

06-18-2025 7-9 pm at
MayDay Space

Spokescouncil Meeting - Date: 06-18-2025

Spokescouncil Strategy Meeting 2 (aka what to do about the future of the space)

Agenda

Names/Pronouns (5 min)

Roles (5 min)

- Facilitator (Ash + Dora?)
- Timer
- Stack
- Whiteboarder

Review of "Options" (5 min)

Review of Monday meeting (10 min)

Brief Updates and Open Questions (10 min)

Breakout group research huddle (35 min)

Break (5 min)

Breakout group reportbacks (15 min)

Plan for Monday June 23 Meeting + Proposal Teams (10 min)

Action Items + Bottomliners (5 min)

Meeting Highlights

Roles (5 min)

- Facilitator (Ash + Dora)
- Timer : LP
- Stack: Shahrazad
- Whiteboarder: Iris
- Notes: Rachel

Review of "Options" (5 min)

- Option 1: "Lease Takeover" : "Matt / Woodbine" moves to new space Ridgewood Democratic Club; 585 Working Groups becomes its own entity REMAIN at 585 by renegotiating lease w landlord w 3-mo seed money (rent)
- Option 2: (Matt & Maria are definitely out) current Co-Directors are OUT; what "we"[person speaking] would rather look to do, is stay on lease and work with spokes council as a buffer from directorship; everything stays as is (expanded Directorship roles - retry it)
- Option 3: Matt goes to RDC; Other working groups have to find their own spaces if they don't want to take over 585; seed money would go to this unknown 3rd space. (Budget doesn't feel available for that?)
 - Doesn't sound like any 3rd spaces are pulling through
 - We have a breakout group looking into 3rd spaces
- QUESTION: do "WB" groups WANT to go? (Reading groups, screenings)
 - The "brand" of WB is transferring to RDC;

Review of Monday meeting (10 min) (Dora)

- Reviewed options 1,2,3
- Ideated pros and cons of options
- Talked about moving parts, what collaborations might be, big questions about funding streams,
- Created 5 breakout groups:
 - Fundraising & Collaborations w other orgs
 - Potential alternative spaces

- Legal support (Incorporation)
- Leadership accountability models & Leaseholder Relationships
- Points of Unity
- A document was created as potential statement of intent to be used for any of the options for us to review and go through
 - “This is the plan, and this is the timeline” type document
- Pulse check at the end of the meeting: MOST people interested in Option 1.

Brief Updates and Open Questions (10 min)

- “I want to clarify: Option 2 now sounds a lot like Option 1,?”
 - Johnny: under all scenarios, Matt is leaving lease or self-indemnifying
 - WE DON'T KNOW IF LANDLORD WILL ALLOW ENTIRELY NEW SET OF LEASEHOLDERS
 - 3 new leaseholders entirely (seemed skeptical)
 - Matt indemnify and keeping John & Duncan on the Lease
 - Matt indemnifying himself and finding a replacement on lease
 - Liability issues are still a major concern
 - Is option 1 now a complete new lease take over??
 - Option 2 looks different now
- UPDATE: option 2 is shifting ?
- UPDATE: Johnny talking to landlord on Saturday that will hopefully clarify
- QUESTION: would it help our thinking if we throw away options that aren't working anymore: the critical decision is do we want to talk to landlord about transitioning lease?
 - Johnny clarifying: Matt is indemnifying/leaving no matter what, so we will have to talk to the landlord no matter what
- QUESTION: WHAT IS THE MINIMAL VIABLE DECISION THAT NEEDS TO BE MADE BY WHEN
 - RE-ASKING because of getting different answers
 - **What Matt asking for is ppl to come together w statement of intent to keep running the space and how it's going to happen**
 - **END OF JUNE**
 - **We have a document template for that**
- QUESTION: have there been people who would be interested in joining the lease as third person? (Good income/credit etc folks??)
 - question: what are the requirements for lease?
 - Johnny: during COVID, very loose .. we have rapport
 - Johnny; thorough background and credit checks
 - Three-person lease

