

# The Bainbridge Island Village Project

## Progress Report to the Village Steering Committee

Period February 2015 through January 2016

### **Background and Introduction**

Local citizens and organizations are coming together to explore the possibility of starting a village program on Bainbridge. Villages started as a movement to help citizens “age in place”. This will still be a focus on Bainbridge Island, however, the vision here is to create an *intergenerational village* to realize our full potential as a great place to grow up in and grow old in.

This report outlines the process and progress that has been made since the concept of a village for Bainbridge Island was first introduced to the community in February 2015. This report is a chronological record of activities, dividing our work into three phases: exploring community interest; organizing and building capacity for planning; and strategic and business planning. As in all organic processes, there is natural overlap between phases of this work. For example, exploring community interest will be a theme throughout all phases and all phases will further refine our organization structure and inform our strategic plan.

### **Phase 1 –Exploring community interest (Feb-June 2015)**

This phase started with the community conversation held at the Senior Center. Initially it was intended to be an information meeting only, but the interest that emerged was beyond expectations and several participants wanted to determine the feasibility of establishing a village program on Bainbridge Island. This phase included the following events and tasks.

#### **Community Conversation: A BI Village?**

- Village 101 convened by the Senior Center, under the leadership of Sue Barrington on February 28, 2015. A national expert was brought in to talk about the village and facilitate discussion.
- Over 70 people attended this initial workshop.
- During this meeting, we began the important work of identifying our community’s assets and initiating a needs assessment.
- A website was initiated at this time and the BI Village joined the National Village-to-Village Network.
- Three additional monthly follow-up meetings were convened to engage interested individuals who wanted to begin planning a village.

Approximately 40 individuals who attended the initial workshop participated in follow-up sessions.

- Task groups were formed to explore needs assessment, communication/community awareness, volunteer engagement and funding.
- It became increasingly clear that additional resources would be needed to support the productive engagement of volunteers and respond to increasing inquiries.

## **Phase 2 –Organizing and building capacity for planning (June 2015 through January 2016)**

Concurrently stepping back and stepping up to the challenge of establishing a village program on Bainbridge Island characterize phase two.

Stepping back, organizational leaders needed to honestly assess their available time and resources to carry planning forward. During this period, volunteer facilitators were engaged to help facilitate discussions and develop a concept paper, including the structure that would be needed to determine need and establish a village program, if this was to be the intended outcome.

Stepping forward, community information meetings were resumed in the fall and volunteers recruited to fill critical positions to carry the leadership for planning. A volunteer-driven leadership structure was developed. Progress during this phase is outlined as follows:

### **Initial steering group meetings and the National Village-to-Village Conference**

- Convened by Sue Barrington, leaders from Housing Resources Board, Island Volunteer Caregivers, Bainbridge Island Senior and Community Center, and Area Agency on Aging met several times over the summer to share leadership responsibilities and develop a plan for moving forward.
- John and Judy McKenzie, citizen volunteers, agreed to facilitate these meetings, develop a concept paper to serve as a foundation for planning, and facilitate the planning process.
- The National Village-to-Village Conference was held in Seattle this year. Twelve representatives from the Island attended, including agency leaders, agency board members, citizens and planning facilitators.
- After the conference, the attendees met to distill what they learned from the conference for reporting back to the community.

### **Three additional community engagement meetings**

- Three additional community information meetings were held at the Senior Center on October 25th, November 21st and December 13th to continue to gauge community interest and to engage citizens in planning.
- Approximately 135 interested citizens participated in these fall meetings.

- 50 individuals volunteered to take on some task or leadership role.
- Over \$4,000 in start-up contributions was pledged to help fund start-up of the Village.
- Thirteen individuals volunteered to host Living Room Chats to inform their neighbors and friends about the village concept.

