

December 7, 2010

To: Mayor and Members of City Council
cc: John Szerlag, City Manager and Lori Grigg Bluhm, City Attorney
From: Robin Beltramini, Council Member
Subject: National League of Cities Congress of Cities, Denver CO,
November 30 – December 4, 2010

First, I want to thank you all and the citizens of Troy for allowing me to represent our community at this conference/convention. With this report, I will summarize my activities of last week. For a complete report of the Congress of Cities read *Nations' Cities Weekly* and consult the NLC Website (www.nlc.org) over the next few weeks.

Wednesday, December 1:

Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR): The morning was spent in the FAIR Policy and Advocacy Committee meeting where we finalized recommendations for amendments to National Municipal Policy in our areas of responsibility and held discussions regarding emerging trends and issues.

Of particular interest to Troy may be the resolution our committee added to policy regarding medicinal marijuana. There is a baffling conflict between federal policy (marijuana is classified as a Schedule 1 narcotic with no legal use) and the policy and laws of many states (over twenty states allow the use of marijuana for treatment of some medical conditions) which puts law enforcement and communities in a bit of jeopardy. Which law governs for enforcement purposes? What are the consequences of choosing which to enforce? Additionally, there is a safety concern for the law enforcement personnel. The reaction to law enforcement intervention by persons growing and using marijuana strictly for personal use, or for the use of medically qualified individuals, can be significantly different from those growing for illegal profit. And in Michigan, as well as many other states, it is impossible for an officer to know with some certainty what the situation is as a call for enforcement is made. Therefore, we presented a resolution calling upon the Congress to work with the states and "fix" this inherent conflict. The resolution was passed unanimously by the General Assembly. I would like to thank Lori Bluhm for her help in crafting this resolution during the FAIR Steering Committee's meeting in Troy last September.

Emerging issues include the potential for permanent loss of Community Development Block Grant funding (Troy uses for Home Chore and qualified infrastructure funding), a need for general overhaul of federal tax policy and the recommendation by the President's Deficit Reduction committee to eliminate tax exemptions for municipal bonds. Those issues will be studied over the next year by the FAIR committee.

As chairman, I reported the timeline for revision of NLC's governance structure. Committees, councils and panels will be realigned over the next year for more meaningful engagement of the membership and nimbleness for advocacy. Currently, NLC has a rather segregated

structure of membership interest/issue councils and panels and a separate cadre of committees for municipal policy and advocacy. Hopefully, the future will bring a more purposeful engagement of the two sides of communities' needs. Changes are expected to be fully implemented by January 2012.

Effective Tools for Communication and Innovative Thinking: This Leadership Training Institute seminar was full of creative ways to get people to think beyond "the norm." Instructors were Bob Wells and David Johnson of the World Humor Organization. Improvisational thinking and problem-solving techniques were taught in a "learn by doing" atmosphere. It was very interesting to participate in a situation where there was no trust at the beginning and by the end of the session participants were openly engaging and accepting each others' ideas. This spirit carried forward among the participants throughout the conference. However, there was no television or written communication for someone to edit and quote out of context. Therefore, people felt absolutely free to share even the most outlandish brainstorms which led to unique pathways for innovative problem-solving.

Thursday, December 2:

General Session, Chuck Hagel, former U.S. Senator (R-NE): The Senator talked about "resets" of the U.S. economy over the past 60 years caused by Pearl Harbor (1941), the Japanese surrender (1945), the Berlin Wall coming down (1989) and Sept. 11, 2001. Each brought its own set of changes in society, global engagement and power and the economy. The remarks were focused on the challenges of today and our future. Several points were made about living in an interconnected world where it is impossible to adopt an isolationist philosophy, where we are building a new world order and transformation abounds.

Hagel reflected that in today's U.S.A. data, whether statistical such as Gallup or anecdotal such as meetings in the grocery store, tell us that the largest ever division of the nation is happening today and the nexus of that division is "The Role of Government." Parties are polarized, but the majority of the American people remain centrists. The middle is growing, yet we are missing the values of the World War II generation in today's politics. That generation led with a spirit of compromise, putting the country first. Local governments are the closest we have to that kind of leadership today. Local leaders are more responsive, more innovative and most accountable to the people. What is that role of government? Hagel spoke about the choices we local officials must make. The texture of our society and culture, the value of systems, leadership are what matters in building sustainable communities. Those do not show up on a balance sheet, but are vital to the consequential bottom line. As we move closer to a "balance sheet" mentality, we exacerbate the distrust and lack of confidence in government. Again, local officials are in the best position actually to create trust in government. Hagel challenged that the importance of all of this is with our youth and our future. If our youth accept the distrust in our institutions, our future is in severe jeopardy.

