

2016



ENGAGE



What's your #bigidea for Halifax?

Foreword

on shifting the idea, practice, and value of engagement

Every year for the last 25 years the School of Planning has held a conference which brings together the community with the profession, academics and students. The conference is run entirely by students who believe that a healthy exchange of ideas can make all the difference to the communities we build, to the practice of planning as well as to how planners are educated.

For the last few years the CONFERENCE topic has focused on the notion that we are living in a moment of immense change and extraordinary possibilities. We can't move forward by standing still or looking backward. Our attitude, perspective and outlook need to change more dramatically. Both the ambitions and the models for building walkable, healthy, equitable, environmentally responsible and socially diverse 21st Century urban and rural communities need to SHIFT.

The SHIFT will only happen if it is understood and valued, informed and led by the community. SHIFT ENGAGE provided a forum for participants both local and from away to share insights and methods, examples and stories. The conclusions seem both obvious and profound:

- 1. EMBRACE ENGAGEMENT.** Involving community is not a necessary evil. It's not just time consuming. It is the only way of making change happen, of incorporating local knowledge, mobilizing local action and frequently of getting political support.
- 2. MAKE IT CREATIVE.** Facilitating isn't enough. Nor is information gathering or surveying or voting. To get real change we have to raise the level of public discussion. Engagement needs to be seen as mutual learning. Real solutions to our emerging realities of climate change, gridlock, intensification, social inequity, rural decline, youth alienationare not multiple choice or off the shelf. There is a need to question experts and dismiss accepted ideologies; to engage the community in the creative process of planning/design.
- 3. EMPOWER NEIGHBOURHOODS.** Change happens at the local level. Rather than stifling local initiative, finding reasons not to do anything, or committing projects to die by "study"; in Seattle the Municipal government supports local neighbourhoods, provides funding for local projects and values volunteer efforts.

Engagement is not an afterthought or a one way street or an endless quagmire. Its an opportunity to build on/with the knowledge, talents and energy of community. It may also be the only way to get around vested interests in the status quo and government agencies and experts operating in isolated silos, resistant to any change. In this light engagement that is uplifting, recognized, creative, empowering and action oriented becomes an essential instrument for moving forward.

- Frank Palermo

Introduction: Why Engage?

a word from the students

For over 25 years, students at Dalhousie University's School of Planning have organized and hosted the SHIFT Conference. Now in its 27th year, we are pleased to report that we have hosted another successful conference, where we explored the theme, "Engage". Engagement in planning has come to involve a number of components with various meanings to urban and rural communities, or communities with special interests. By continuing a discussion about engagement, we contributed to understanding people better and to removing barriers to participating in the planning process. We believe that access to well-planned and inclusive engagement is the right and responsibility of every member of a community. However, engagement is sometimes overlooked or seen as a burden in the planning process. The conference aimed to shift the way we think about engagement.

One of our 2016 keynote speakers, Randolph Hester, reminded us that the most important skills for planners to have are social skills. The knowledge of participatory theory, group processes, and political organization cannot be overlooked. Additionally, planners must be guided by the desire to "do good" for the entire community and everyone in it. Nevertheless, planners are not the only ones with a role to play. As was discussed in our Placemaking Panel Discussion, community members have the ability (and responsibility) to make their community a better place by getting involved. Community engagement does not have to be a sanctioned activity by

an established government or organization, it can certainly be spurred from the 'bottom-up'. As our keynote speaker Jim Diers stated, governments will need to shift their focus from people's needs to their strengths and allow communities to take ownership of their neighbourhoods and be democratic in their decisions. The intent of this year's theme was to not only inspire planning professionals and allied fields, but to also encourage community members to make positive change in their own communities.

So, now that we know that engagement is necessary and that it is a positive component of planning, how can we ensure it is triggered at the right time, or at all? Our Conference speakers and participants have provided us with great direction. Engagement requires communication, collaboration, and mutual trust amongst governments, organizations, communities and citizens. As speaker Tim Merry pointed out, engagement should occur earlier so that stakeholders and people impacted are better integrated into the process. Additionally, it should be clear what the people can change and influence, as engagement is pointless if the peoples' opinions and feedback are not influential on the final outcome. SHIFT Engage allowed us to challenge our current methods of engagement to explore ways to share knowledge and to build relationships of trust and respect. Alternative methods for engagement such as web based platforms and informative videos were explored during presentations by Simon Lapointe

and PLANifax. To put everything in a Halifax context, in collaboration with WSP, we asked people to share their '#bigidea' for Halifax. The responses were quite varied from planning a light rail system to developing protected bike lanes and heated bus stops, and will be highlighted in the upcoming report.

