

ImPERUing as oNE
Meeting Notes
Feb. 21, 2020
City Hall @ 9:00 a.m.

Present: Dan Hanson, Vanessa Sherman, Becca Jewell, Sara Granfors

Also Present: Amy Mincer, student guests: Kelsi Leiniger, Gabby Bakirane, Austin Guhde-Egger

1) Introduction of student guests – Sara Granfors identified the following students as potential participants with the group. They attended today and would like to commit to future involvement:

- **Gabby Bakirane** – RHOP Pre-med, Cheerleading, Phi Epsilon Kappa
- **Kelsi Leiniger** – Business major, Honors Program, Phi Beta Lambda
- **Austin Guhde-Egger** – CMIS major, Honors Living Learning Community, Phi Beta Lambda

Dr. Hanson reviewed (for the student guests) the history of this group, which began by gathering a group of individuals who lived in the City and/or had a vested interest in the success of the City. The group developed mission and vision statements, which are posted in City Hall. The UNL Extension office assisted the group in distributing a survey to community members and holding a town hall meeting to review the results. Out of those efforts came the formation of Planning Teams, which all give updates at monthly meetings. When the flood hit Peru, it was challenging for this group and the focus shifted. There was a need for enhanced communication between the City Office and the community members. Eventually, this group began distributing a weekly, and then biweekly, Flood Response Report to give regular updates from the Mayor to the town.

Dr. Hanson emphasized the importance of having student involvement in the group, both participation and feedback. For example, Kelsi has been involved with the Honors students regarding the coffee shop proposal.

2) Review on Jan. 10 meeting notes – In a review of the prior meeting notes, items listed in red font should be addressed during the discussion today.

3) Long-Term Recovery Group update – Dr. Hanson reviewed that the LTRG is working on flood recovery/funding concerns for Peru including the following:

- **Levee Repair** – Most recently, Senator Slama has proposed LR288 and held a hearing where some of the LTRG members testified. Following this hearing, the Governor and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers met with Senator Slama in Peru to discuss ongoing flood recovery and the levee repair. Governor Ricketts is now eager to find funding at the State level to cover the engineering study for the levee repair. Dr. Hanson added that there will be a flood-recovery panel discussion on the College campus this evening. It will be filmed by NET and they plan to air it on radio and television in the future.
- **Water Solution** – The City has examined several possible permanent solutions to provide water to Peru. They have narrowed it to two viable options – either build new wells or connect to Auburn water. There are funding challenges related to obtaining the \$6 million needed for the project.
- **Wastewater Solution** – The City will need \$2-8 million to restore and protect the treatment plant from future flooding.

- **Street Repairs** – The City is applying for approximately \$4 million in grant funding to help with road repairs, including sidewalks and lighting. Becca Jewell pointed out that student feedback on this project will be important.
- **Economic Impact Document** – The LTRG has spearheaded the development of this document, created by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, to use in educating people about the flood impact in the area. The information shows an \$8 million economic impact.

4) Water Conservation Project – Sara Granfors reported on the water conservation campaign that the Rotaract group has proposed so that the temporary water treatment plant does not get overloaded. She distributed the “water tracker” that students use to show their shower usage. They have also provided students with a water usage information sheet, as well as a list of water puns to keep some humor involved. Sara said that Rotaract will be posting water droplets with names on them to show how many have committed to the conservation pledge. They plan to be in the Student Center on a monthly basis to remind students about water conservation. Sara noted that Darrin Reeves has shown them good results from their efforts – campus water usage has decreased! Vanessa Sherman requested that Rotaract attend a PCIG town gathering to share this information with the community so they can see the College’s conservation efforts. **Sara agreed to attend the gathering at City Hall on Monday, Feb. 24, in order to share the news.**

5) Planning Team Reports –

A) Infrastructure – See above “Long-Term Recovery Group update”

B) Housing – Dr. Hanson reported for Tim & Cindy Hoffman. This team wants to promote better rental properties in town for students and others. **They are working to develop a Priority Housing List of properties that meet certain standards and can be used as a guideline for those looking for housing.**

Dr. Hanson also reported about the \$500,000 housing grant funding that has been awarded to Peru. These funds will provide for the purchase, renovation, and resale of single-family homes. The City has formed a Housing Authority, which is working to identify the homes that will be targeted in this program.

C) Attraction, Retention & Communication (ARC) – Vanessa Sherman reported that this team is sharing information with the community through the www.perunebraska.org website. They are focused on sharing business & service resources that are available for community use. Gabby Bakirane suggested having athletic teams more involved in community events. **Perhaps the cheerleaders could visit a community meal? Vanessa/PCIG will invite them.**

D) Business/Economic Development (B.E.D.) – Dr. Hanson reported that the grocery store is for sale. This team has developed advertisement flyers that Rob Walker will be posting in area small-town grocery stores, with the hope of finding a buyer for the store. There is also the possibility of a community-owned store. **A meeting will be held tomorrow (Feb. 22) at City Hall to discuss the grocery store transition. Students are welcome to attend. Two Peru State faculty plan to attend.**

6) Next Meeting: Next meeting will be March 20, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. at Peru City Hall (Normally the third Friday of the month.)