

SUFC Steering Committee Conference Calls

Vibrant Communities Initiative

December 2012

SUFC Steering Committee (SC) held two conference calls following the in-person meeting in Washington DC on December 3, 2012. The purpose of the calls was to examine the current Vibrant Communities Initiative and the proposed strategic plan and for the SUFC “team” (Shannon Lawrence, Jen Hinrichs & Larry Wiseman) – specifically to get clear guidance from SC on the fundraising [NUCFAC grant] and other elements of the plan and direction on the scope/scale of work SUFC members are willing to support.

Future calls will provide additional guidance and organizational decision making (early 2013).

Participating in one or both calls: *Keith Cline, Jen Hinrichs, Shannon Lawrence, Don Winsett, Cara Boucher, Steve Sinclair, Dan Lambe, Carrie Gallagher, Julia Anastasio, Alice Ewen*

The outcome and decisions of both calls (12/10 & 12/12) are summarized below:

- SC members voiced concern about the amount of time and resources the VC initiative is taking and its potential negative effect on the Coalition. The SC is NOT looking for SUFC to implement programs – so the “million \$ question is how to we [SUFC] get our biggest bang for our buck and continue with both VC and SUFC?”
- Both the FS and the SC reinforced the importance of the Coalition and keeping it strong by remaining within its traditional role of convener, facilitator, networking and relationship incubator and advocate for urban forestry/green infrastructure (via policy, federal agencies and external audiences).
- SC and Forest Service (FS) representatives agree that SUFC should focus on the *baseline deliverables outlined (with some modifications) in the original Forest Service proposal/grant to SUFC for Vibrant Cities.* Those include:
 1. Vibrant Cities/Communities Clearinghouse & hub
 2. Vibrant Cities/Communities Communication Campaign Plan
 3. Convening Funders
- There will be little to no FS funding for the continuation of this initiative under SUFC.

- Grant deliverables should be completed (as much as possible) by May 2013¹ by the VC team and SUFC members. SUFC's formal role with VC lead will end.
- The VC grant deliverables should focus on planning and recommendations vs. implementation. The VC team is currently revising the proposed VC strategic plan to reflect guidance from both the FS and the SC. This will advance the three deliverables listed above (3rd bullet).
 1. As part of the three deliverables above, the VC team is developing plans and a "package" for an organization/s to move VC forward.
 2. Supporting stakeholder canvassing and an environmental scan of past UF communication/marketing campaigns will be included.
 3. To "set the table for future funding," the larger, more visionary elements of the original strategic plan will be captured in this same final deliverable (or "package") that can be picked up by future implementers and funders (i.e., expanded website hub, expanded pilot communities concept etc.).
- SUFC SC will meet early in 2013 to discuss:
 - How SUFC (and VC) move forward with strategic fundraising efforts aimed at supporting both SUFC (minimal operating funds) and the work of the larger UF community AS WELL AS specific on-going expenses like the VC website management and requested VC toolkits.
 - This information will also provide much needed guidance to complete the deliverables in the VC grant to the FS.
- There is a need for SUFC to be aware and responsive – to some degree – of the diverse VC stakeholders who represent a broader constituency (outside of this table and our inner circles). Question posed: *"What have we/will we do to really change and advance our fields in the arenas of policy, planning and on-the-ground work? And how do we fund this?"*
- SC voted to withdraw the submitted NUCFAC grant by SUFC members on behalf of SUFC (five votes to pull, one abstaining).

¹ SUFC Steering Committee and VC Team will continue to meet and discuss how SUFC members continue to advance the Vibrant Cities recommendations and specific elements of the VC grant post May 2013 – these should all be in line with current SUFC interests and priorities (i.e., supporting the convening of UF funders concept at Partners Mtg. and so on.) SUFC is identifying its strengths through its growth & planning process and should be able to identify where and how VC fits into those strengths going forward.