We are grateful to all the attendees, volunteers, organizers, speakers, sponsors and partners for contributing to SHIFT 2016. Our conference would not have been a success without the continuous support of the community. A testament to the community's outstanding support of the conference came on the second day when, despite a snowstorm, participants came from far and near to attend. We cannot thank you enough. Additionally, I would personally like to thank my wonderful classmates who worked tirelessly for seven months to put together this free and informative conference. Your efforts were inspiring and you should be very proud.

The following report is a summary of the two-day conference with response summaries and includes key points from each session. Although it is only a fragment of the discussions and presentations, we hope it provides inspiration to engage in our communities and confirm that our opinions and ideas can have an impact.

Introduction written by Elizabeth Nicoll, Masters of Planning student at Dalhousie University.

The SHIFT: Engage committee comprised of: Elizabeth Nicoll, Sarah Bercu, Joseph Gnemmi, Sandy Mackay, Mina Seddigh, Genise Grant, Ross Grant, Christine Lee, Jake Papineau, Andrew Scanlan Dickie, Allison Myggland, Jordan Zukowski, Janelle Derksen, Sara Jellicoe, Yanan Gou, Mia Feng, Eliza Jackson, Caitlin Hinton, Sarah Ravlic and Frank Palermo.

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KEYNOTE

Randolph Hester

skills community designers need

Randolph Hester has been an activist planner throughout his career, opposing freeways and promoting social equity. He has received an honorary degree in Planning from Dalhousie University. At the SHIFT: Engage Conference, Hester delivered the opening keynote about the skills that community planners need in the 21st Century.

The most important skills for planners to have, according to Hester, are social skills. These include participatory theory, group processes, political organizing, microsocial transactions, and macrosocial trends. Understanding culture and social interactions are essential to getting things done as a planner. With all of these tools, planners must be guided by the desire to do good for the whole community and everyone in it.

A well, Hester was adamant that planners need to understand grading and drainage. According to Hester, drainage is one of the main ways that environmental racism occurs in a community, especially when effluent from one affluent site at the top of a hill rolls downhill. In the community of Yountville, where an above-grade freeway was slated for construction, Hester fought alongside the community against the freeway

on the basis of the pollution that would occur.

Hester discussed how planners need to know their limits, what they know and what they don't know. In China, on the Chi-Gu Lagoon, developers wanted to build a petrochemical plant. The plant would have created short-term jobs in construction and long-term jobs in chemical engineering. But its effluent would have destroyed the livelihoods of the lagoon's fishermen and a refuge of the Black-Faced Spoonbill. By consulting with a spoonbill expert and local fishermen, Hester was able to build a case for the site's preservation and an alternative development plan of ecotourism, which created thousands of long-term service jobs.

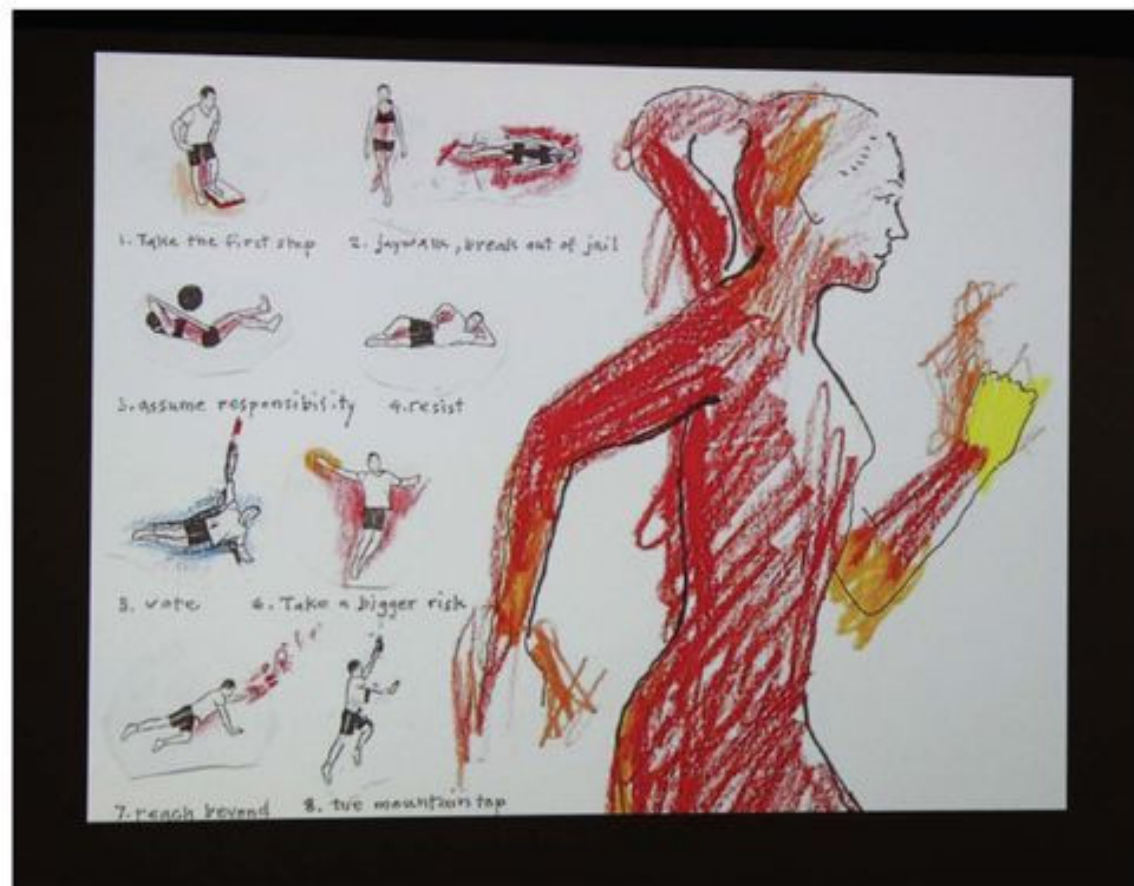
In Manteo, California, Hester talked about understanding culture. Manteo had 22% unemployment because the town hadn't transitioned from wooden to steel shipbuilding. There was a development plan to reinvigorate the economy by building wooden ships again. It was important to understand the culture of the town for the plan, or as Hester said, the "sacred things," in this case, peoples' porches, where they could watch the public realm. Through careful observation, Hester found spaces that even the townspeople didn't realize