Of course, Hagel ended on a positive note quoting from Franklin Delano Roosevelt's fourth inaugural address where he spoke of the upward trend of the long history of civilization. While the U.S. has seen massive swings in recent elections (2006, 2008, 2010 all saw party changes to House majorities), ultimately we do live with the best governmental system in the world and the American people always will demand the best from the available options.

Workshop—A Call to Service: City Leadership to Mobilize Volunteers: I moderated this session where panelists included: Karl Dean, Mayor, Nashville TN; Kimberly Allman, Deputy Director for Intergovernmental Affairs at the Corporation for National and Community Service; Jesse Salinas, Vice President Partnerships for HandsON Network. We discussed the shrinking municipal budgets and growing community needs and ways to harness the power of volunteers to bridge those gaps. There was significant discussion around appropriate use of volunteers, matching volunteer skill sets with needs and the effectiveness of volunteer engagement. Key partners in recruiting and using volunteers are the faith-based organizations, colleges and universities, chambers of commerce, service organizations and non-profit “issue” organizations such as environmental preservation clubs. We learned that it is important for government to facilitate, that is, do things like be the clearing house for listing opportunities, but to not try to be the ever-present convener for opportunities.

The first step for meaningful and successful volunteerism in a community is a community assessment. (This government can do.) Look at what the community needs are where volunteers could be appropriately engaged. Next, look at what organized assistance currently exists in the community to address those needs. This provides the beginning of a cross reference. See where the holes are. Can they be filled by one-time, task volunteers? Is a system necessary? For instance, Mayor Dean spoke about HandsOn Nashville (HON) taking on some of the emergency preparedness tasks. HON trained volunteers for sandbagging if the Cumberland River looked to overflow, evacuating families, clearing out damaged properties, etc. This was a recognized need before the 1,000 year flood. Therefore, there was a complement of volunteers trained for these tasks and then called forth when the flood occurred. This was a system. Others spoke about activities such as our River Day where no prior training or background clearance is necessary and a specific time and energy requirement is clear.

In order to effectively and consistently use volunteers to meet community needs there are some absolute rules: activity must match the interest and passion of the volunteer(s); experiences must be meaningful to the volunteer; leaders must model the behavior—our citizens need to see us volunteering in the community. It is imperative to be able to state a clear vision, mission and program whether recruiting volunteers or applying for funding.

Funded initiatives can be very helpful when trying to implement a particular system of volunteerism. The panel discussed the Cities of Service initiative funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies. The program was initiated by Michael Bloomberg, Mayor, New York City in January 2010. It, literally, was a call to service for mayors to inspire their citizens to help them rebuild the spirit of volunteerism in their communities. Various plans, including Mayor Bing’s for the City of Detroit, can be found at www.citiesofservice.org. The Corporation for National and Community Service is a grassroots grantor. Their best known programs are AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and Learn and Serve America. The grants are given to governments, schools, faith-based organizations and the like for purposes of improving community and building the values of citizenship, service and responsibility. Their Website is www.nationalservice.gov. HandsON Network is a nationwide organization committed to training and inspiring volunteers to make a positive difference in communities. There are affiliate groups in every region of the country making a difference through projects running the gamut from refurbishing recreational venues to fighting flood conditions. Additional information can be found at www.handsonnetwork.org.

Workshop—Bridging the Gap: This session focused on strategies some communities are using or may use to manage the structural deficit within city budgets. The deficit could be

caused by delayed infrastructure maintenance/replacement, decreased property values, diminished state revenue, health care and pension costs to name a few of the most common discussed. Panelists included: Steven Cochrane, Managing Director of Moody's Analytics; Michael Pagano, Dean at the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs, University of Illinois at Chicago; Kim Stacy Rueben, Sr. Fellow at The Urban Institute.

