Facilitators' Guide

Sustainable Racine
Vision Council Work Session 1

March 14, 1998

A note to Vision Council Facilitators from the Design Team

First, thank you. We continue to be inspired by your commitment to this community. We are enjoying working with you as Sustainable Racine engages all of us in making "facilitated process" the way to get civic business done in the Racine area.

These materials are for your use in preparing to facilitate at the first Vision Council session on Saturday, March 14, beginning at 8:30 AM in the cafeteria at Starbuck Middle School. **Please arrive by 8:15 and let Deena know you are present.** The ending time is a bit flexible -- we will explain in a moment -- but at the latest, you will be able to leave Starbuck by 2:00 PM.

This will be the first time Vision Council delegates from 24 sites will meet together as one body. They should accomplish their work in about 3.5 hours. The skeleton for the session, and the purpose for each part of it, are presented on the next page. The work begins with a welcome from the co-chairs of Sustainable Racine's Vision Stewardship group, a very short video capturing some of the essence of the Community Forum, and a charge from Sam Johnson. Then each site will make its three minute presentation. Then we will take a break.

You may notice that up until this point, the Council will not really need facilitation. But after the break, the facilitation fun begins. The Vision Council delegates will form Work Groups, and will hold their first work sessions. These work sessions are where you come in. On page 4, we describe the system for creating the Work Groups. Steve and Rona will facilitate this activity for the whole Council. Once the different Work Groups form, each will need a team of facilitators from then on.

On March 14, we expect you will begin your work with a specific Work Group, in a classroom at Starbuck, at about 10:40. We will arrange for lunch to be available by 12:00. Once you are with your Work Group, you will need to work with those delegates to accomplish a set of tasks. **[See the design for this first Work Group session, beginning on page 4**]. We are not specifying an ending point. Your Work Group may want to take a quick break to get some lunch around noon, and then return for another half hour of work. Or they may want to wrap things up early. It will be up to you and the group.

Starting at 12:30 we on the design team will lead a 1.5 hour optional facilitator skills development session in one of the classrooms. We will get some feedback from you, do a sizable chunk of training on a core facilitator skill, and do a short preparation session with you regarding your facilitation of the Vision Council work sessions on March 26 and April 2. We will adjourn at 2:00 PM.

One more note: your assignments to Work Groups on March 14 will be provisional. We may ask some of you to shift after that day to an ongoing assignment with one of the Work Groups.

See page 9 for a schedule of all Vision Council sessions and Facilitator Development sessions between now and May 23, the final Vision Council session.

Vision Council First Session Agenda and Purpose Outline

Time	Agenda Item	Purpose
8:30 AM	**Welcome**: Norma Carter and Q.A. Shakoor, co-chairs of Sustainable Racine's Vision Stewardship Group, which is sponsoring the vision development portion of Sustainable Racine's work	To establish a welcoming climate for productive work
8:35 AM	**Video** Highlights of Sustainable Racine's Community Forum on January 31	To build energy and shared knowledge; remind all delegates that their work grows on the foundation established on January 31
8:40 AM	**Charge to the Vision Council**: Sam Johnson, Chairman, SC Johnson Wax	To build energy and commitment; clarify Vision Council's mission and purpose and distinguish it from other aspects of Sustainable Racine; underscore the Vision Council's importance
8:45 AM	**Three minute presentations from each site**	To build delegates' shared knowledge of Racine area people and interests; underscore participation as the central strategy for getting Vision Council work done
10:15	**Break**	To support conversation and relationship development; encourage delegates to move, refresh and renew their energy for work
10:25	**Vision Council Work Group formation**	To form efficient and effective work groups that will carry out the Vision Council's work
10:40	**Vision Council Work Groups: Work Session 1**	For each Work Group: To begin identifying the values that will form the basis of the vision for a sustainable future; agree on a short description of the scope of the Group's interests; agree on a decision-making method for the Group; identify learning needs and "home work assignments;" plan agenda for Work Session 2
12:00	**Lunch available**; Work Groups adjourn when ready	To encourage Work Groups to work as long as needed while enjoying eating together
12:30	**Facilitator Development Session** (Optional)	Improve a core facilitation skill and prepare for Work Sessions 2 and 3
2:00	**Adjourn**	Enjoy what's left of Saturday

Here's how the Vision Council will form Work Groups:

1. Based on all the ideas from the January 31 Community Forum, plus the knowledge of people who have developed efforts in other places, the Sustainable Racine staff has developed some large themes that will be presented to the delegates. Themes will be shown on signs around the room. These themes represent different ways that different people like to approach working on a vision for a sustainable future. Some people like to work on the future by thinking about youth. Some like to think about and work on jobs. And so on. All the themes represent one "lens" for envisioning the future. Each person will be asked to choose one theme or topic and join with others to form a Work Group. Each Work Group will work on articulating a vision and goals for their topic, to be included in the integrated vision for presentation to the community in June, 1998.