"Implement the Cycling Coalition's 'On Track for 2020' protected bike lane plan"

were sacred, such as the docks where the teenagers would gather and share many firsts. Weaving these sacred things into the town's urban fabric, and enshrined them in the planning strategy.

It's important for planners to be able to put themselves in another's shoes. This does not mean compromise. Conflict is important, because it gives opportunities for all sides to interact and come to an understanding. When understanding is reached, according to Hester, the best decisions can be made in a way that benefits everyone.



Kate MacLennan·TJ Maguire·LaMeia Reddick

community engagement through placemaking, justice, and art

Overview

As part of the morning programming for the Conference, Kate MacLennan, TJ Maguire, and LaMeia Reddick discussed their experiences in making change in the community. The intention of the session was to inspire attendees to action the ideas they have to make their community a better place. The session introduced the panelists and the work they have done in the community. The panelists then discussed their passion projects that ignited their career in engagement and answered questions posed by the attendees. At the end of the session the panel turned the focus of the discussion to the groups formed by the attendees and encouraged the participants to discuss their ideas for community development. The panelists facilitated the discussion at the tables. A final take-away from community engagement panel was to encourage participants to make connections and to inspire others to make the ideas happen.

Synopsis & Reflection

Community engagement does not

always have to be a sanctioned activity by a established government or organization. Often communities do not have control over the community development and community engagement project. When working with a community that you are not a part of, it can be helpful to find a connector. A liaison or connector can help give a community a bit more freedom and flexibility in the engagement process. LaMeia has worked with various organizations and groups to provide input from the African Nova Scotian community. LaMeia discussed the importance of 'building the bridge' to tap into existing community knowledge. When working with certain communities it is important to let groups have opportunity to speak amongst themselves in order to respect the space. The community's desires may then be brought forward to the broader community.

The panelists discussed the impacts and effects of positively contributing to the area you care about. There is an aspect of one's overcoming fear. Being a leader of change means taking a risk and often people will take risks with you. It is important to just making things happen. The panel encouraged participants to start auctioning an idea.



"make all street parking permitted or paid--no freebies for storing personal vehicles."



There will be a number of people wanting to help make it happen. As Randolph Hester said “be willing to go to jail”, you never know what can happen if you can share an idea.

People aren't happy with the engagement that is taking place and are looking to go deeper. Building relationships is a key component to community engagement. Engagement is about people that go through things together, both struggling and succeeding together. You can be empowered by others just have the confidence that it is possible. It takes an individual to champion change when opportunity presents itself.

When doing engagement with a community, all ideas need to be captured,

represented and pushed forward. Let your role in a project evolve. Engagement is always richer when the question on how to move forward is posed to others. It is important to work with a community to define what is needed and what is wanted. Provide opportunities for people to connect with grassroots initiatives. Community engagement can mean being a coach to assist community groups to develop a project. Community members are the ones implementing the plan. Community members might need a coach, as they are interacting with existing structures as both barriers and opportunities.

