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Rockville Community Forum : Facilitatrs' Report

Michele Straube

S.J. Quinney College of Law, University of Utah, michele.straube@law.utah.edu

Mara Elana Burstein

S.J. Quinney College of Law, University of Utah

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Wallace Stegner Center

for Land, Resources and the Environment

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH S.J. QUINNEY COLLEGE OF LAW



Rockville Community Forum

Held May 14, 2015, 6:30-9 pm
to present Town Survey Results

Facilitators' Report

Co-Facilitators: Michele Straube, Director, EDR Program
Mara Elana Burstein, Research Associate

Submitted June 17, 2015

Environmental Dispute Resolution Program

332 South 1400 East, Room 101, Salt Lake City, UT 84112-0730

801-585-5516 - michele.straube@law.utah.edu

<http://www.law.utah.edu/projects/edr/>

EDR Blog: www.edrblog.org

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- A. May 14, 2015 Community Forum Agenda
- B. Rockville 2014 Town Survey Results, Five County Association of Governments slides from Community Forum

Stegner Center's Environmental Dispute Resolution Program (EDRP)

The [Stegner Center's](#) Environmental Dispute Resolution Program (EDRP) — established in 2012 — promotes collaboration, mediation, and other alternative dispute resolution processes (ADR) as a means to address contemporary environmental conflicts. Focusing initially on environmental and natural resource conflicts in Utah, EDRP is building capacity for expanded and improved collaboration and mediation, while also documenting the extensive collaboration efforts already occurring in Utah and the Mountain West.

The program's approach redefines the meaning of "ADR." Usually thought of as an alternative to litigation, EDRP uses the term "ADR" to mean Additional Dialogue Required – using mediation and other collaborative processes to create an opportunity for dialogue, mutual understanding, and respect in environmental and natural resource conflicts. This approach builds long-term relationships, produces enduring and creative on-the-ground results.

In addition to academic instruction, public education, research and analysis, EDRP is available to "do the work" of environmental dispute resolution for select projects. Services available include conflict assessment, process design, and mediation/facilitation. EDRP staff is also available as a conflict coach or mentor in specific cases.

The Planning Commission and Mayor of the Town of Rockville, located in Southern Utah, reached out to EDRP for support on how to address contentious community issues surrounding land use, planning, and growth. They asked EDRP to design and facilitate a Community Forum to present the results of the most recent Town Survey in a way that would initiate a community conversation, and to offer process suggestions for town leaders to continue decision-making on priority issues in an open and transparent manner.

Town of Rockville, Utah

The Town of Rockville was founded by Mormon pioneers in 1862 and remains a rural, residential, and agricultural community to this day. Their [General Plan](#)—developed in 1988 and updated in 1997—reflects the community's intent to respect its heritage and govern itself with an emphasis on its quiet, small town atmosphere and its agricultural values. The General Plan contains a Town of Rockville Vision Statement, as well as chapters outlining existing conditions, assumptions for the future, community goals and planning policies for growth-related issues (land use, housing, population and services, transportation and circulation, environment, economy, capital improvements, and annexation). The town's [Land Use Code](#) provides more details on the specific requirements applicable to growth and development within the Town of Rockville.

To ensure the Rockville Planning Commission's priorities are informed by the community, residents and landowners are encouraged to participate in a Town Survey every five years. The most recent survey was developed with the assistance of the Five County Association of Governments, and was distributed to Rockville residents and landlords/landowners (non-

residents) in November 2014. The survey questions and tabulated results will be available shortly on the [Town website](#). The slides summarizing the 2014 survey results are attached to this Facilitators' Report as an appendix.

May 14, 2015 Community Forum

Town leadership informed EDRP that several issues had been contentious in previous meetings. EDRP designed the Community Forum agenda thoughtfully to 1) present the results of the survey, 2) solicit a list of additional community issues, 3) identify the town's current top priorities, and 4) set the stage for a future process to include community voices in addressing those issues. The Community Forum agenda is attached to this Facilitators' Report as an appendix.

About 50 community members attended the May 14, 2015 meeting. A reception was held from 6:30-7:00 pm, with refreshments provided by community members. The Community Forum started at 7:00 pm with a welcome by Robert Ford, Rockville Planning Commission co-chair and Tracy Dutson, Rockville Mayor. Both individuals stated that the Community Forum was the first of multiple meetings to be held on priority issues identified in part through the survey.