- **A couple folks have approached Ash about that directly saying they would be on the lease as good candidates**
- **No one has committed to Johnny about it specifically**
- QUESTION: is the 9-yr lease deal that Matt negotiated going to be compromised by his self-recusal?
 - **Finding out on Saturday Maybe**
- QUESTION: IF DINO THE LANDLORD WOULD renegotiate leases w/ new lease holders raise rent?
 - **MAYBE**
- QUESTION: would us [585] incorporating change landlord's calculus at all? LLC
 - **I don't think so? I think he cares about getting money and trusting lease holders > but Dino wants a point person to be Johnny or Matt**
- QUESTION: DO we have a copy of the lease?
 - **Johnny has it on his computer**
- QUESTION: Do we have feels on what groups would want to leave / stay?
 - How have those conversations been happening?
 - **No one here to answer that**
 - **Stay: Gym, pantry, dinner crew, (food fight is looking for new space / open to staying) (the most infrastructure-entrenched groups)**
 - **RDC does not intend to accommodate food distro / dinner**
 - **leave: ?? Research group? Reading group?**
 - QUESTION: HOW concretely do they feel / who is making that decision for those groups
- question: what are the essential roles in the space/duties / responsibilities — who is interested doing them?
 - **Finance, legal, rentals, co-working management, maintenance, lease, operations, lease relations, fundraising, programming, calendar, repairs**
- QUESTION: a lot of income from co-working: at what point in time do we address those people specifically (\$1600/mo)
- QUESTION: Co-working people is a collection with "With Friends" — during this transition, when are these people alerted and when do they make this decision? Clarify when they make that decision
 - **Def have to recruit new people for co-working at 585 bc co-working will happen at RDC**
 - **The agreement we talked to Matt about, the first 3 months would split income btw 2 spaces from Patreon and WithFriends > announcing changes**

- QUESTION: to what extent the various working groups have been informed what might happen?
 - **first announcement would be through listServ July 1**
 - **Matt sent out a message in “Coordinators” chat with sporadic attention, no idea how well those were read**
 - **People on Saturday were informed and most people know now**
 - QUESTION: reiterate that whatever changes are made that people in the Patreon need to be informed beforehand — if we do anything w/o telling them is serious defrauding issue:
 - **We will have to talk to Matt about it (Andrew volunteering to do so)**
 - **Perhaps financing group can help strategize around that**
 - **Legal group did research into that (see below)**

Breakout group research huddle (35 min)

- Financing funding & Partnership: funding streams & partnerships,
- Legal: Incorporation, patreon carry over;
- Points Of Unity: making a board unifying mission statement to help us come together
- Leadership and Accountability & Leaseholder relationships: dreaming up how these leadership roles that maintain the space : who to make sure spokes council has real power and how does it integrate w other leadership roles (leaseholders)
- Alt Spaces: we don't need to meet? BUT one benefit could be just to see what's out there so we have a more empowered approach ? Might just be jumping the gun; we've been throwing around links but we don't need to discuss in person so much

LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY group notes: Relationship btw spokes council and leadership roles

Note: Property taxes for 585 lease : \$8000/yr in taxes: Department of Finances

Question: Is landlord paying for major repairs ??

discuss pain points from the past to help inform going forward: WHAT HASN'T BEEN WORKING (not blame person but like more generally what dynamics don't work > with intent to address/avoid a structural concern)

- UNCLEAR overlap / delineation between leadership roles vs responsibility roles : ie busted things : ppl who are in roles of leadership vs roles of responsibility for pragmatic needs

- daily needs need to delineated more clearly

- S liked things with “JOY” in reference to a shared example / document: make people WANT to come and do the work because they want to
- Avoid “Social capital” of people skills: creates weird power dynamic
- Johnny: clarifying what he means by “leadership”: “to me it is I don't have time to do that much, I don't have interest in running the space, the issues to leadership to me are things

in category of finance, building capacity and legal liability, but I'm fine with everything else litigated by wg's through spokes council

- "So I think there should be a team that I am a part of that can make those decisions"
- Oftentimes, the space has changed a lot, usually there is one person who makes decision all time time > rotating roles 2-3 people in roles/realms with open communication where everyone knows what happens
- Monthly meetings: "I think it'd be cool if there would be a point where anyone could ask any question"
 - Have something online? People show up confused irl > lots of disparate mailing lists and signal groups
 - Then there's an agenda
 - But all finances and agenda should all be public and open and transparent
 - But every meeting should have a public-contribution option / portion
 - (Pain point is LOW TRANSPARENCY: HARD TO PLUG IN)
- Anyone being able to force others out by denying access codes
- TRUST is a big issue: sporadic presence of people in the space
 - Roles that have been not very present, because they have key influence over things but haven't been around
 - Directors not known by people > who are you , why are you telling me to do this??
 - DOOR CODES: Bloomington people change the code once/month
- STRUCTURE: A LOT OF THESE things have overlapping themes of lack of transparency, in building structures there are a lot of things that are common to organizing: busy, come and go, transience, we can't control peoples lives and behaviors, but important to create roles and responsibilities with that keep turn over in mind, so even when a leader has to leave ; and that we are going. To be bad at it for a long time and it's going to be hard
- Good idea for how to address that
- Accountability: Doesn't mater how people get into role, but GENERAL MEMBERSHIP NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO VETO / PULL BACK leaders
- V: been on a bunch of WB things since 2016, problems with lack of accountability
- **Things we would like to see:**
 - Le rentals could be a clear group of people that can do it together
 - All leadership roles should have accountability and
 - Something that would help with that: rewriting of lease if that happens; we really should consider being an LLC!! It's not a single person:
 - Liability and decision making: a requirement for J is people in leadership who will be responsible about finances and liability but at the same time we want to make decision collectively: so whoever those leadership ppl are > they have veto power SPECIFICALLY FOR finances and liability and only that and they must be able to defend that decision