It is important to find the answers

when the answer is unknown. Leaders of community engagement need to ask for help; input from others can greatly contribute to the project. Every person has a unique roll in engagement and all participants bring something to the table. Every person brings a unique skillset to the table and it is important to recognize skills and gaps. Seek out those who can help you. Work through difference to contribute to learning. Leaders and facilitators should ask if the direction is the right direction. Consultation is not worth it if the community is not going to be listened to, it needs to mean something. It is important to define the goal to then design around the goal. Allow communities to have freedom in their direction. When trying to make a project happen – go where there is energy and start small to build momentum.

that allowed people to get in touch with information in their community on such things as permaculture, a welcoming committee, or neighbourhood identification

Ideas For Community Initiated Development

#1 – Gentrification think tank: a participant is hosting a gentrification think tank to discuss the ongoing gentrification of the North End of Halifax and what can be done about it

#2 – To establish a trail at Larry Uteck – a participant wanted to work with the city to develop a trail. The current desired route is not ideal and some members of the community would prefer to work with the city to find a better location for the trail.

#3 – Listening stations – a wifi audio concept



"incentives for alternative transportation: tax breaks, job perks for biking or carpooling, etc..."

Tim Merry

facilitating authentic engagement

To kick off the afternoon of the first day of SHIFT, Tim Merry conducted a workshop around authentically engaging the public in planning and development. The workshop consisted of a presentation by Merry, some roundtable discussion in groups of four-five, and a live illustration of the session by Marguerite Drescher of BraveSpace. Drescher's role was to distill the big ideas that came out of the workshop, something that she has done as part of Merry's engagement session many times before. Merry spoke to the role of engagement in planning based on the fact that situations are often too complex for one or few people to solve. When planners or developers merely present and defend information, they are not providing the public with a meaningful way to influence the outcome of a project. Merry argues that if you are not allowing enough space for meaningful public participation, there is little to no point in engaging with them in the first place.

The presentation went on to cover the elements of engagement, which include events, online platforms, and creative endeavors. In an attempt to "find people where they're at", Merry and his team will often hire actors or create pop-up engagements



in public spaces in order to garner opinions and insight from the public.

The process of engagement, as Merry describes it, is an iterative process where the person or group conducting engagement must think about the type of engagement, the platform where content will be made available, and the messaging that is used to help people make more informed decisions. Merry concluded his presentation with some key takeaways that he had learned throughout his experience in conducting engagement. They were as follows:

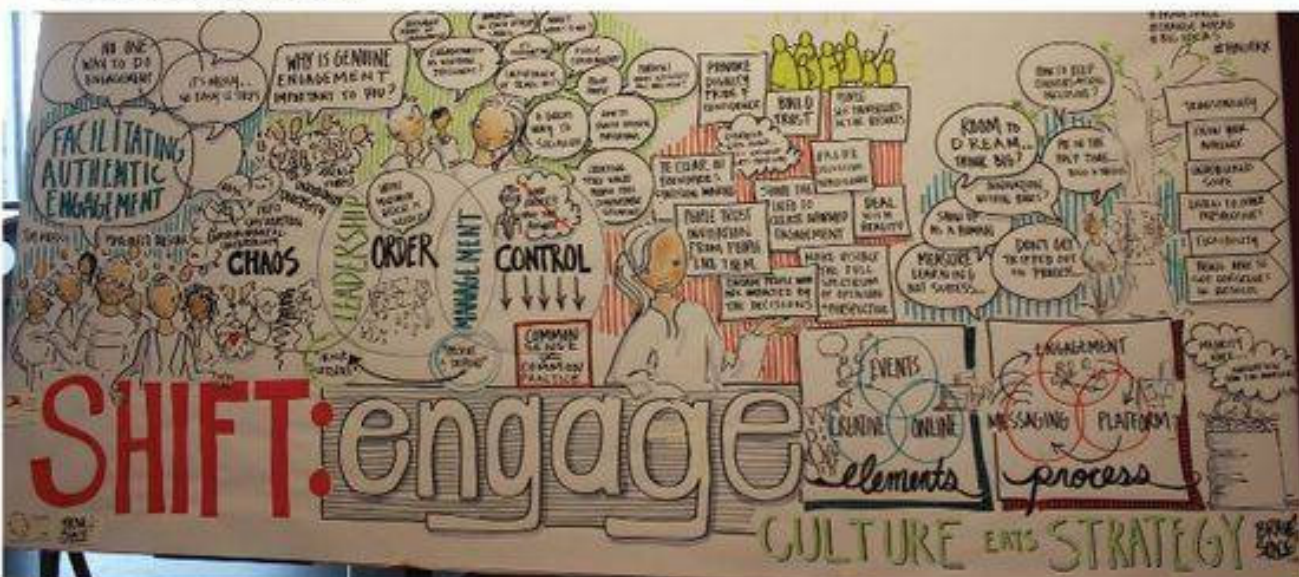
- People trust invitations from people like themselves: it is crucial to incorporate people from marginalized groups into your team and your process.
- Engage the people who are impacted by the decisions: think about when engagement happens and engage



stakeholders earlier so that their voice is integrated into the process.

