

General Assembly – 4/25/2013

Facilitator: Charles
Notetaker: Tallam

Agenda:

Canvassing
City Fraud
May First
Tigard Walmart
Elder Caucus Banner

Announcements: Sunday Parkways

Report on the canvas: Joe said he is here making sure that the GA knows what is happening on the canvas and following through with his commitment to update the GA, which he made 2 weeks ago when the GA approved the idea of setting up the canvas. He let spokes know we are planning to implement the paid canvas. There was support but no vote since. It had been approved by the GA. Reporting now that the various structural entities of Occupy Portland, FoOP, the GA and Spokes, have been briefed and there is broad support. I feel confident now that we can move forward, having done everything we can to be inclusive in terms of the concept. Why the concept is controversial is that it is a paid canvas. It is structurally going to be set up as an independent non-profit with the Occupy canvas name. The proceeds will first go to pay the employees, who will be the Occupy folks, then go to cover the overhead of the operation of itself, then the money raised in excess of that will be donated by the Occupy nonprofit, to FoOP, who will filter the money back to the various different needs that Occupy has financially. The benefit of the paid canvas is that you have a dedicated force of people going out on a nightly basis, ...to support us. Canvassers are activists first, so they will canvas very well. [This is] a way for an individual in Occupy to become a full time activist: raising support and funneling support to the issues of Occupy while raising needed capital. Next steps are straight forward. There is an organizing committee of Joe, Dan, Danial, Charles. Wuffa wants to get on. Next step is setting up a nonprofit. Will not be a c(3) or a c(4). Looking to hire a canvas coordinator and an assistance canvas coordinator. The assistant will do bookkeeping. We are recruiting canvassers. Our next step will be setting up job descriptions.

Q: Looking on Craig's list?

A: I am seeing looking into the Occupy community for people who have talents. We have a lot of experience in terms of people being able to train people. If we can find a few people in Occupy willing to step into a management position we can address that, train them, and give them the necessary skills as long as they are good management folks. It's not rocket science but it is tricky. That requires people around who have experience that know pitfalls and the cool things that can happen. But not a Craig's list type of thing.

We're in a go mode right now. Wanted to make sure everyone know what we were doing backward and forward.

Q: Why not 501c(3)?

A: Not a 501C(3) because want easiest route. C(3) and C(4): they are IRS designations. To get a C(3) classification takes 6-12 months. People who are going to make contributions won't get a tax deduction. My experience for door-to-door that is an add-on at the end. If people are going to make a contribution they're going to make a contribution. We are in a timing situation, where we want to hit the road now.

Everyone does not know what Occupy is doing now. If we can get a hot, tight, canvas (letting people know what we're doing) we'll get support. With a good, crisp clear message, our canvassers will be trained.

Q: Are you still thinking you will not need any seed money.

A: Yes, not expecting seed money.

Q: You're going to need something in writing that tells people these things, that has connections, numbers.

A: Canvassers arrives on doorstep with a clip board. There will be something [a statement] identifying me as a legitimate canvasser. Then on the flier ...the clip board will have information, fliers, materials, ...they'll [people in the home] have a twinkle [in response to the materials] and you focus.

Q: And you have a design for that or you need someone to design that?

A: Yes. Need help with that. That is one of the questions we have. How we are going to get the word out.

Q: Do you have a goal/date to get this going?

A: If getting going is having the first group go out, I'm saying the first group of folks going out canvassing30 days, something like that. Once we get 4-5 folks canvassing then we'll grow it. Hopefully the folks in the canvas will have a positive experience, they'll be generating money for themselves and going toward Occupy. First we'll have to get the coordinators and train them. Someone who is good, good management skills, and people skills. Tricky position but we train and help them.

Q: Accountability, are you going to use numbered invoices, receipts for accountability?

A: You don't really have to do a receipt number. If someone asks for a receipt, a canvasser would have something in the clip board, some standard receipt form.

Q: How will you pick the issues?

A: The ones that work. Typically you go to a home and on your clip board you have two or three local issues that we're working on, and a couple of national issues that Occupy is working on, and you have sign-in sheets... let's say folks working on challenges of folks getting kicked out of your homes...a natural deal for a canvasser to talk to that. Each issue has its dynamic points.[missed something here]....For that there is a two week bus tour, cool is going to be on it.....

C: I created a signup sheet for both paid and volunteer canvas. We tried to first use it for Clinton Street. Would love to table that at May Day. I won't be able to do that because I'm trying to bring some people from my high school there. Sign people up by getting a connection going that way.

R: Dan and Charles will talk about getting that done. Jack can help.

C: This organizing group, ... our next thing is to figure this out. We need to go through a campaign plan in terms of outreach and issue group. At table, we have these kinds of plans. Now we need people to pull this together.

C: Something for the canvassers to bring to people may be the Elder Caucus Face-to-Face talks with Brian Willson that they are setting up in local coffee shops.

A: KBOO – is another thing.

C: Union vs. management issues are going on right now.

Tigard Walmart

Last night Alexander and someone from Occupy Lake Oswego went to the neighborhood association meeting. Next month, Walmart will be there at the Neighborhood Association meeting. The building will be placed on wet land. Alexander and Occupy Lake Oswego are going to start a MalWart campaign.

