about what is currently happening at those schools. We would also follow-up on some of the issues brought forward in this meeting and assign some specific follow-up.

Jeff was going to try to see if B.J. Walker could come to next meeting (tentatively May 21) to speak to this initiative.