Cochrane began with the assessment that labor markets are soft throughout the country and that all regional economies are about equal. Layoffs are persistent in the West; working hours are increasing; Indiana's economy is growing at a rate of 1.67-5.67% while the economies of Illinois and Michigan are, at best, flat. Midwest foreclosures are at a rate of about 2.5% of owner occupied homes. While Michigan is still in a recession, the revenue outlook is that state revenue is expected to increase 4-6% in 2011 but local tax revenue will be essentially flat or diminished until at least 2013. Southern lower Michigan will experience a growth in real estate ownership, but the price of homes will be 6-10% lower than this year.

Pagano began with necessity for a calibration for efficient use of tax dollars toward maintenance centering on the life cycle of the infrastructure (the method we use in Troy). Additional attention needs to be paid to developing an effective link between capital and operating budgets. The good news was that, as bad as the economy feels, it is not The Great Depression: today's unemployment—10%/1929-33—25%; today's Dow Jones National Average (DJNA) decrease—20-30%/1929-33—89%; today's municipal defaults—only a few/ 1929-33—4,770; today's bank foreclosures—10%/1929-33—50%. Suggested changes in laws to assist local governments in successfully managing our mission: allow diversity of revenue structures; reform the tax structure, including income tax; broaden the sales tax. Some more innovative ideas were: restructure property tax to a split rate, including a more equitable payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) structure to adequately fund services used by tax exempt properties; joint service provisions including regional taxing authorities to directly collect and pay for them. Pagano went on to discuss the notion that pricing drives consumer behavior and disadvantages cities. There needs to be an equity between residents and workers who all use the infrastructure but do not all pay equitably for its upkeep. The question is asked, "Is there an ability to price the original cost of infrastructure to include lifetime maintenance?" There was no answer, but Pagano seems to think that if those costs were built into the original costs infrastructure funding could find some stability.

Rueben centered her discussion on pensions and health care benefits for employees. She, too, reiterated that a community cannot decrease agreed upon pension benefits. However, she shared different strategies for managing health insurance and pension costs. Rueben went on to mention potential changes in sales tax as ways to stabilize revenues for cities and states. For instance, crafting a national sales tax could do away with the Internet sales tax issues. In discussing trends, she shared concern that federal changes, particularly to health care, would push the load down to states and cities. However, she expressed hope for areas of innovation. In particular, she noted the emergence of different ways to deliver library services—virtual and on demand. Also, contract negotiations are becoming more innovative and interest-based (something we do already in Troy).

Friday, December 3:

General Session:

Community Excellence Awards: Communities with populations under 50,000—Silver winner was Clemson SC for their technology program developed to assist Public Works in coordinating and mapping areas where debris pickup is necessary. It is a wireless system that creates work orders and maps routes for pick up. Gold winner was Kingsport TN for their Higher Education Initiative which through scholarships and repurposing of existing buildings and infrastructure made education a way to spur economic development within the community. Communities with populations 50,001-150,000—Silver winner was North Charleston SC for their Sustainable Urban Revitalization project which brought together public, private and non-governmental organization to revitalize portions of the city impacted by the closure of the Charleston Naval Base. The project resulted in green housing and several new public schools including an arts academy and the first LEED platinum certified building in SC. Gold winner was South Bend IN for the Northeast Neighborhood Revitalization program to develop the area surrounding the Notre Dame campus. Cities with populations 150,001-500,000—Silver winner was Minneapolis MN for the Wireless Minneapolis project to effectively integrate technology into the city's infrastructure. Gold winner was Newport News VA for their program to strengthen ties to the growing Hispanic community. The initiative included a Hispanic Advisory Committee and several informational tools, public listening forums and partnerships with community groups to identify and plug gaps in service delivery. Cities with populations over 500,000—Silver winner was Los Angeles CA for the Terminal Island Renewable Energy project (TIRE), the nation's first effort for producing green energy from renewable biosolids. Gold winner was New York City NY for the Financial Empowerment Center which offers free, confidential one-on-one financial counseling to citizens.

L. Hunter Lovins, President and Founder, National Capitalism, Inc.: Ms. Lovins themed her presentation around green initiatives and the place of local communities in innovation and our planet's sustainability. She began with the quote from Jane Jacobs, "Cities are the engines of prosperity" which served as the basis for a series of assertions toward the point that local communities can model, as well as regulate, ways to determine a positive outcome for Earth's future. For instance, the "global drivers of change" are loss of the eco system, carbon constraints, economic instability, volatile energy prices and water resources. All of these can be profoundly influenced by what happens at the local level. In our community, do we value natural features and their ability to sustain our quality of life and spirit? Do we conserve energy as a model of behavior and do we (at least) encourage it in our citizens? Have we found those emerging businesses, technologies, services that can sustain and grow our local and global economy? Are we facilitating their existence and expansion? Do we understand that for time without measure, water has been the resource most coveted and, therefore, most likely to produce conflict?