2. Delegates will be given an opportunity to add new Work Group topics, and to meet in their individual delegations to decide which Work Groups each delegate will join. Each delegate will then stand near the sign for her/his chosen Work Group topic. The whole Vision Council will look around at the allocation of human energy to Work Group topics and will consider whether any simple adjustments might improve the situation.

3. Based on the size of each Work Group and number of available facilitators, Work Groups will receive room assignments and (provisional) facilitator team assignments.

4. Once the Work Group assignments are clear, Rona and Steve will invite delegates to consider the treasures/rainbows posted on a wall. Steve and Rona point out that each treasure/rainbow is a tangible part of someone's vision for the Racine area's future. Then Rona and Steve invite each delegate to take one Treasure/Rainbow off a the wall, choosing one that interests her/him that relates to the Work Group s/he intends to join.

5. Delegates go to their assigned rooms with their facilitators.

Facilitators' Guide for the First Session of Vision Council Work Groups

Generic facilitator themes:

1. Maintain your neutrality.

2. Encourage the connections people are inclined to make with each other.

3. Open well. It will help your group relax if you act like you know what you are doing as you state the purpose, set up the tasks, and ask people to agree on a decision-making approach.

4. Record closely and fairly what people say in each section of this Work Session.

5. Work for balanced participation: encourage the less talkative people to speak and gently encourage the too talkative types to listen more.

6. Have fun.

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Please note: All times are approximate. Accomplishing the tasks detailed here may take some groups longer. Staying within these time estimates will require careful attention to facilitation, and frequent questions to the group about their readiness to decide and move on. Still, as always, aim to be crisp but without producing a sense that you are rushing the group.

10:40 **Facilitator introductions**: Introduce yourself and ask all members of the facilitation team to introduce themselves.

Explain the purpose of this session:

(Read or paraphrase:)

"Our overall purpose is to generate a vision and goals relating to our topic, which is _____, [state it] and to work with the other groups to incorporate our ideas into one integrated vision and set of goals for a sustainable future for the Racine area. We will be working together until May 23, and will take our final product to the community at a special event in June.

Our purposes for today are to learn about each other and what attracted us to this Work Group; agree on a short description of our subject, agree on a set of ground rules for our work together, and get ready for future meetings."

10:45 Task 1: Delegate introductions: Ask each delegate to introduce her/himself by *briefly* completing three sentences.

1. My worries about this Work Group topic are...

2. My hopes about this Work Group topic are...

3. My experience with things related to this Work Group topic is...

   Emphasize that it is not necessary at all to have experience with the topic, but if people do have some, it would be good to know that because it can be a Work Group resource

[Recorder: you can put these three sentence starters on the flip chart or chalkboard to help people remember them. Please record the gist of each person's responses. Use three columns on the flip chart page, headed "worries," "hopes," and "experience."]

11:10 Task 2: The community values or hopes behind the Work Group's Treasure/Rainbows

Explain the purpose of "adopting" some treasures/rainbows:

(Read or paraphrase:)

> "Our fellow citizens who took part in the Community Forum on January 31 listed a lot of treasures and rainbows that represent their hopes and dreams for the Racine area. Each of you has a card holding one of those treasure or rainbows. We believe these cards are the concrete pieces of a vision for improvements in the Racine area. Each card represents not just an idea, but some deeper community value or hope that lies behind that idea.
>
> We are going to work with these cards to see if we can identify some of those deeper community values or hopes, because they may be the building blocks for the vision and goals we will be developing.
>
> I am going to ask each of you now to read your card and say what deeper community value or hope you think it might represent. Our recorder is going to record all those community values or hopes for our use."

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Go around the room, giving each person a turn. The whole Work Group may want to jump in to help think about the values behind a particular card. That is fine. Without rushing people, encourage them to be crisp and keep this process moving. Everyone does not need to agree on one value or hope per card. You can write down more than one

value per card, and if a card presents a difficult challenge, you can put down question marks beside a guess about the community value or hope it represents.

