

Notes from the Roanoke Change Academy's Fourth Discussion of *Designing Creative Communities*—May 9, 2022

Thought Homework Discussion: The group spent the session discussing our thought assignment from the previous week: Think about what your vision is for Roanoke's future. This can be a big citywide vision, or as small as you want! What would success look like? Who would be your early adapters? What would your prototype be? Visions included:

- Roanoke having a master list of all the volunteer groups in the city in one place. Have a volunteer fair/information booth at every event in Elmwood Park so people know what opportunities are available
- Clean up the city! A prototype to get people talking could be costumed people picking up trash
- Initiate a kindness campaign. Businesses could donate Kind bars as a prototype
 - One participant noted that Pat Wilhelms is leading a kindness campaign
- One participant wrote a document called Local Abundance Exploring, which focuses on cultivating a mindset of abundance. Key points included:
 - Neighborhoods using ecovillage concepts to achieve abundance in all local enterprises, including education, food, housing, and transportation. Features could include co-housing, more access to locally-grown food, and decreased reliance on transportation. These local efforts would generate more local circulation of money
 - For this vision, success would look like the development and opening of numerous new local businesses
- The group discussed the importance of switching from a mentality of pitching your own ideas for the community to asking how you can serve others (see page 296)
- People from across the city could paint rocks to line each trail at Mill Mountain. Paint and the rocks would be provided, and this would encourage people to explore the trails
- Meshing an artist program with the libraries, perhaps around a branch renovation
- Have a resource card for residents
- Individual Roanokers able to support others, no matter what they look like. One participant suggested reading the children's books *Each Kindness*, by Jacqueline Woodson, and *The Golden Rule*, by Ilene Cooper. Think of acts of kindness as creating ripples
- Implementing compassionate conversations about—and reparations for—Gainsboro
- People being able to share their visions for their communities and how they fit in. Find your niche within the existing infrastructure
- Having a community in which everybody is able to earn enough to support their families
 - Rob Leonard teaches building trade skills in Gainsboro
 - Provide more hands-on learning opportunities, such as farms connected to schools and hands-on makerspaces
- One participant said that we have to connect people with different skills and experiences, and to move forward thoughtfully
- Our group should get back together in the future to see how much progress we've made!

City Plan 2040: One participant's vision is City Plan 2040 coming to fruition

- There's opportunity for groups working towards the plan's goals in their own niches and with other groups
- Each Change Academy member could sign up to join an organization working on the Comprehensive Plan
- Participants noted that there's not one centralized place tracking progress on the plan
- When asked about how developments are happening in conjunction with the plan, Council Member Bill Bestpitch said that developers have reduced rezoning requests and have been doing work where the City has indicated needs
- How do we let more residents know about City Plan 2040? One participant suggested tabling at community events with information about the plan, its goals, and ways to support it. Another participant suggested having a one-page handout about the plan with a QR code linking to it

Thoughts from Artists:

- Use something other than cardboard for prototypes!
- "To be an artist, one has to exercise participation and making decisions. Art can be incorporated into everything"—Pete
- There's a negative stereotype of artists in popular media as flaky (think Phoebe from Friends), but artists are so much more!

Upcoming Events:

- Gainsboro Block Party: May 21st from 11-2—outside the Gainsboro Branch Library
- Local Colors: May 21st from 11-5—Elmwood Park
- First Ukestra Gathering: May 28th from 12-1—Parkway Brewery
- Fundraiser for Ukraine: June 19th from 3-6 PM in Countryside Park