- Point person. / vs leadership?
- Rhizome collective Austin TX
- Omni commons Oakland CA
- Johnny: there is an assumption that WB is an anarchist space, but it never has been, and there is a lot of frustration about that , and it feels like no one is listening to the people who were here first
 - Culture is alive and changing
 - Part of legacy and DNA is there and can't be kept static
 - Response: there are a lot of different people here, don't think it's specially a capital-A anarchist thing
 - A general feeling specifically when dealing with Matt > kept pointing to idea documents > but we've grown a lot and changed a lot and have diverse members
- Johnny: Thing have changed, wb has grown; doesn't want culture of Anarchism to push out all other ideas/groups; that there is a vibe; and so I have a lot of apprehension
- The claimed politics vs the nuts and bolts > if nothing is designated in a clear manner, then there will be a structure that is haphazard
 - We can't necessarily vote on how money gets used because not everyone has context for that????
 - So what about a financial working group?
 - Like if you let everyone in on the finances, it would be very dysfunctional to just hand those decision over to the spokes council
 - So we want to create a clear structure so it's NOT haphazard
 - J: concerns about administrative things: we wield power over everyone, but also you need to demonstrate investment in the space > demonstrate that you're appropriate for the role
 - We are not talking about an anarchist structure, instead as democratic; flattening the structure
 - J: feels huge worry about liability with types of events and finances that are happening at the space!!!!
- The common denominator is that Matt is not involved: "we want to buy a pinball machine" example > finance group that can actual field thoughtful proposals
- That would bring so much joy
- How do both wheels overlap, share joy
- Point person mentorship
- Spokes council
- Integration of the two wheel groups
- Point person and spokes people will be doing the work together

- Impeaching and recalling: that is important to feel like there is power in the people creating the space together
 - Conflict support happening continuously
 - Hopefully it doesn't get to a point of impeachment, but that there will be more conversations about it before it becomes this monster
 - "Hey I'm liability person and I'm stressed out threatened etc" the conflict working group is here to help with that so that people feel safe and understood
- Can we avoid: give people the context so they can make the decision
 - If we can let people know what's in the bank account because then we can plug them into the paths / context to show them HOW they can get those things > here's how !! (Or why that doesn't work)
- So it's about being prepared for problems and dealing with problems rather than avoiding them!!!
- Conflict-averse people : nothing ever gets done!! (Festering, rot etc)
 - Rotating roles: appropriate for some things and not others (Rentals — it really is just about who is able to do it, has those relationship, has the time > becomes an efficiency issue; Rentals: a lot of liability on leaseholders as well. > delineation between responsibility vs leadership >> it has to be worked out with CLARITY
 - Talking about role rotation with another long time organizer : whatever role rotation, there should be a clear structure with MENTORSHIP and FEEDBACK and knowing that people will make mistakes
 - There are a ton of collectively run spaces where no single person has that role and collective can be responsible and be open to this working
 - V: my dream and vision for the space from talking to lots and lots of people and meetings, there are the spokes (back wheel is drive wheel, working groups) that drive the drive chain and grow the space, there's the front wheel (admin) > the bike is the space > full transparency between two wheels that is making the whole bike work
 - People complain about stuff all the time: not an excuse to hoard knowledge : conflict averse behavior:
- WE ARE AT TIME: huge conversation: we will be meeting Thursday or Sunday or both > obviously not a conversation that's done
- THANK YOU JOHNNY FOR BEING HERE! And hearing all these thoughts and conversations;
 - Would we have to clear rentals with the spokes council? NO
 - But maybe there's a rental committee very educated on what rentals are and rental liabilities > Johnny would be able to see what the rentals are too > super concerned about NOT IMPEDING RENTALS BECAUSE OF INCOME STREAMS!!!!
 - J: talk about worry about finances briefly: at best, WE ARE LOSING AT LEAST 1/2 OF OUR INCOME FOR THE SPACE!!!