In trying to show ways that specific communities have tried to meet these challenges in creating a prosperous future for themselves, she cited specific examples. Berkeley and Sonoma County CA use Special Assessment Districts for renewable energy installations thereby increasing jobs and bottom line savings. The green installations expanded job opportunities for electricians, welders, pipe-fitters and other skilled labor jobs that had decreased in the area. (A problem encountered was some "push back" on loans from Fannie and Freddie.) Riverside CA installed helical turbines in water pipes to perform like constrictors, but generate alternative energy. Gainesville FL has a Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) whereby locally produced energy is much cheaper to use than that which comes from outside the community.

General actions and lessons included the knowledge that using clean energy to begin with is much easier, safer and cheaper than polluting followed by necessary clean up and/or retooling. The city that innovates will rule. A look at China is highly illustrative. There is a "circular economy," meaning that there is no waste. All is recycled within the economy. While such actions may not have the same ease of implementation here in our society, it is certainly a lesson not to be ignored. Europe and the Middle East are developing a multi-nation smart grid.

There are economic lessons in alternative energy. Alternative energy carries a significant return on investment (ROI). The ROI on CFL and LED lights alone is 40%. Those DJNA companies that are paying attention to sustainability generally have the highest share price in their sectors. For more information, the Carbon Disclosure Project actually tracks and records the carbon footprints of companies. Their website is www.cdproject.net.

The Role of Government surfaced in this presentation, as well. Lovins believes our role is inspiration and some regulation. She believes that part of the inspiration comes through the setting of a BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal) such as a decarbonized city. To assist with such BHAGs and their attainment several resources, city climate protection and economic development manuals and guides, were listed from the National Capitalism Website, www.natcapsolutions.org and from the Local Action for Sustainable Economic Renewal Website, www.global-laser.org.

The closing comments were that incremental change is not an option and that truly new and innovative ways of doing business are the only positive pathways to a sustainable future. The good news is that there are resources available to assist us as we set those BHAGs and reinvent ourselves.

CityFutures Panel on Democratic Governance: This working lunch was a particularly helpful overview of the new tools available for citizen engagement. Dr. Alice Siu, Associate Director of the Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University, gave a synopsis of the factors to be assessed when designing a public consulting project and deliberative polling, in particular, as a technique. All methodologies are not equal, but any can be highly ineffective if not appropriately qualified through probing of who the target to poll is, method of selection for subjects, type of opinion sought (in-depth, educated, superficial, quick, over time, etc.). Also, there are inherent problems with public opinion—rational ignorance, phantom opinions (answer even if ignorant of the issue/subject), selectivity of sources. Deliberative Polling has been used since 1994, globally, including in the Save Michigan initiative through PBS last year. Deliberative polling is a random selection of the subjects and a comparison of opinion before and after an educational component and a discussion component. There could be some partnership between the Center for Deliberative Democracy and the NLC in the coming years as we cope with financial, social and economic change in our communities.

The second presentation was from Dr. Alan Shark, CEO of Public Technology Institute (PTI) in Washington DC. Technology is a driving force in the way we govern today. It offers transparency and involvement, but also can contribute to Citizen Enfranchisement, as well. As leaders we must endeavor to move technologically from the static Post to full Interact. The intervening steps, respectively, are Transact (online permits, etc. with safeguards) and React (surveys and other one-way data). We must do this soon. By 2019, it is expected that 96% of all communication devices will connect to the Internet. We must prepare ourselves and begin the transformation or suffer the distrust of our citizenry since we will not be progressing at the new "normal" speed. It was the feeling of the panel that PTI could be

quite helpful in identifying best practices, offering practical briefings and research results, as well as the sponsorship of Webinars and other technological tools.

The panel discussed recent programs that might be of interest to the general membership. From "Polarization to Problem Solving" was used by one community to overcome severe disconnects. It is a small group, facilitated process of discussion and resolution. League of Minnesota Cities is moving forward with "Outside the Ox." This program helps define the Role of Government for Minnesota communities as it asks citizens three questions: What services do you want? How should they be delivered? How do you want to pay for them?