- Be clear on boundaries and decision-making: what is it that people can actually change and influence?
- Share the necessary information to create informed engagement: make information from previous sessions available so that each session can move forward, rather than rehashing what happened the last time.
- Make visible the full spectrum of opinion and perspective: don't normalize or exclude the outliers.
- Value collective engagement: people are smarter together and it is crucial to aggregate the themes that arise out of each session.
- Deal with reality: make sure that the reality of the situation is clear from the beginning and think about what can come from the reality.

- Provoke dignity, pride, and confidence: tailor engagement to reflect the community.
- Build trust: don't do something if it is not an active exercise in building trust with the community.
- Make sure people see themselves in the results: how did the people's feedback factor into the final outcome? Show them!
- Culture eats strategy for lunch: need to make sure the culture of an organization makes them more participatory.



"create streets and places to BE, rather than move through"

Simon Lapointe

web-based engagement platforms

Overview

As part of our afternoon programming for the Conference, Simon LaPointe delivered a presentation on the use of web-based engagement platforms to better connect with and engage community members throughout the planning process. A well-attended presentation, attendees were introduced to the basic 'tactics and tools' for deploying online engagement platforms and what the strengths and challenges of using such platforms in the planning process are. While Mr. LaPointe presented a number of 'tools and tactics' for using web-based platforms for community engagement, a core message that he focused on was that online engagement strategies must be designed with the user in mind (be people friendly and reflect the values and preferences of the community) and ought to be used in tandem with in-person engagement strategies in order to achieve genuine community engagement. Suggesting that community members often need more of an 'active' invitation to use web-based platforms, Mr. LaPointe's presentation concluded with a brief activity where attendees were encouraged to speak with people at the Central Library about

using an online engagement platform WSP developed specifically for the Conference to express their ideas on how to improve mobility in Halifax (www.wspengage.com/shift-engage). Posing a series of 4 questions over the span of the Conference, the platform attracted dozens of responses, which was supported by the face-to-face interaction Mr. LaPointe identified as being key to the success of community engagement strategies. A final take-away from Mr. Lapointe's presentation is that web-based and in-person engagement strategies are ultimately complimentary tools that planners may employ to effectively engage with a diverse range of increasingly mobile-centric citizens.

Synopsis & Reflection

As technology becomes increasingly pervasive in the lives of citizens, planners must be conscientious as to how deploy online engagement platforms to better engage with communities. Mr. LaPointe began his presentation by discussing the limitations of traditional engagement strategies such as open-houses or in-person meetings. He discussed two examples



where conventional engagement strategies within the planning process either failed to attract any attendees or did not attract a diversity of community members. Referring to conventional public engagement models employed by governments as 'vending machine governance' whereby resources are committed to strategies that may or may not return any valuable information. Rather than simply 'shake' the machine until something comes out, Mr. LaPointe suggested that governments ought to think of themselves as a 'platform' for governance and employ different tools to make the engagement process more effective.

Recognizing that Canadians are among the heaviest Internet users globally (spending an average of 45.6 hours per month online), that Millennials overwhelmingly access information and platforms using mobile devices, and that baby boomers are the fastest growing group of Internet users, Mr. LaPointe suggested that decision-makers may be better connected to citizens through web-based platforms. However, he argued that haphazardly selecting and employing a web-based platform (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, etc.) is ineffective and that governments and decision-makers must effectively 'know the audience' that they are trying to reach. The key to effective community engagement using web-based platforms is to think about community tendencies and preferences

and identify the right tool/platform for the application. Oftentimes, he suggested, we select the wrong tools.

Discussing a number of 'tactics and tools' for using web-based platforms for community engagement, Mr. LaPointe identified three primary functions of web-based platforms in the planning process: to facilitate collaboration (wiki tools, shared workspaces, large-scale online platforms such as the WSP site mentioned above), survey attitudes (polls, aggregation of poll results), and to aid with prioritizing options (GPS-based platforms to identify geographic locations of issues such as potholes, data visualization/mapping, budget simulations). To ensure that these 'tactics and tools' are employed most effectively, Mr. LaPointe suggested that it is important to engage with participants face-to-face and to introduce others to how online platforms may be accessed and what type of value these platforms add to the community planning process.

Presenting a number of successful examples as to when web-based platforms were effectively deployed for community engagement strategies, Mr. LaPointe's presentation did not advocate for the wholesale use of web-platforms as a stand-in for more traditional engagement strategies, including face-to-face interaction. Rather, a key take-away from Mr. LaPointe's presentation was that governments,



"we can be a city where the waterfront is vibrant 12 months of the year"

decision-makers, and community planners must be conscientious about how technology and web-based platforms can be used to compliment other engagement strategies. While the potential for web-based platforms to enhance the quality of engagement, reach a broader audience, and attract a greater diversity of thoughts and opinions, these platforms are not in and of themselves recipes for effective community engagement. Suggesting that planners should be aware of what tactics they are employing in the engagement process, what tools can/should be used, and why the strategy is being used to begin with, Mr. LaPointe poignantly recognizes that 'questions are cheap and answers are expensive'. Planners must be asking the right questions and for the right reasons in order to increase the effectiveness of community engagement. Ultimately, web-based engagement platforms are only as effective as the questions being asked and is contingent upon those questions being asked earnestly and for information collected to be taken to heart by both decision-makers and planners as they strive to better engage citizens.