Leaseholder stuff: mostly dependent on SATURDAY discussion

Break (5 min)

Breakout group reportbacks (15 min)

WAIT: why am I talking:

LEGAL:

- PATREON & With Friends: their terms of service require that that change of services provided be announced
- NYS law: we do have to report to our donors that we are changing the structure of the organizing;
 - Incorporating: LLC (hard wired individuals), several other entity types, different from non-profit (directors are responsible to and can be changed), different from 510(c)3 would have a manager/president >> so that no individual has to take on scary liability and bank account could be for the organization
 - LLC makes it much harder on grants!!!
 - 501c3 MIGHT BE BETTER
 - 585 SPACE: during COVID : it took A LOT of legwork to find options: we could reuse this model
 - = a lot of benefits to incorporating
 - Can we bring this up with Dino on Saturday? J will ask him but doesn't know; Dino wants a point person for sure. In his mind as someone to blame for anything going wrong.
 - NEED A FISCAL SPONSOR: this will be further down the line >> LLC cannot do tax-deductible sponsors
 - FINANCE/FUNDRAISING:
 - Showed us comparison with others space that matters is taking on
 - How splitting half btw 585 and RDC ? Who gets to decide?
 - Consider more overhead costs!! How that money that people have continuously put into 585 should be split
 - Because RDC rent is going to be half of what 585 is
 - So having a community of spaces, being realistic about what things actually cost
 - Especially with no reading group on Sundays
 - Dora shared really great breakdowns of finances over the last year in 2-6 month chunks
 - Mayday, Ridgewood Tenants Union
 - Programing for things that are leaving, opens up spaces that are now available: Sunday time slot is a big one (pop-ups : money fundraisers, bake sales, smaller

scale do seem to add up, vending market things)

- POINTS OF UNITY: we reviewed existing work from last meeting, discussed two-pronged approach of what we believe, tenants and what the core parts are :
 - Whether and how to include more about WHO the space is for / who we trying to reach
 - Ways to overcome the gatekeeping / confusing about legibility and participation
- ALT SPACES: Libby put together a report that he will share to a general chat; we CAN get a comparable space price, but much smaller

Leadership / accountability:

- Pain-points: accountability & transparency
- Liability
- Ideas for how to integrate spokes person model with leaders
- Make sure admin is integrated with working groups / point persons and spokes persons all integrated
- Committees formed around some groups
- Point person mentoring new people
 - Same person stays the same for a while
- Concerns about finances and sharing info about it > transparency
- We have a lot still to go, meeting Thursday and/or Sunday

QUESTION: what is the point of third space / option 3: the vast majority of people want to stay with 585, have a collective body that pairs with leadership;

- 3rd space is useful to understand value of staying at 585

Plan for Monday June 23 Meeting + Proposal Teams (10 min)

- write proposals prior to meeting to finalize one by the end of the meeting

- Beginning of MONDAY meeting: any report backs from all the groups who do meet in the interim, if anything new comes up, new info from landlord Dino on Saturday;
- Then do breakout groups depending on size for TO WRITE 2-3 proposals for what we should present to Matt — use that document from K as a template to adjust / add/ phrase based on their ideas
- SECOND HALF OF MEETING: VOTING ON PROPOSALS and editing
- Other tweaking asynchronously and with a set deadline later, but before 30th
- Incorporation stuff: we just need to show an intent by 30th rather than actually have to have it incorporated
- QUESTION: do we have any lawyer friends w wb and contract law that we could get help from?

- Some people reaching out, haven't heard back
 - Briar's aunt is a tenant lawyer, but "she's weird"
 - Andrew can ask their sister lawyer "she's cool I guess"
 - Libby has contract lawyer friend > they want a specific set of questions usually > we need to be more coherent before we approach them
 - Another person sorry I forgot name was realty paralegal and can ask friends
 - =====>> GROUP IN WITH LEGAL TEAM HUDDLE
- The only thing we need by July 1 is information pertaining to the lease: everything else is a more flexible time line : it's not the end of the world to not have details hashed out by July 1: is good context
 - We can do as much as we can with the time slated
 - Details can change over time
 - Can we get intel from Saturday landlord meeting ASAP? In the chats
 - J will reach out to someone to share after Saturday LL meeting
 - Proposals: visions for the future / charter documents: what are the big plans for the future > proposal for next Monday is more general structure who will take over the lease ?? ? we don't need every little piece right now
 - YES.
 - Why would Dino have any incentive to cooperate?
 - J: there is a world where Dino forces M to stay and there's a crash and burn option....
 - Is Dino open to Matt leaving the lease?

Action Items + Bottomliners (5 min)

- PLEASE DONATE TO MAYDAY FOR BOTH MEETINGS: Venmo @mayday-space
- Meet with your breakout groups
- Johnny meeting with Dino LL Saturday .
- Please look at the proposal document! Wants edits to it.
- Dora posted financial breakdown in the emergency chat > ask Dora or Natalie if questions

Revision #6

Created 17 June 2025 20:50:36 by Ash

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