Q: How is outreach going?

R: Walmart – Lake Oswego is a great canvassing issue. Spread the word in terms of Cascadia. Cascadia's issues are perfect door-to-door.

Sunday Parkways

Neighborhood festivals where parts of streets are closed to cars and people are encouraged to walk and bike with families. Charities, businesses, etc. volunteer to control traffic and shut down the street. Perfect that Occupy Portland, knowing its history, volunteers and helps to shut down the street. Asking to see if this is a good idea. Volunteering is free.

City Austerity and Fraud

J: I was looking at Occupy website and saw the proposal for the city to impose austerity and cut budget by 10%. I've had an experience with the city. I reported a fraud to the city. Capital Group was doing small business assessments. I learned about a theft and reported it to the city. Eventually the city would collect back \$17,000. It appeared that the city was not going to act on this. After contacting the Oregonian, then the city acted. I'm the only person who has used the tip line that produced recovery of funds. I abandoned my anonymity to make that happen. How many instances has it occurred where people remained anonymous [and tip line issues were not pursued]. There is no system of accountability with regard to the fraud tip line. They refused to discuss the evidence involved. Other city employees have said that more money was taken than the money recovered. Secondly, I've had minor accounting jobs in hotels, etc. I've been audited. That experience, with that level of experience, I was able to tell that the theft should not have occurred. If there is any kind of appropriate financial oversight, this theft should not have happened. There is a total lack of accountability. The city does not seem to be interested in the amount of money lost or recovering the money lost. I've been in contact with the press. The city basically wants this to go away. They are intending to cut the budget. It was open to them to recover money and they did not do so. Seems to be a tip-of-the-iceberg situation. City is resistant. I've asked questions about the oversight that was in place when this occurred and they are saying that I don't get to know that. Code of ethics should be both to do right and avoid the appearance of wrong. They are intending to do draconian cuts to the most vulnerable people. If there was a full audit, I'd be curious to find out about how much money could be recovered, that has been lost or misappropriated. Before cutting, they need to be sure their own house is in order. There is another budget hearing on May 16th. KBOO has an occupy radio show the day before. I would like to be able to do a condensed version of what I have just done here to the City Council.

Q: Are you interested in releasing these documents and doing a press release to other groups?
We have an online newsletter and other media outlets do look at that.

A(J): I've been in contact with the Mercury and Voices from the Edge in KBOO. Also, in touch with Oregonian. Initially put out a scattershot and only person who contacted me back is Beth Slovich from the Oregonian. Want to get this out. For me personally it is more than that just this one company that stole money, for me it stinks really really bad. Talked to Amanda Fritz on KBOO show and she seemed not to be aware of this. Which brought up "who are the gatekeepers in charge." This seems to be so much about what Occupy is interested in in terms of openness....

R: Your issue is important and the challenge is how to create leverage to change that. As you talk with Occupy folks, there are a lot of city issues around. One of the ways someone like yourself could suggest, you know these newspaper boxes where you get a free paper, if Occupy got 6-8 of these boxes and surrounded these buildings with the Occupy issues that are calling out... the people in those buildings...during Katz administration, we did that to great effect. We had access to all the people because they were embarrassed publically. Have a group of people working on the city newsletter ...fill out the newsletter. An effective way of creating quick effective leverage.

R(J): Teresa Blevans who gave out the money, just quit, stayed in Europe, changed her name and now works for Multnomah County. At best she is incompetent but more likely she was on the take. She now oversees several million of contracts for the county. Someone should be going through her work and checking it.

Q: What resources do we have that we can apply to this.

R: Newsletter, Occupy Portland website and Portland Occupier.

R: Newboxes around city hall. City Occupy issue that comes out every few weeks and calls people on their deal.

Q: Do we have someone who can provide that. Boxes for the camping ban vigil never got paid for.

C: The budget hearings are mostly being addressed by Occupyers as the People's Budget and Solidarity Against Austerity. May 16 is the debut of what they have digested. They will take input but it is a little late for the city budget.

C: Refine what you are asking – is it this person, tip line broken, something more...

C: We should think about doing weekly messaging. Commerce puts free newspapers in front of city hall all – has City Agenda on the back.

C: Solutions would be another place to take this issue.

C (Jack): Looks like I volunteered to be a tabler, so if you want to come to me at the table I can point you to some people.

C: City is preoccupied by fluoridation right now. But many of the anti-fluoride people would also be interested in this issue.

Elder Caucus Banner on Guantanamo Bay

Elder Caucus has this Git'mo banner available to it and would like to make it an Occupy thing rather than just an Elder Caucus thing. Have an event every week to get the awareness out. The EC has already approved having it in one place. Asking the GA approve the publicity stunt. In order to get all dealt with here. Pass it here contingent on it passing at the Elder Caucus.

C: Proposal – Occupy trusts – we don't do endorsements any more, there are no endorsements or sanctioning from GA.

C: Didn't approach Culture Mend, the Woman's day, etc. Occupy PDX approval business ended when we got evicted from the parks.