Planners in Nova Scotia

engage your planner

Planners from around the Province were gathered together to create an informal panel for one-on-one conversations, similar to speed dating. This created an opportunity for the general public, students, and professionals to engage planners from a range of backgrounds and practices to learn more about the profession, as well as to share ideas and questions with them.

Jacob Ritchie

Urban Design Manager for HRM

Jacob Ritchie is the Urban Design Manager for Halifax Regional Municipality. He leads the Urban Design team for the Municipality, whose portfolio includes Streetscaping, Heritage, and Policy work throughout the region. Working throughout his career in a broad cross section of design environments Jacob has had the opportunity

to manage and deploy projects around the world and throughout the Maritimes. His training and experience as Engineer provides a bridge to help cross interprofessional gaps in the design community.

Marcus Garnet

LPP, MCIP, Senior Planner, Regional and Community Planning, Halifax Regional Municipality

Marcus Garnet has worked as a planner with HRM and the former City of Halifax since 1990. He is also Vice President East of Transport Action Canada, a public transit advocacy group. He received his Masters in Urban and Rural Planning at the Technical University of Nova Scotia, which brought him from Montreal where he had obtained a B.Comm and a Diploma in Community Politics and the Law.



"we need more neighbourhood-based decision making!"

Marcus focuses on the relationship between transportation, community design and lifestyle. He applies principles of compact, mixed-use, walkable town centres to both suburban and rural zoning. His work includes workshops, questionnaires and the use of Lego to illustrate alternative development forms.

Gordon Smith

Provincial Director of Planning for Nova Scotia



Prior to taking on this position in February 2015, he worked as a planning and landscape architectural consultant in Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Manitoba and Botswana Africa. Gordon has wide-ranging experience in diverse projects in a variety of settings and cross-cultural environments.

Patricia Hughes

Acting Manager, Planning & Scheduling, Halifax Transit

Patricia holds a Bachelor of Science

Degree from UPEI, and a Masters of Planning Degree from Dalhousie University. She is also a Licensed Professional Planner and a Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners.

She has over ten years of public sector experience, and has a background in both land use planning and public transit. Her work has included planning and executing public engagement activities ranging from site specific to regional scale topics. In her current position she is accountable for the



planning of all transit service in Halifax, the scheduling of transit routes, capital budgeting, project management and on-street infrastructure.

Jessica MacDonald

Director of Planning at the Town of Bridgewater

Jessica MacDonald is six months into her role as Director of Planning with the Town of Bridgewater after eight years with the province of Nova Scotia, first with the



Department of Environment and then most recently as a senior planner with Municipal Affairs. Prior to joining the government, Jessica worked as a researcher and consultant in Nova Scotia, Sri Lanka and Ontario. She has lived life both on a small family farm and in some of Canada's largest cities and credits those experiences as being what drew her into the planning profession.



Nathan Rogers

LPP, MCIP, Assistant Director of Capital Planning, Facility Management at Dalhousie University

Nathan pushes the planning profession. He is constantly seeking to hear new ideas and decipher how to make planning seen to be done. He was once referred to as the "Mohammed Ali of Planning" – he just keeps on going with all the punches."



Gerry Post

Lifelong planner

Graduated from Ryerson in 1975 and became the youngest Director of Planning in Canada. He has traveled the globe and worked for both Government and the Private Sector as an advisor to royalty, prime ministers, mayors and business leaders. Gerry's work has received both national and international recognition including Awards of Excellence from the Canadian Institute of Planners and the World Leadership Award in Town Planning for a major initiative he directed in one of the world's most volatile regions: the Middle East. It's where he spearheaded an Arab urban development think tank.

Gerry's passion is empowering citizens - including children - to have control over their communities. He helped accomplish this in HRM in the mid-1990s when the civic leadership agreed to hand-over the controversial siting of a new landfill to its residents; it resulted in the Halifax Waste/Resource Management Strategy which made Halifax a leader in this field,



thanks to its citizens. In the Middle East he helped support an elected Children's City Council and a group of young activists who called themselves Interruptions!

TJ Maguire

Urban Designer at Waterfront Development Corporation Ltd.

TJ is the Urban Designer for Waterfront Development, focusing on key public waterfront lands in Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford and Lunenburg. His passion is collaboratively imagining what places can be and making great ideas happen. TJ's commitment to planning and authentic engagement continues through volunteer roles with Placemaking Canada, 21inc, Fusion Halifax, The Planning & Design Centre, Walk & Roll Halifax and The Downtown Halifax Business Commission.