#### **Implementing the governance structure**

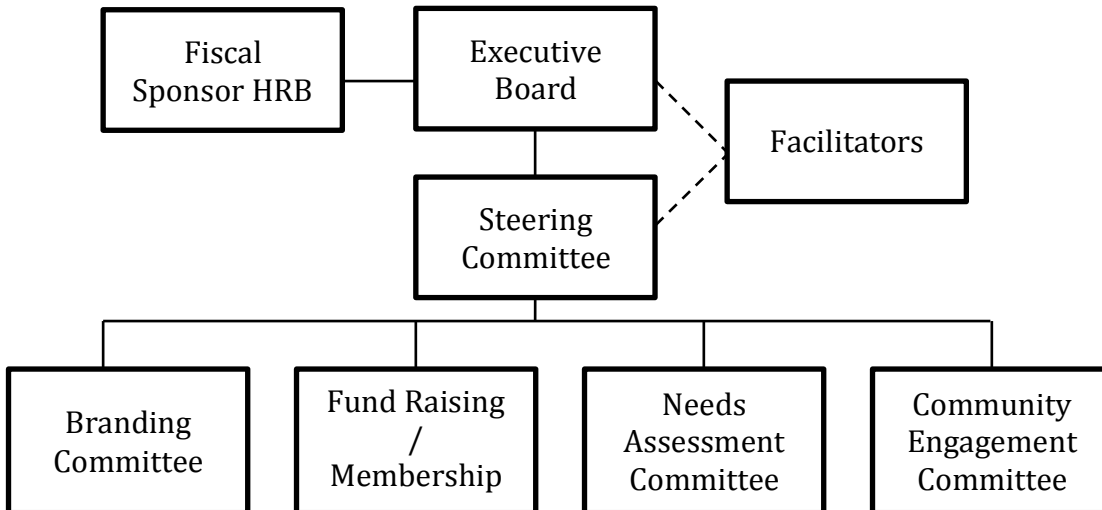
- The first official Steering Committee Meeting was held on November 30, 2015. Eighteen volunteers joined the Committee. The Committee will meet monthly on the third Thursday of the month from 4-6 PM. These meetings are open to the community. The role of this committee is to advise and guide the planning and development of the BI Village.
- Officers were elected and an Executive Board made up of the five officers was formed to conduct business between meetings and form a Washington nonprofit corporation. This is necessary to enter into contract with a fiscal sponsor. The nonprofit Board will be made up of Steering Committee officers and additional community members, not to exceed a total of nine members.
- The Executive Board met once in December, twice in January and has a schedule of bi-weekly meetings planned for the foreseeable future.
- Application for non-profit status in Washington has been submitted and a proposal was submitted to Housing Resources Bainbridge (HRB) to become the BI Village fiscal sponsor.
- January 12, 2016, HRB agreed to enter into contract with BI Village to become our fiscal sponsor. This plan will be implemented once BI Village gains approval of its nonprofit status with Washington State.

#### **Sub-committees and work plans initiated**

- Community Engagement: this committee, currently made up of seven members, met November 9<sup>th</sup>, December 7<sup>th</sup> and January 11<sup>th</sup>. Focus has been on developing a work plan, planning the fall community engagement meetings and developing the protocol and materials for Living Room Chats. The role of this committee is to inform the community regarding the village concept, engage as many interested citizens and volunteers as possible and to develop a database of interested persons and potential members. The pilot Living Room Chat occurred on January 14, 2016.
- Needs Assessment Committee: this committee has eleven members at this time. It met in November and conducted a retreat in January to develop a work plan and priorities. Its role is to evaluate and make recommendations regarding the need and potential interest in the village in the community. The committee decided its first priority is to complete an asset map of existing formal and informal services available on the Island.
- Branding Committee: this committee is being formed to develop the mission, beliefs and marketing strategy for the village, including the name, essential identity and public relations strategy. A meeting is scheduled for January 27.

- Funding and Membership Committee: this committee will be responsible for obtaining start-up funds and membership policy and recruitment. It is currently being formed. The first meeting is scheduled for January 19<sup>th</sup>.

The new organizational chart for the BI Village moving forward follows:



**Other outreach and public relations activities performed**

- The planning facilitators were invited to make presentations to the Board of Directors at Island Volunteer Caregivers (IVC); at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bainbridge Island Senior Center (BISC); and to the Board of Directors of Housing Resources Bainbridge (HRB).
- In December, interviews occurred and articles about the village were in the Bainbridge Island Review and the Senior Center newsletter, Splash.

**Phase 3– Strategic and Business Planning (January– December 31, 2016)**

This phase started in January of 2016 and will continue throughout 2016. During this phase the following major goals and objectives will be accomplished:

**Document the need and support for a village program on Bainbridge Island**

- Complete needs assessment, including asset map, surveys and focus groups
- Continue outreach to the community through Living Room Chats and marketing plan

**Determine the most effective business model for a village on BI**

- Draw on needs assessment and community input to decide whether to form a new nonprofit or work through an existing one
- In collaboration with existing organizations, determine appropriate role and services for the village and best strategies for coordination and networking

### **Develop a business plan and resources to assure relevance and sustainability**

- Establish village mission, beliefs, brand, and communication strategies
- Determine what services will be initially offered and our plan for phasing services
- Develop funding and membership strategies
- Raise sufficient start-up funds
- Determine staffing and volunteer service requirements for start-up

### **Implement program**

- Hire staff
- Membership drive
- Create initial service offerings

### **Challenges and Opportunities Going Forward**

Since the village idea was first introduced on Bainbridge, over 250 participants have attended information and planning meetings and approximately 30 volunteers have stepped up to take on various leadership roles and tasks. There will be many questions and challenges to face together going forward. Five that stand out are:

1. How do we balance the pressure of moving too quickly or moving too slowly? We need to determine if a new organization is needed or would it be better to augment existing services? If a village is created then how can it facilitate coordination and collaboration among existing organizations to optimize our service delivery system?
2. The second challenge is to not over-promise. If we do decide to create a village then what services will be most valuable to our citizens and how can we do a few things well to start with?
3. How do we brand and message our village so that it is perceived as intergenerational, while still empowering, exciting and engaging citizens who want to age in place.
4. What about this idea of membership dues? This is a new idea for most. How will it be interpreted, marketed and accepted here? What is a reasonable rate?
5. How do we create an entity that is financially sustainable and has the leadership, resources and flexibility to meet emerging needs?

This will be a very exciting year of community engagement, more courageous conversations and thoughtful decision-making.

Judith and John McKenzie  
Volunteer Planning Facilitators