

Meeting of the Meeting Meeting

12/09/12

Stable House Restaurant, Bed Stuy

Tammy: You guys want to start going around with names?

Someone: I'd like that.

Tammy: OK. I'm Tammy. Hi, everyone.

Someone: Hi Tammy!

Tim: Hi everyone, I'm Tim.

Marisa: I'm Marisa. Is that all we're supposed to say? Just your name?

Tammy: Yeah! I don't know, whatever we want. What do you want to say?

Marisa: That's fine.

Dacey: I'm Dacey.

Robert: Robert.

Bobby: Bobby.

Bre: Bre.

Christina: I'm Christina.

Nick: I'm Nick.

Someone: I'm Tricia.

Kristian: I'm Kristian.

Robert: Do we have an agenda?

Tammy: Well, here are two things I thought we could do. One is, I thought we could give feedback from the last meeting, just for folks to talk about what people thought did go well and could be improved. And

the other thing I thought we could do is... I'm in this, sort of, like -- sort of, like, training program with some folks, and we went through this process on Friday... like, we were doing this exercise, and they needed a case study, and the case study we used was the challenges we're having as, like, in decision-making in Occupy Sandy. And so we got some good stuff out of it, and I thought it might help move us in a direction, if folks were interested in reviewing that. Those are the only two things that I was thinking of -- were other people thinking things?

Marisa: I'm curious to hear what the thoughts were on this case study.

Tammy: On the what?

Marisa: I'd like to know, like, what came out of that. Seems like an interesting conversation.

Tammy: Cool. So, yeah, we can do that, too. It's part of what's on the wall. But I can explain it when we get to that. Is there anything else, though, that people want to, like -- I mean, then, obviously, we have to plan what happens Tuesday. But is there anything else people want to put?

Robert: Well, I think, just generally, based on a lot of personal -- in-person conversations and email threads, we're on the cusp of an identity crisis. And I think the more chance we get to talk collectively about what we want to do together, the better people will feel about, you know, moving forward.

Bre: I would phrase that differently.

Robert: Well, yeah --

Bre: I don't think we're in a crisis.

Robert: Well, I -- you know what I mean.

Kristian: I'll throw in --

Bre: I think we're actually all in agreement in the situation --

Robert: Yeah, I think things are moving in a good direction.

Bre: -- and on the cusp of (inaudible). OK, sorry.

Kristian: A lot of the people I talk -- see every day... they didn't know how long they'd volunteer; they thought maybe they could work [in a box?] for a day, and it's five weeks later. And the need to pay rent and pay bills is starting to bite. And so, people are wondering if we need to switch into paid employment somewhere else, or find paid employment somehow... as a result of doing Occupy stuff, with... you know,

an organization in relief -- I don't know. I'm just hearing a lot of that. So we might have an HR... situation -- staff retention.

Tim: Well, also, I don't have any desire to have a discussion about finances, but a lot of people have that expectation of this next meeting, and I think they might be kind of upset if there's not some sort of element of that this time. Or, at least, a means for them to, sort of -- how they can contribute.

Bre: I'm a little confused as to how that came out.

Tim: Me too. There was some sort of expectation that that was going to happen last week; I don't know why.

Bre: Because, the -- I mean -- as the -- one of the funding team people, we weren't talked to at all about that expectation. So it's frustrating to -- it feels like it's not an act in solidarity with everybody; it feels like it's an act that, like, "Hey, you're just going to show up at this meeting, and we're all going to yell at you." Which is not a helpful situation.

Tammy: That's why we didn't do it last week.

Tim: Right.

Tammy: Because we -- we're, like, "We're not ready to have this conversation." But there was a lot of requests over the list -- like, when we announced the Tuesday meeting last week, the feedback that came over the list is we want to talk about finance -- like, a lot of people were saying that. And then last week's meeting-to-plan-the-meeting, we all agreed that we weren't ready to do that. And I talked to Daniele that night about how we expected that even though we weren't doing it this Tuesday, that we were -- we know people want to have that conversation at some point soon. So, I'm not sure it happened quite like... that.

(pause)

Tammy: The other thing that would be good to talk about is if we got any feedback from sending out these fliers, but we can't do that, unless we can --

Dacey: Wait, what's the Gmail account?

Tammy: The meetings meetings thing? Did it go to the -- no, it went to the list. It was supposed to go straight to the list, I think.