Facilitator Straube gave an outline of the evening, reiterating that town leadership was seeing the survey results for the first time at the Community Forum, learning and digesting the information along with community members. She acknowledged that "difficult" issues were likely to arise about which individuals might have strong opinions. This was seen as a positive (meaning that people care about their town). Ms. Straube encouraged all Forum participants to speak freely, but also to "take responsibility for the energy you bring into the room," to maximize the opportunities for creative problem-solving.

Rockville Town Survey

Gary Zabriskie, Deputy Director and Director of Community & Economic Development, Five County Association of Governments, gave a presentation summarizing the results of the 2014 Rockville Town Survey, and answered questions about the data gathering. The slides for his presentation are included as an appendix to this report, so they will not be summarized here in detail.

The survey generated a 57% response rate (137 responses out of 240 surveys sent out), which is significantly high. The survey respondents were approximately 2/3 residents (91 surveys self-identified how long they had "lived in Rockville") and approximately 1/3 landlords/landowners (44 surveys self-identified as "I do not live in Rockville"). The vast majority of survey respondents are home-owners (86.8%), with a small group of renters (4.3%) and "other" (2.1%), and 12 respondents skipping this question (8.7%). Survey respondents included a broad cross-section of community history: 41% lived in Rockville for 21+ years, 25% for 11-20 years, 16% for 6-10 years, and 18% for 5 years or less. A majority of individuals taking the survey planned to continue living in Rockville for a long period of time: 64% for 11+ more years, 6% for 6-10 more years, 3% for 0-5 more years, and 25% were unsure. Finally, over 90% of survey respondents

agreed that “Rockville should continue to plan and prepare for challenges related to future growth in the Zion Canyon Corridor and greater Washington County area.”

Audience Suggestion for Future Surveys

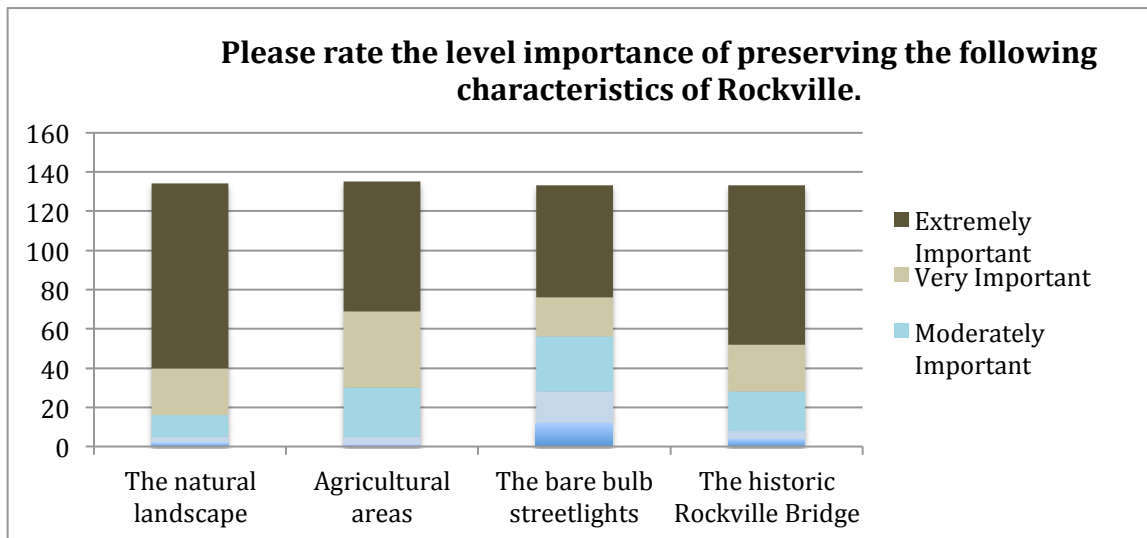
Present the results in both percentages and raw numbers, to avoid confusion.

Community Values

Community Forum attendees next reviewed and discussed Rockville’s community values.

First, attendees were asked to pick someone in the audience they did not know at all or did not know well, and share a short story with that person about something they really valued about Rockville. Two stories were shared with the full group, both of which suggested that the historical and rural nature of the community is memorable to multiple generations of Rockville residents (grandparent to grandchild).