Next year the panel will be updating the Democratic Governance Tool Kit and developing a Leadership Training Institute seminar on welcoming and assimilating immigrant populations. It could very well focus around existing processes and skills being used in innovative ways.

Workshop—*Fees or Flames: Is it Time for a New Social Compact Between Government and the People?*: This workshop grew from the exposition of the different, and perhaps unsustainable, expectations citizens have regarding local government services and the government's ability to provide and fund those services. Panelists were Kevin Frazell, Director of Member Services at the League of Minnesota Cities, Susan Clarke, Professor of Political Science at the University of Colorado at Boulder and Joe Moore, Alderman, City of Chicago.

Dr. Clarke began with the illustration of the multiple actors performing "government functions" in today's world. For instance, city fire departments and contract fire departments not only both exist, but may exist in the same neighborhood. When the actors overlap it creates changes in who's in charge, who's responsible and accountable, as well as who is paying for the service and how. The result is citizens have ties to multiple entities and greater choices. The choice facilitates innovation—the upside. There can be a whole range of service, methods of delivery, providers, even types of service. The downside is that the role and ability of the city may become compromised. If a city chooses a certain level of service to be offered to the entire community, can citizens purchase additional levels of service from the city or another provider? Does the city have an obligation to notify of choices for service (e.g., additional fire protection or insurance, private providers)? Is there a requirement to articulate how the services would interact or function? If the city does notify, does that send a signal that the local government is incapable of performing adequate service, in which case confidence and funding could both be eliminated, not because of an inability to perform, but because of a self-inflicted negative perception.

Kevin Frazell illustrated the "Outside the Ox" campaign outlined above.

Joe Moore explained his Participatory Budgeting initiative. Chicago Aldermen are assigned "Aldermanic Menu Money" which amounts to about \$1.3 million annually for capital improvements in their ward. Previously, Moore had assigned the use of this money himself based on anecdotal community input and educated personal assessments. However, as the distrust in big city government began to grow, Moore decided to take his Aldermanic Menu Money to the community for assignment. He assembled a group of community leaders to help outline and guide the process. Neighborhood assembly meetings generated the project list. Community representatives volunteered sit on subject matter committees which researched each project as to cost, timing, etc. There were two additional ward-wide meetings to discuss and adjust the proposals. Finally, there was a one-day ward-wide, single precinct voting day (with the information boards available for perusal at the polling place).

Any resident 16 or older had eight votes that must be spread over eight projects, no weighted voting. In the end, Moore committed to use his Aldermanic Menu Money for the projects with the most votes, up to the \$1.3 million. Lesson learned was that for road projects, people tended to vote only for the roads they drove on, not necessarily for the roads most in need of repair. Therefore, the road question next year will be to choose the percentage of the discretionary money to go toward road projects, rather than specific projects for voting. This allows for the most efficient use of road dollars to maintain infrastructure while preserving the public's ability to prioritize the menu money.

Question and answer issues: Panelists were asked if a participatory process could be used for less tangible areas of the city budget. The answers were pretty consistent that the process could be a great discussion tool for things such as police resources, quality of life issues, but cautioned that an absolute following of the electorate could be a bit more problematic. All agreed that this tool gave a sense of procedural justice and helped temper expectations. It should be noted that in the Chicago example, items for choice ranged from street lights, to community gardens, to dog parks, to street reconstruction and a variety of projects were selected. Evanston IL uses citizen input on General Fund expenditures. Information is online and participation encompasses a range of citizens beyond those usually engaged. However, in Evanston, the city manager and council ultimately decide.

Saturday, December 4:

General Session: John E. "Jeb" Bush, Former Governor of Florida and Robert D. Putnam, Professor of Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard

University: Robert Putnam's opening remarks encompassed the historical perspective. We are a country of immigrants who have, always, wanted to become integrated in communities. Historically, since the 1600s every 30 or 40 years a new group of immigrants arrives. Each time there has been turmoil, but successful assimilation. Managing language is the most difficult issue. Second generations are the most integrated. Today, immigrants are gaining language and social and geographic integration faster. Albeit, we are doing less than ever to facilitate immigration.

