

NOTES ON BOSTONCAN STRATEGY DISCUSSION MEETING POST TRUMP ELECTION YEARS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2017 Terry Mason 27 people attended

Facilitated by Mike Prokosch

Exercise: Hopes and fears—Mike Prokosch led group in brief one on one exchanges about our biggest hopes and fears for upcoming political era and climate change work.

Summary to right in text box →

Mike P facilitator:

- I. **Question posed:** *Nationally don't expect progress, focus more on state and local—not a new idea of course but big post-election mantra. Agree or not?*

Responses from group:

- A. Clarify—national/federal *government* is what that should mean—Bernie and other national leaders we should definitely work to support, etc. –
- B. Well, yes, but we need to also stop some things at national level—example: U.S. House gutting independent ethics committee brought outcry that stopped it
- C. We also need to hold our congressional folks accountable and promote stances for them
- D. And the Paris Agreement? We can't ignore that.
- E. Focus on state level, especially If leading states such as Massachusetts could take positive concerted actions that could show the way for others.
- F. We may at times be surprised that we will get allies from unexpected places, **like McCain going to Estonia (?)**

- II. **Mike P facilitator Second Point:** *Climate movement doesn't have strength to move agenda itself—we will need lots of movement building—polling showed people think climate is important but not one of the issues that moves people the most to take action (one reason politicians don't do as much as we want on this)*
- *Trump admin likely to go after so many issues, constituencies—danger is to be overly spread out responding to this and that million actions*
 - *So—we need to integrate the issues—immigration, jobs, displacement, etc.*

Ideas offered by the group:

HOPES

- Trans-partisan, people issue
- Energy!
- Green market growing
- Civics lesson
- Link to P.O.C. organizations [????]

FEARS

- Fragmentation, will be spread thin
- Future generations, grandchildren
- Ability to connect with those who disagree with us
- Labeling people
- Movements won't be strategic

WE WANT TO SEE

- Social justice and climate
- Base building

- A. Cross movements integration, more with people of color—climate justice—base building—grassroots organizing, and reaching out to people who voted for Trump-
- Don't label 'people who voted for Trump'—it's a quite diverse category and we should speak more about working people, whether Black, White, Latino, etc.
 - The climate march in NYC was a great example of how the movement became inclusive 350.org has a full-time organizer to address this expansiveness
 - On intersectionality—how do we cross integrate without also playing into identity politics overly—and/or when do we do this, how do we define the 'base' we are building?

B. *How do we build such an integrated movement?*

Mike, Facilitator provided example of how this was done—Dorchester for Peace

- Started with an anti-racism committee —extensive internal education, quotas about who is in leadership
- Focused on issues that meant peace *in Dorchester*—gang violence, political repression
- Wanted to work with other orgs in Dorchester led by people of color, and stumbled on a way
- No Child Left behind required schools to send names of 'drop outs'—to defense dept for recruitment. We did educational flyers—got us working with Project Hip Hop and got 25% of youth off the list in Dorchester—establishing relationships that continue to this day.

Group ideas:

- A. Show up at other people's events—build working relationships—find an issue where interests overlap—instead of trying to recruit people onto your campaign
- B. Have to be real coalitions—have to be about changing reality, having people put the time in
- C. BostonCAN has pretty good record to date on this—we work in coalition—good relationships with a variety of base building groups but we need to work more
- D. Identifying an underlying analysis that links a number of issues into a shared framework needed, although be careful to make it inclusive rather than off-putting to people who are not in your circles—for example, some potential allies will be put off by an 'anti-capitalist' message
- E. Start with a core issue that then you can build around—we need to go to other organizations with our core issues

III. *Additional ideas and discussion points concerning how best to approach building the local intersectional integrated movement for reaching our goals*

- A. Some felt focus should be mainly or exclusively on climate change; others felt that economic issues and implications of our issue should always be foregrounded
- B. **Community Choice Aggregation is definitely a key strategy for BCAN**

1. Need to inform ourselves and to clarify some key questions about the Community Aggregation approach and campaign
 - What does community aggregation do for jobs? How does it go beyond being a slogan—‘green jobs’—to degree that community aggregation can help drive the market for production of locally sourced renewable energy?
 - Most renewable energy jobs are construction jobs—wire systems, less skilled jobs actually putting them on roofs—BCAN working with those unions through Green Justice-
 - Other jobs in retrofitting and insulation —requires lots of spending— low to moderate skilled jobs
2. How build the constituency and base on this campaign?
 - Agree that the BCAN group doesn’t need to master all details (presentation by Brookline speaker at Kick Off)
 - Rather we need to highlight and to learn from people in other groups what is most appealing about Community Aggregation, what attracts people to it?
 - Health and economics should be part of the message no doubt, but when we go out to other groups’ meetings, we ask them what is important, explain basics and see what they ask and highlight
 - Examples—get a locked in price, cleaner, cheaper energy, bill will stay same—can improve asthma, better air, methane bad for health, planet

Summary conclusion: we need to do internal education about Community Choice Aggregation, including the jobs it will create, costs, etc.