The survey results confirm that the community overwhelmingly values preservation of the unique community character. As shown in this slide, over 50% of survey respondents rate the natural landscape, historic preservation and agricultural areas as *extremely* important, and an additional 40+% rate them as *very* or *moderately* important. Other aspects of the unique community character identified through write-in answers to the survey include night sky, small town characteristics (i.e., lack of commercial, single-family), river, historic structures and features, and historic ditches.



Forum attendees next reviewed excerpts from the 1997 Rockville General Plan’s Vision Statements and confirmed that these still accurately state the community’s values and vision:

- Rockville shall continue as a community which respects its heritage and chooses to govern itself with an emphasis on its quiet, small town atmosphere and its agricultural values.

- Any growth which Rockville may experience shall be carefully planned, consistent, and phased so that the town’s quiet, rural values are maintained.
- Agricultural use, historic preservation, sensitive lands protection, and the maintenance of the community trust are essential elements which define our community.
- Rockville shall protect its natural landscape with special attention to the benches, floodplains, river and surrounding mountains.

The latest survey reconfirms the town’s community values, as stated consistently in previous town surveys, even though the composition of the community may be changing. The 2014 Town Survey responses and Community Forum participants confirmed the values underlying the General Plan and Land Use Plan.

Priority Issues

Facilitator Straube started this portion of the Community Forum with two observations:

- Many of the priority issues identified in the survey are happening “to” the town (e.g., increased visitation to Zion National Park, growth of neighboring communities). Recognizing that things over which we do not have control are hard for us (as human beings) to accept, the town does have choices in facing the challenge to find ways to manage its “new normal” in ways that preserve community values.
- Many of the issues identified in the survey are tied together, such that decisions on one discrete issue may have an impact on other issues. Example issues from the survey include whether or not to allow commercial business or accessory dwelling units, both of which have possible town budget, water and traffic implications. The town cannot necessarily decide each item in isolation.

The priority issues listed in black below were identified from the survey results. Through specific questions (are there any significant issues missing?) and group discussion, Forum participants identified additional priority issues listed in blue below.

- Water
 - Culinary
 - Irrigation
- Increasing traffic
- Rockville Bridge
- OHV / ATV
- Recreation / trails
- Parking limitations
- Municipal services / tax revenue
- Fire services
- Land use
- Commercial business
- Accessory units

- Affordable living / housing
- Geophysical hazards
- Camping
- Density
- Enforcement of land use ordinances
- Lack of land use options

- Commercialization of natural resources, including recreation within and around Rockville Town boundaries
- Over-flight traffic, including helicopters
- Population sustainability
- Conservation and preservation of open space, protection of sensitive lands
- Night sky

Top Rockville Priorities

Forum participants were given five green dots and asked to pick their *top five priorities* from the list above. Dots were to be placed one per issue, with a request not to place multiple dots on the same issue. The priority issues rated as follows (number of dots are noted in parentheses):

1. Increasing traffic (25)
2. Culinary water (23)
3. Commercialization of natural resources (18)
4. Historic bridge (16)
- 5a. Density (13)
- 5b. Enforcement (13)
6. Land use (12)
7. Over-flights (11)
8. Municipal services/tax revenue (10)
9. Affordable living/housing (7)
10. OHV/ATV (6)
11. Camping (5)
12. Accessory units (4)
- 13a. Parking (3)
- 13b. Irrigation water (3)
- 13c. Land use options (3)
- 14a. Recreation/trails (2)
- 14b. Fire services (2)
- 15a. Commercial business (1)
- 15b. Geophysical hazards (1)
16. Population sustainability (0)

Notes from Community Discussion

The following comments were made by Forum participants. Comments compiled here came from multiple sources: observations made during group discussion, and stickie notes and index cards available for anonymous comments.