Dacey: Well, some emails would, but anybody who calls the phone number, it goes to Google Voice. So I can try to log into that.

Tammy: It was osmeetingmeeting, and I think the password is <bloop>.

Dacey: Yeah. I think it's possible that -- I think it kind of makes sense, possibly, to... like, if we did want to not continue the voice conversation this time around, and to do it the next week, because then there's time for people to really chime in about it... that might be wise. And just in terms of adjusting to the analog communication we have to use, that might be a good, like, pace.

Tammy: OK. So, in terms of agenda -- we talked about... feedback from last meeting, doing the -- talking about the case study... sorry, I wasn't writing this down because I was eating a croissant. And now I forgot what was said.

Bre: Talking about the case study... talking about what we're doing for this meeting.

Tammy: And then, this meeting -- and some things I heard were HR, finances -- which are, I guess, connected, possibly. And was there something else?

Kristian: Not HR; it's more staff retention.

Tammy: Got it. Anybody else? OK.

Leah: So, are the things on the -- sorry to just drop in, just --

Tammy: We haven't done -- we haven't even touched that yet.

Leah: OK, but the two things, HR and finances, were the...

Tammy: This is -- we were just making agenda items. We haven't done anything yet.

Leah: Oh, OK.

Tim: Is that you were saying? That we should have the voice discussion --

Dacey: Yeah, just to give more time for people to respond.

Tammy: Do you have an agenda item you want to have?

Leah: Are we going to talk about that as -- sorry, it's --

Tim: That's the agenda for this meeting. Yeah.

Christina: Basically, we're just starting for this meeting, I think.

Leah: We're starting.

Tammy: Yup.

Leah: Cool. Sorry, Tammy. Go -- please. (laughing)

Tammy: So, do we want to start with feedback from the last meeting? Starting with what went well?

Tim: Sure. Let's start with that.

Tammy: (pause) Don't all jump up at once.

Marisa: So, I thought the prompts were really good, but the questions that were asked about the -- the sort of form and scope of what... Occupy Sandy would be, and what kinds of decisions -- like, the balance between the autonomy of local hubs and, like, the whole -- the way that you framed that was really helpful. Yeah, so that's what I want.

Tim: I found, between this past week and the week before -- both times -- having a few prompting questions is incredibly helpful for discussion, because it's not going to let people just derail it if they're not related to those four questions. And it's not to say that those other conversations won't be worthwhile, but there are things that we need to answer first. And... everyone's pet project getting the attention that they want it to have... doesn't work well if we don't have this -- you know, some sort of community agreement of how we expect conversations and decision-making to go.

Marisa: Tammy, are you taking stack?

Tammy: I was -- I don't know what we're doing. (laughing) I was just trying to go with the floor.

Bre: I can do stack.

Someone: OK, Bre's doing stack.

Bre: OK. Go.

Kristian: Yeah, the feedback that I heard about the last OS meeting was that it wasn't useful to try to get new work done in a two-hour meeting. And more that the two-hour meeting was too long, so... it could be, perhaps, more in -- sort of the consensus I was hearing at 520, just walking around... and that it would be a lot more useful as a reportback space and time. And then do the work during the week, and

report it back on the Tuesday nights. As opposed to trying to initiate new projects and trying to get things done during that meeting. So, just more efficient use of time.

Tammy: We were still on what went well, by the way. But if there's nothing else, that's fine.

Kristian: I guess it's feedback, so --

Tammy: We can just do feedback; that's fine.

Dacey: Yeah, feedback's good. I thought that -- I really liked the brainstorming session about what types of decisions we'd want to make together. I do think that it could have... it would have been maybe good to process it a little bit -- like to feed back a little bit about some of them. Because a lot of them I thought were appropriate for us to all make decisions on together, and a lot of them I had concerns with us all making decisions about together, and there was no, like, kind of, processing time for that -- it might be good to do next time. And I thought that the -- the second breakout round -- I noticed we like -- we lost a lot of people. And I think that maybe the lesson there is not to ask people to break out into groups they don't necessarily identify with? Like, we -- we kind of names roles that people -- so, and I don't know if we made it explicit enough, that we were asking people to participate in a discussion about something that they have a stake in, but not something they're necessarily working on. And that's tricky. So maybe it's better to address these questions in the groups that people identify with, talking about the different, like, types of things -- or whatever it is. We should stick with the breakouts that people already are in, and go with that setup. The other thing is, I'm worried that we need to actually flesh out the decision-making process -- like Tim was saying. That that needs to be a prerequisite to having, like, a functional outcome to any discussion about these things. That, like, we can't really get to the end of any of these conversations until we know how we're going to make decisions together. So, I don't know how we -- like, so far we've been working that in gently, like, as we do this other stuff -- like, we've been kind of, like, moving towards that without confronting it head-on. And at some point, we might actually have to get specific and talk about how that works.