Explain that as the Work Group continues, you will keep using the Treasure/Rainbow cards, and the community values and hopes behind them, as part of the foundation for your work.

11:25 Task 3: Affirm conversation guidelines, including consensus as a decision making approach

Remind people that they have already agreed to work within some conversation guidelines at previous meetings. These include:

1. Share your ideas with the group.
2. Encourage other people to speak.
3. Listen with respect to other people's ideas.
4. Aim to create something new together before you leave here this morning.
5. Allow the facilitators to keep the meeting on track, including recognizing people to speak, if necessary.
6. Abide by common courtesy: listen without interrupting; no personal attacks; no side conversations; no disrespectful behaviors toward others.
7. Aim to make decisions by consensus, which means something all of us can live with and defend later, even if it is not our first choice. If consensus is not possible in a reasonable amount of time, we will vote.

Ask if they will agree to continue abiding by those guidelines, or if they need to adapt them in some way. Reach closure on this by asking for a signal of some kind that people accept the guidelines.

"Can you agree to this?"

If agreement comes quickly, move on. If people need to make changes, facilitate this by listening and asking questions. Keep asking, "Can you make a specific proposal about some language that we could all agree to?" Or "Are there any new proposals?" When you sense that the group is moving toward agreement, ask, "Are you ready to decide this issue now?"

If a group chooses to work by voting instead of consensus, that it its choice. Remain neutral in your approach to this decision, as in all situations.

11:30 Task 4: Defining the Work Group's task

Ask the recorder to read the list of community values and hopes that came from the

treasures/rainbows.

Explain that the Work Group now needs to move quickly to define some boundaries for its work. People joined a Work Group that had a broad topic or label. Now it is important to say more specifically what people in the group intend to address-- and what they don't. The Work Group members will set their own limits, define their own boundaries. Invite people to make proposals of phrases, using six to 15 words, that complete this sentence:

> "This Work Group's focus will be _____ [complete in 6-15 words]."
>
> [Recorder: put this "sentence starter" on the flip chart. Then record all the proposed completions.]

Ask the Work Group to choose from among the proposals. If there are five or fewer proposals, ask each person to vote for one. If there are six or more, give everyone two votes.

Take the top two vote getters, and see if people want to make changes or new combinations, staying with the 15 word limit, that will help make the whole Work Group's preferences clear.

This is a good time to remind the Work Group members that they do NOT have to develop action plans for their topic. The end product will be a statement of a vision and a set of goals for a sustainable future for the Racine area. The work toward an action plan will begin after June.

Use your preferred decision making method to come up with one statement that the Work Group members say they can live with.

11:45 Task 5: Identifying learning challenges

Ask the Work Group members to respond to these questions: [Recorders, record each response to each question.]

1. Given our mission of developing a vision and set of goals, and given the amount of time between now and May, what can we do to improve our knowledge in our topic area?

   [Invite responses relating to information, field trips, interviews, shared learning experiences, any kind of learning that Work Group members think will be helpful.]

2. What expectations or needs do you have for assistance from Sustainable Racine

with regard to your learning needs? What should Sustainable Racine be getting together or providing?

3. What learning tasks or "homework assignments" will Work Group members take on right now for accomplishment before the next meeting on March 26?

11:55 Task 6: Summarize this meeting and plan the basic agenda for the next one

Summarize the Work Group's first session by stating what they have accomplished: introductions, a search for community values and hopes that underpin a collection of treasures/rainbows, agreement on a decision making structure. State the Group's definition of its focus (the 6-15 word statement.)

Ask the group to help set the agenda for the next meeting. First check to see if everyone knows that the next scheduled session is on Thursday, March 26, from 7:00 - 9:00 PM at Starbuck.

Explain that the purpose of the next meeting will be to complete the issue definition and establish the criteria the Work Group will use to develop its vision and set of goals.

Propose as a starting point that the March 26 meeting begin with each person describing what the focus issue, as now defined, means to them, to their part of the Racine area, and to the whole community.

Ask for responses to that idea, and for other suggestions about things that need to be on the agenda. Explain that you do not need consensus, just a list of ideas.

[Record all suggestions.]

Thank people for coming. Suggest they make a habit of talking about what they are doing with people in their area, and asking for ideas and suggestions for the Work Group.

12:00 [Or when ready] Eat lunch, adjourn