- There should be a “commercial use” chapter in the town’s Land Use Code, whether or not there is commercial use allowed in Rockville.
- Traffic / bridge / bypass are interrelated issues.
- Rockville should work with Zion National Park and the Town of Springdale regarding traffic issues.
- Rockville needs a comprehensive land use plan to address population growth:
 - A 3- or 5- or 10-year plan
 - With budget and numbers
 - Using projections from others to calculate costs, pros and cons.
- Rockville needs a way to enforce current and new rules. We don’t have our own police or enough staff. The Town lacks funds for enforcement.
- There is no public access to the Virgin River within Rockville boundaries.
- Many relevant studies were identified by Forum participants. The suggestion was made to post them on the Town webpage or some other easily-accessible digital location. We have listed the studies as they were described [note, their names may be inaccurate and some might be duplicates].
 - “Hurricane to Zion”, 2010, traffic projections
 - AOG population growth projections
 - Zion Corridor study
 - UDOT study, will be completed August 2015, implications for 10-20 years, as well as FY 2016/17
 - Washington County water study, few years ago, presented 5 alternatives (and there may be more alternatives that weren’t identified)
- Another suggestion was to create an on-line interactive comment opportunity regarding key issues.

Interest in Future Public Involvement

A sign-up sheet was circulated for individuals to state how they would like to be involved in future discussions on specific topics. The individual was asked to identify the topic of interest, and then indicate “how I want to be involved”:

- I want to be an active participant in a working group or task force on this issue.
- I will attend a public forum to learn more about this issue.
- Just give me regular updates.

The completed sign-up sheets were handed directly to town leaders at the end of the Community Forum.

EDRP Future Process Suggestions

The EDR Program has been asked to offer process suggestions for town leaders to continue decision-making on priority issues in an open and transparent manner. We offer some general suggestions on ways to maintain transparency and encourage continued community input, and also provide some ideas for promoting community learning and collaborative problem-solving on specific issues. ***DISCLAIMER: We are not providing legal advice, nor is this a formal process design. The process suggestions are ideas only that need further fleshing out before being implemented.***

Transparency

Post survey results to Town website.

- Questions with quantifiable answers
- Compilation of write-in answers
- Five County AOG slide presentation

Collect and provide on-line access to relevant studies (preliminary list identified by Forum participants, but there may well be more studies to include).

Explore opportunities to create an on-line interactive comment opportunity regarding key issues. (Five County AOG offered to help with this)

Identify key issues that lend themselves to follow-up meetings, and set them up.

Review the sign-up sheets identifying individuals who want to be more involved in problem-solving, and let that reflection of interest inform future process. Respond to these individuals personally with a status update.

Provide regular (quarterly?) status updates to the entire community on key issues. (via newsletter, email blast, website postings, etc.)

Ensure that all categories of Rockville citizens are represented in future planning work (residents, distance landowners, renters, existing commercial).

Creative and Inclusive Approaches

As mentioned at the Community Forum, many of the issues of concern are linked to each other and cannot necessarily be decided in a vacuum. Likewise, several of the issues cannot be solved by Rockville alone. We encourage Town leaders to be intentional about which issues to consider together, and to ensure that all stakeholders needed to develop and implement a sustainable

solution are included early on.

We also encourage Town leaders to use an inclusive problem-solving approach to many of the priority issues, as a way to leverage the rich intellectual capital and personal history with the issues found in your community. Such an approach does not start with a proposed solution; rather the optimal solution is built on the basis of a full understanding of the relevant facts, desired outcomes and creative brainstorming. A problem-solving approach will likely follow these general steps:

- *Collaborative learning*: Gather all significant information on an issue and share it with the community in a way that all interested community members can come to a similar level of understanding about the underlying facts, challenges and opportunities.
- *Develop desired outcomes*: After an opportunity for collaborative learning, develop a general sense of desired outcomes for the issue, and test them with community members. Desired outcomes, which may be framed as evaluation criteria, provide sideboards for discussion about various possible solutions and help identify the trade-offs any given decision might require. Desired outcomes can be specific to the issue at hand (e.g., reduced traffic on side streets) and more generic (e.g., minimum impact on municipal budget).
- *Brainstorm options*: Work with interested community members to identify possible options for addressing the issue that appear to meet the greatest possible number of desired outcomes (recognizing that, in some circumstances, not all desired outcomes can be met). This part of the process should be creative, with any and all ideas encouraged.
- Compare the options to the desired outcomes/criteria to *make a reasoned choice*. This could be selection of one single option, or multiple ideas blended together to find a solution that works best.

We have not researched the issues you face, so will not make specific process recommendations. We do, however, see some potential synergies and community problem-solving opportunities among the issues raised by survey respondents and Forum participants. In the following sections, we identify some creative approaches to problem-solving complex problems that Rockville may find valuable.

Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting (PB) as a way to help community members learn about the trade-offs required in public budgeting, and provides an opportunity for taxpayers to work with community leaders to inform budget decisions. We are familiar with two somewhat related ways to use participatory budgeting. One approach implies shared decision-making; it assumes an available pot of money for a specific purpose and asks community members to help decide the projects on which to spend the money. The other approach is more educational and evaluative; it assumes that possible expenditures exceed available government resources and, through use of a game, asks community members to make value judgments about which income sources and expenditures should be pursued.

One of the key issues identified through the survey and at the Community Forum is the

inadequacy of town financial resources to perform necessary and desired functions. It is our understanding that there is strong community resistance to the various known ways to increase town resources (e.g., taxes, commercial use). It is possible that through the second approach to participatory budgeting, community members could explore the difficult choices that will need to be made to correlate existing and potential additional revenue sources to desired municipal services.

More information about participatory budgeting available here:

- <http://www.participatorybudgeting.org> (Participatory Budgeting Project)
- https://www.commddev.org/userfiles/files/1613_file_GPB.pdf (A Guide to Participatory Budgeting)

Collaborative Learning

Water was one of the top priority issues, and one about which there is much for the community to know. It is an ancillary issue for several other top priority issues – e.g., the decision of whether and how to allow commercial use may have an impact on water resources. There also appear to be multiple players, each of whom plays a unique role in the long-term supply of water to the Town of Rockville. This may present an opportunity for collaborative learning about current and future demand and supply of water to the Town.

The Town might consider hosting an educational community evening on the topic of water. In order to prepare for the educational community evening, it might be prudent to work with a smaller group of water “experts” first to identify and gather up the relevant information. The smaller group should probably include the Town (whomever manages the culinary water system), the shareholder company, the irrigation company(ies), Springdale (to the extent Rockville currently relies on their water supply), and any regional water authority with relevant information.

Relevant information to be gathered would include supply information (current sources of water and long-term assumptions about its availability, possible future/additional sources of water) and demand information (current and future assumptions about demand). Presenting this type of information to the community should inform future community conversations about the many issues potentially impacted by or having an impact on water supply.

There are additional priority topics that may lend themselves to a collaborative learning approach, but we have used water as an illustrative example.

Scenario Planning

Increasing Traffic was identified at the Community Forum as the *top* priority issue. Several other high priority issues appear to be directly related to increasing traffic, either as a potential cause for increased traffic (e.g., OHV/ATV, camping, recreation/trails, commercialization of natural resources) or as being the direct impact of increasing traffic (e.g., historic bridge, parking). Other top priority issues (e.g., commercial business, accessory units, affordable housing) may

have traffic-related impacts. If considered in tandem, the interplay between these discrete issues becomes clearer and the trade-off's can be directly considered.

Envision Utah and faculty at the University of Utah have developed a scenario planning tool that could help test various approaches to these interlocking issues in a fun and creative way. <http://envisionutah.net/wasatch-choice-toolbox/tool-et/item/75-overview> Using GIS mapping technology, scenarios can be developed that demonstrate the traffic and other impacts of different approaches to traffic-related issues.

The Town of Rockville should consider whether it alone can (or should) address the issues related to increasing traffic. The majority of the increased traffic comes from ever-growing visitation to Zion National Park. The increased demand for camping and OHV/ATV routes is fueled in part by land use decisions made by neighboring public land managers (e.g., Zion NP and BLM). Likewise, decisions made by neighboring communities can have an unintended impact on Rockville. These realities may create an opportunity to work with Zion NP, BLM and other towns along the park's entrance corridor to envision a joint plan for controlling traffic by managing parking, ATV's, camping and other traffic-generating activities in a more regional and integrated way. Scenario planning is one tool that may be useful.

We have made initial contact with the faculty involved in developing the scenario planning tool, and will do what we can to help the Town and/or others use scenario planning, if this is seen as valuable.

Low-Hanging Fruit

During our personal tour of Rockville, we noticed confusing signage near one camping spot (a BLM sign far in advance of the actual BLM area, which could cause campers to assume that the lovely shaded parking area adjacent to the sign was BLM land and available for camping) and a lack of prohibitory signage at this and other areas of illegal use. The Town should consider whether taking simple steps to use signage to clearly communicate legal and illegal activities in areas of concern might be effective.