Jeb Bush spoke about the United States' ability to absorb people as our greatest success. We must grow population to be successful as a nation. As we age, we need young innovators and workers. We need a path to citizenship and sanctions for employers who break the law. Integration into American life can be assisted with a greater requirement for history courses in K-12 schooling, attention to family literacy, and not lowering the bar for achievement by immigrant children. He went on to cite the Florida model of raising standards for all children—and all children exceeded previous standards, including immigrant children.

Question and answer issues; What is the role of local elected officials in the immigration process? Both speakers answered that leadership was the single, most important factor, more important than programs when working toward integration. Our role is to inform and educate. Both were asked their opinion on the Arizona law. Both oppose the law. Both have personal circumstances which guide that opposition. Bush stated an understanding of the frustration but believes that better training to assist local law enforcement in enforcing the federal laws would be a more positive step. When asked what single action could most facilitate inclusion Bush answered that providing cost-effective ways to accelerate assimilation would be his choice. An argument to pose to Congress is that facilitating

assimilation facilitates a high growth economy. Immigrants are aspirational. We need to align actions to help them achieve their dreams. Putnam cited previous Congressional actions that have funded ESL training. Private groups can do this, but it must be a national priority. Religious institutions, local leaders of all stripes can help. Interesting statistic cited: Future of the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S.A. is in Latinos. (Two-thirds of all attendees under 35 years old are Hispanic.) Why should there be a path to citizenship when illegal immigrants are scofflaws? Bush talked about the fact that we have legal redemption for other illegal acts. A path to citizenship with significant redemptive requirements is acceptable. It is impractical to think that we can successfully deport 12 million people. Putnam agreed.

Workshop—Immigrant Integration: Listen, Reflect, Act: I attended this session because of our large foreign-born population. Excerpts from the film *Welcome to Shelbyville* were shown as conversation starters. The lesson is that successful integration is a two-way street that requires adjustments by both immigrants and long-term residents. We held roundtable discussions sharing successes and challenges in our own communities. I was proud to share information about our Ethic Issues Advisory Board, Sights and Sounds of Troy and our Interfaith Group. Lessons learned from others included the essentialness of reaching out. As leaders we must make the first step to interact with new residents. We must be the catalysts for their wanting to participate. While we may think that we are the most immigrant friendly nation, in fact, Canada has the greatest immigrant population in the world with Toronto claiming 50% of its residents are immigrants. The U.S.A. is ranked 19th worldwide in the immigrants per capita measurement, about 17%. Building inclusiveness can build sustainable communities as we embark on further globalization in all sectors of our lives. NLC has resources to share.

Luncheon Speaker—Tom Vilsack, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture: After a video presentation of First Lady, Michelle Obama, sharing her Let's Move program which has been adopted by NLC as Let's Move Cities and Towns, Secretary Vilsack went on to speak about the statistical obesity of our children (1/3 are obese) and how pervasive a problem this is for our future. In addition to the obesity issue, one in four children is in a "food insecure" home, meaning that there is not a week that the child does not go without one or more meals—even with the federal breakfast and lunch programs. Retired and active military generals and admirals believe this is a national security issue. Children who do not arrive for school at a healthy weight and/or having been fed a healthy breakfast cannot learn effectively. Currently, only 25% of 19-24 year olds are fit for military service. Now, this includes those dismissed from the pool for a whole host of reasons, but many of them are dismissed because they cannot accurately read and write and/or perform necessary physical functions. If ¼ are already unfit, can we afford to continue to allow 1/3 of our children be automatically unfit through obesity? Vilsack encouraged some actions for cities: link information regarding stretching food dollars and nutrition from usda.gov to the City Website; assess barriers to fresh food—and do away with them (e.g., change zoning to facilitate farmers' markets); identify "food deserts" in community—places where fresh food is not within walking distance; expand farmers' markets, community gardens (U.S.D.A. has grants for farmers' market set up and ways to take food subsidy payments at those markets); promote summer feeding programs; partner with other groups such as the NFL's "Fuel Up Play 60" program.

The conference ended with the Annual Business Meeting where a new set of officers was elected and a new Board of Directors. I was grateful for the opportunity to represent Troy, learn so much about community inclusiveness, participation, innovation and sustainability.

For your information, any presentations that had instructional visual aids, such as power point, will be available on the NLC Website for additional information. The movie *Welcome to Shelbyville* that illustrates the difficulties communities still face with immigration will air on PBS stations early in 2011. I will share sample documents from these sessions, applicable anecdotal information I gleaned from other attendees and specific vendor information with the city manager.

R.E.B.