Design Charrette

Spring Garden Road design discussion

A Design Charrette hosted collectively by the Planning and Design Centre, Walk'n Roll Hfx, and the Spring Garden Area Business Association.

Spring Garden possesses the potential and the "bones" of a great street. However, the street is not currently living up to its potential. This charrette provided an opportunity for community members to think collectively, imaginatively and boldly about how to make Spring Garden Road a destination area for Halifax.



"every city needs a heart"



"asking the right question is crucial. make sure the answer you prompt will build knowledge for your goal"



Jim Diers

the value of bottom-up planning and shifts that local governments must make

The morning of Saturday March 5th may have passed in usual Halifax fashion for many. The air was cold, the snow was heavy, and the streets were slippery. Students, professionals, and engaged citizens considered it business as usual and braved the weather to hear inspiring and hopeful words from Jim Diers: an internationally renowned speaker, a community consultant, and a teacher at the University of Washington. What does he do best? Engaging people with their communities and making them passionate about the decisions that affect their lives.

Jim Diers began by indicating the two paths for creating great neighbourhoods: service delivery and community action. The former is driven by agencies and professionals who focus on top-down planning to address the needs of the neighbourhood. The latter focuses on the gifts of its citizens and the democratization of decision making. Jim Diers' central point revolves around the collaborative relationship between these large government agencies and community led grass roots initiatives to build stronger neighbourhoods. However,

the present is laden with single purpose land uses, globalization, increased mobility, and fear. These have resulted in neighbourhood crises that Jim Diers pegs as dangerous but also as great opportunities:

- The recent economic crisis, although devastating, has woken up industries and untapped resources within communities who are, consequently, exploring new methods of self reliance. Neighbourhoods are realizing gifts of their people, working with their built and natural environment, and embracing their culture, history, and identity.
- The planet in crisis has inspired those who are attached to their communities to act responsibly. The result is a more empowered people who recognize that the best care, with no substitute, comes from their community. There is nothing more important than knowing your neighbour.
- Our democracy currently sees citizens as taxpayers and clients,



regarding them as only consumers. Government's must support communities and empower them. Government's must see citizens as producers, people with unique gifts that can benefit others and economies

To take hold of these opportunities and spark change, governments and communities must work to move beyond particular frames of thought. Jim Diers first suggested considering whole spaces rather than working in silos. He illustrated this using Seattle's Department of Neighbourhoods; the city assigned little City Halls and coordinators to each neighbourhood to act as connections between people and their government. Second, governments need to shift their focus from the people's needs to their strengths. Too many times people are labeled as homeless or disabled yet their talents are rarely considered; everyone has gifts of the head, heart, and hands that they can contribute. Finally, we must go beyond top-down community design. We must allow communities to take ownership of their neighbours and be democratic in their decisions, facilitated by departments that work at the local level.

There is a continual struggle to understand the proper distribution of responsibility between communities and professionals. Often professionals are

doing tasks that a community should do for themselves. We must, consequently, recognize what roles are best suited for either party. And if there is significant intervention by government, it must be in a supportive role that does not waste the talents or time of neighbourhood members. According to Jim Diers, there is something for everybody if communities are created by everybody.



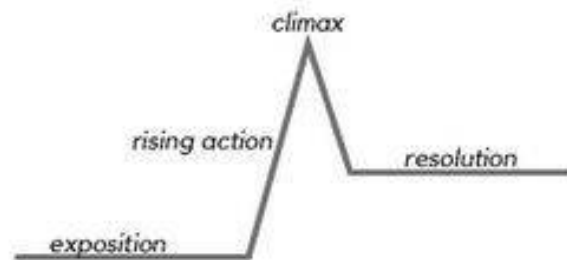
PLANifax

video workshop

PLANifax is a non-profit co-operative that was formed in 2014, and incorporated in 2015, with the goal of making planning issues and concepts more accessible and understandable to the public.

PLANifax presented a lecture/workshop style presentation. In their lecture, they effectively demonstrated the effectiveness of videos as an educational tool. They did this by showing a slide full of small text, and then afterwards, a short 30second video conveying the same information. In a video, the audience is engaged on two fronts because they are both seeing and hearing content at the same time, providing more stimulation than reading an article, newspaper, or even by-law.

Storytelling was emphasized in this presentation. It is not enough to simply shoot a video. Telling a story will make the information more interesting and relatable to audiences. A successful story will give audiences context, and will not shy away from conflict. The following diagram depicts the basic storytelling formula as presented by PLANifax:



Lastly, PLANifax stressed the importance of balance when making videos. There are two sides of a story being told. Balance will provide a better story than presenting something as an absolute right or absolute wrong.