- IV. *Facilitators asked: what other things do you want to bring up that we haven’t mentioned yet?*
- Electoral politics—Make Trump One Term President, but also local, congressional races are key
 - Constellation between federal and state politics—how we can be more up on our state politics?
 - “Indivisible”, strategy document circulating—talk about other states and reps—how can we support other states with their issues—how do you make a difference in other states?—MA is going in right direction
 - City level: The Mayor—there is movement around the country on mayors—we have to have a politics to push our Mayor—one of Mayor’s office not excited about CCA—lean more toward mitigation and not renewables; but there is going to be big spotlight on Mayor of Boston this summer with US-China Mayors’ climate summit in Boston—good opportunity for pressure—can Walsh claim CCA as an accomplishment for the City?
 - CCA related:—what are the possible objections to it? would like to learn more about it-

-William, BCAN Organizer: I've been told CCA is not going to be cheaper for people's bills—it will be same or probably a little more-

- Fossil Free Somerville rep—working on developing new campaigns and so am here to learn—need messaging on climate change that offers something positive—giving people something better—a lot of messaging sounds like taking things away from people
- Mary D from Climate Action Brookline—how to build stronger alliances and how to share information and network—**Mass Power Forward focused on State House—Mass energy bills—State House March 30th (Jan 25th?) —lots of people there to figure out how to get better energy bills through the legislature—Forum with leaders from Power Mass forward as well as legislators—to become informed and active around upcoming bills**
- There are gonna be a lot of disappointed Trump supporters—I want to know how to talk to them
- Paris Accords—I want to know what to do in the near future on that-

Other topics raised:

1. Human rights—to benefit people and other living beings through work on the climate
2. How have we failed in educating the public on the climate issues?
3. Women's march going to be happening—raise the issue of Climate Change issue at the Women's March—April @ 350 has called a huge climate demonstration—we should try to get everyone to go to—this didn't get mentioned-
4. These are radical times like we have never seen before—hope we will all stay open in responding to events —we have to support and take care of one another
5. Didn't talk about all the new construction—on Washington street—no one made an issue that these should be green buildings—talk to community groups with CCA's and push contractors to be green-US Green Buildings Council—they could have lots more green features—BUT energy code in this state is better than many others.
6. California pushes solar, requires it—this could emerge here possibly.
7. Judy longstanding BCAN member is excited about the new membership size—rapid growth—what will our formats of meetings be—she will keep eye on what our organization needs as it expands and how we proceed—

Two summary points:

1. All anxious about how to present CCA—soon as possible have some kind of practice and break it down and how to say it.
2. So much construction going on in the city now—who is going power all that?
Mike P. adds encouraging note: at least two ways to get a handle on that—BCAN connected to Back Bay group—they are focused on the 25 million square feet construction coming to Boston in next three years and how it's going to be powered—calling themselves **Boston Clean Energy Assoc—and**

3. **CCA campaign opens up conversations about resilience, micro-grids, reducing energy consumption—if we can create neighborhood teams we have a structure to take on much much more**
4. Lot of new construction in JP not as green as we would like—Dorchester in Glover’s Corner about to explode and one area we could work—the Bay State Banner has a lot on Roxbury development—Bay State Banner should be read every week-

Final Announcements and Strategy ideas:

- > **Paris Peace Agreement—Brookline strategy meeting Monday 1-9. One idea is to have Brookline sign the Paris Agreement—will commit us to actual changes.** (lots of excitement in reaction to this idea—it’s like Jerry Brown in California challenge).
- > Signal to everyone in the US and to the world—we are gonna do it anyway—including entering into treaties etc.! Force Baker to say that Mass will meet its obligations 350 MA discussed this campaign—to pressure Baker to make a statement on whether MA will stick to the Paris Climate Agreement.
- > Continuing need to address the ‘investing in carbon bubble’ in which fossil fuel industry operating—Not so much supply and demand, though with plentiful natural gas in U.S. Direct action will be needed to block gas infrastructure building
- > Suggestion for brainstorming how to promote CCA locally—have each of us email three questions we have about it, to help focus our learnings.
- > Another March idea: Boston Women’s March on the Common—marching behind a climate banner—March 21st—Boston Commons—11-2 Saturday—

Plus/delta assessment of this meeting;

- 1) Would have made a good week-end retreat.
- 2) Maybe break out into smaller groups.
- 3) For new folks a little background on BCAN would have been helpful.
- 4) Goal of meeting maybe a bit broad.
- 5) Providing details from Dorchester for Peace example was good--something concrete to hang on to.
- 6) Meeting linked up well various topics. Didn’t feel disjointed.
- 7) Appreciated preparation done prior to meeting.
- 8) One point that did not get made but Terry adds it here: Great that facilitator and all participants made it a safe place to disagree.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? NOTES ON MEETING WILL BE POSTED ON BCAN WEBSITE.