

## **GRO Proposal For Future**

The GRO core committee met on August 27<sup>th</sup> to discuss the future of GRO and Aurora in the council chambers of City Hall.

Attendance: Those on hand were Jack Muench, Marsha Egan, Michele Parbury, Jon Holmes, Shannon Walker. We also put Scott Pettit on speaker phone before we concluded the morning session.

Jack Muench and Scott Pettit were in favor of staying the course with GRO if possible, but they understood the intent and direction of the rest of the group and indicated they would support it. We reached out to Scott Pettit via cell phone and put him on speaker.

Michele Parbury, Kim Mobley, Marsha Egan, Shannon Walker and Jon Holmes agreed to request some sort of transition or change with the current GRO format that doesn't seem to be as productive as we'd like to be. Jon Holmes indicated the city's partnership piece would still be feasible with some kind of amendment and explanation. He felt the city had benefitted from GRO and the relationships involved with the various groups.

We will finish the year under the current platform as fees are paid.

\*We can amend the request for Community Partner funds from the city for the \$5,000 and revise as needed with Brian Fogle's assistance.

\*\*We want to have a Zoom call with Brian Fogle in the future to see if we can find a win-win proposal for our future partnership with GRO. Michele Parbury indicated she would set this up. Kim Mobley also indicated she had periodic conversations with Brian about Aurora, YEP and the future.

### **Wins: (per group brainstorming)**

1. Aurora has benefitted greatly from participating in the GRO program for the past 3+ (almost four) years. We actually started the application process almost five years ago as the economic development group was already in place and meeting at central offices.
2. We love the credibility and momentum that being a part of GRO has given us.
3. We enjoy the networking with other GRO communities.
4. Corporate structure has been beneficial.
5. Meetings have enforced accountability.
6. We have enjoyed bringing in the leadership students from AHS and building their skillset to help with some of the documents, like the GRO Code of Conduct and the Mission/Vision/Commitment pieces.

### **Concerns: (focusing on our commitment to transparency)**

1. We feel like some of the homework is redundant with our monthly Zoom call updates.

2. We would like to spend our time and money on actually doing things in the Aurora community.
3. We feel like the time, information and details provided by our GRO team are often overlooked or forced into cookie-cutter platforms.
4. We feel like we are not in the same place as some of the newer communities.
5. We want to keep our money at home and focus more on hands-on work and continued recruitment.
6. We know the pandemic has affected everyone and made our work look and feel a little differently.

**Proposal: We would like to create a mentorship platform of GRO where we could spend our time and money all at the local level:**

1. Staying involved through email, speakers, contacts (Shannon will help with this)
2. Hosting a couple of cross-community events with speakers per year (Hrishue can bring in other communities as CFO sees fit)
3. Graduating to a higher level and advocate for resources, partnerships, growth and a healthy community mindset (Create Here is revamping)
4. Including some information about GRO and our wins in the new Chamber directory (it is getting ready for another printing.)
5. Focusing on supporting the city's comprehensive plan project and continuing our PR campaign
6. Helping YEP with the next mural or the next round of signs and shirts (YEP paid for the first two rounds of them in the beginning)
7. Helping to continue to rebrand, revamp and revise our promotional materials to match our ongoing goals and objectives
8. Paying a lesser amount for mentor communities that graduate to serve as mentor communities. We would use additional monies to help with projects and host events.
9. We like the terms of Community Engagement and Community Partner if we rebrand our next level of GRO participation.
10. We would like to offer our services to CFO to help make these transitions happen.
11. We still want to support Brian Fogle, the GRO concept and the Community Foundation.
12. It is our hope to maintain a fund with the local affiliate or central offices of CFO as some of indicated is possible.
13. We will continue to look for grants, resources, outside funding and support to continue our efforts as a community partner.
14. There should be some community YEP money available in the future for more PR materials/signs/shirts/etc. if we need them.
15. Can we help with Habitat, ABC or any other renovations/Brushes With Kindness? As Covid goes away students can get more involved.
16. The Alumni Center is looking at hosting some community events and workshops on some of our GRO topics.
17. PROJECT RISE could use assistance with the community garden and more incentives for families.