For the workshop portion of their presentation, PLANifax arranged participants in 4 groups and asked each group to think of a planning issue and to create a pitch to turn this issue into an engaging video.



"Spring Garden could be the red carpet to the city"

Terra Tailleur

engagement in the media

The times they are a-changin'. If you try to keep up with all those social media apps these days, you'll agree. Terra Tailleur spoke to conference attendees about the ways to engage in the changing world of media.

Technology today allows us to be constantly tuned in. We can see the news unfold as it happens, in ways we were never able to before. The emergence of live-streaming means we have front row access to previously inaccessible spaces. Terra sees this as a major opportunity for engagement. As an image is worth "more than 1000 words," and a video worth even more, journalists have the opportunity to engage people in quick and direct ways. Planners should be constantly considering how this technology can be used to better engage citizens.

Terra says that the main tips to effective media communication are:

1. Make your stories short, informative and relatable. (Video is better!)
2. Know your audience! Speak their language. Go to where they are.
3. Make the story real and relatable to people in their everyday lives.
4. Include a call to action.

But, if you want to leave the media engagement to the professionals, Terra also has a few tips about how to get a journalist to pick up your story. As the newsroom is a competitive world, you first need to make sure you can convince a reporter that your story is important to the community at large. Remember that journalists aren't looking for the bad story, but for the real story. And finally, know that journalists are nice people! Build a relationship with one and these communications will be easier.



Caroline Robertson

scenario: application to amend the municipal planning strategy and land use by-law to permit the re-development of existing institutional buildings in the residential designation to be considered by development agreement

At the workshop there were 17 participants playing the role of the Planning Advisory Committee for the case file.

In this intensely interactive workshop, Caroline Robertson, Town Planner for Yarmouth, allowed participants to take on the role of Planning Advisory Committee in a mock proposal for an amendment to the official plan by development agreement. The facts of the case were from a real situation that she had dealt with months prior. She explained the situation and tasked the 'Planning Advisory Committee' in coming up with public participation options. She provided everyone with a Public Participation Consultation Matrix which used the Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation to identify all possible action routes. In small groups, she had all the participants brainstorm their possible course of action and took the time to discuss each situation in depth. Many of the participants were not from a planning background which made Caroline's in depth explanation of each term and procedure incredibly successful. In the end, she shared

with the group a summary of her final decisions to promote public participation for the case and as a group we discussed if the results were significant. Participants provided feedback and we all had a discussion on the different ways we can engage the public.

Discussion

Many participants talked about empowering the community. Empowering in the sense that was paralleled to how Caroline presented the case: by educating and informing. Educating the public on exactly what is being proposed helps people understand and not feel powerless. Early in the day, everyone listened to a lecture by Jim Diers about bottom-up planning and ways of empowering the community to do good for itself. This was a recurring theme throughout the group's discussions. Because of the previous presentation from PLANifax, many agreed that educating through the use of audio and videos using plain language and easy-to-understand scripts was a well-supported method.



"let's use our artists to make the city more beautiful"

All in all, everyone benefited from this workshop. Participants with a planning background enjoyed applying planning concepts to a mock amendment process of a real-life situation and other participants enjoyed being able to participate in discussions on public engagement. Every participant was able to take home materials we discussed in our groups for future reference.



"generally people want to be a part of something. you need to give them the opportunity"



Naiomi W. Metallic

engagement with First Nation communities: it's more than checking a box

Metallic began her talk with a brief introduction about Canada's aboriginal people. She showed maps of Canada's and Nova Scotia's First Nations groups. She described the governance structure of the Mi'kmaq. They are more than a chief and band council; they are quite organized and have been in self governance negotiations since the late 1990s. These are structures that planners need to know about if they are going to consult with aboriginal people.

Metallic described the changing relationship between indigenous peoples and settlers in our history, beginning with trading and being allies, but ending with efforts towards assimilation.

In Nova Scotia treaties were not about ceding territory to settlers, but instead about peace and friendship, i.e. agreeing to remain neutral and not intervene in wars.

Metallic listed and debunked some common myths about government spending on and taxing of aboriginals, and described poor life conditions that exist for many aboriginals even today, noting that sometimes it can be unclear whom has responsibility for support: the federal or

provincial governments.

Metallic then described the "Duty to Consult and Accommodate". Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized in the Canadian Constitution. In order to infringe on these rights, the government must consult and accommodate. Only the government has this duty. Court cases have helped to clarify what exactly is meant by "consult" and "accommodate". The court has determined that information alone is not consultation, and that aboriginal peoples cannot be treated as general stakeholders would. Accommodation can include such things as altering project design, financial compensation or land transfer. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has recommended a more comprehensive framework for consultation: one from the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, which requires "free, prior, and informed consent". There are clear connections to planning and engagement in these discussions of consultation of aboriginal people.





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