Bobby: I think there's -- I mean, people talked about it a little bit. I think there's two kinds of organizers, or people with -- there's one group -- or activists, whatever -- that wants to just plug in and share, and they really don't want to talk. And another group that wants to be part of a process that a lot of people think -- myself included -- that is the hard work that needs to get done, as far as, like, figuring out voice and messaging. I was sitting near some people that were frustrated about how much -- you know, they didn't want to go through a long meeting. They're not the kind of person that ever wants to do that, and wants to just really plug in, share, and leave, and go back to the Rockaways. And I think we need to figure out, and it seems like we are, the space for the different people. I mean, I imagine maybe what we're already doing kind of, but more so -- like a quicker, you know... like Kristian said, you come and share who you are, report back, and then people can leave and that's OK. And after that, people can stay and do the breakouts on the issues that they care about that they bring up themselves.

Tim: I kind of like that idea, too -- just, like, the fact that we had some group attrition when we did the breakouts isn't necessarily a bad thing. Because I feel like people just feel like they -- well, some people feel like they don't have a stake in something like social media, because they're not directly involved in it. But I'm sure if they're confronted with a proposal about social media, then suddenly they do feel like they have a stake. There's a lot of people that... don't feel a stake in the creation of something, but do feel a stake in the execution of something. And if we try to consider how -- how to structure meetings around that... that will be an improvement.

Devin: Yeah. I think that if people are going to be confronted by proposals, there's an implicit, like, decision-making -- that that is going to take place. Which, I don't know if that is, like, assumed by everyone here, that that's how the -- how the group, or the network's, going to manifest -- you know, like, whether that's going to manifest in these meetings. I just want to point that out there. But I also want to agree with -- I think I'm agreeing with people -- in that, like, a lot of people want to plug in and share, and that, like -- I think it's a good... that, like, reportbacks are great, and, like, super useful, and I want to hear them. And I especially want to hear when people do reportbacks, like -- if -- I would love for people to have space to then, like, pitch a breakout group. Or, like, be like, "I want to -- like, after this round of reportbacks, I want to be in a breakout group that talks about X. Or I want to be" -- you know. "I want to be in a breakout group that does X or, like, I want to propose that there's a breakout group that discusses X," and then so it's like reportbacks, and then it's like, then people go into breakout groups. And then people can, like, do another -- I mean, then, like, from there, it's like -- what do those breakout groups talk about, would be another round of reportbacks. But then it's also -- I think it becomes problematic when people are sitting in their breakout group being like, "Oh, what are we going to pitch to the group?" When it's like, people just, a lot of times, just need to be like -- "Yo, I have this resource; you have that; like, I have this -- you know, like, I just need to figure out what's going on." And I feel like what we saw in that meeting was, like -- at least for me, I was like, "Wow, everyone's in a room. Finally, I get to talk to the, like, four people that I need to talk to right now." And like, so I'd want to be -- right now. Like, in a structure.

Someone: I wasn't at the meeting for the full time, but one observation I had that I'm sure wasn't, you know, true for every breakout group, but it seemed to me people that, you know, are from Occupy Sandy and have been involved in Occupy Wall Street were much more in-tune with how the structure of the breakout groups were, and how to participate. And those people from the community -- or the people, you know, that weren't as well connected to how things work were kind of on the periphery -- you know, quite literally on the -- of the breakout group. Just kind of watching. So, I don't know if that's something we could improve upon, maybe -- just facilitation of those, you know, breakout groups, to make sure everyone's involved.

Tammy: Yeah. OK, I'm going to give some positive feedback. (laughing) Which is that I think for the breakouts -- the breakouts went a lot faster, and... like, it didn't feel, at the end of the breakouts, like I wanted to pull my hair out. I maybe just felt that way because I was facilitating, so, I mean -- you guys can shoot down all the positive feedback that I'm giving myself. I also... yeah, that's the main thing, is that

I felt like... it was really hard before this week to get through reportbacks and get everyone heard, but this time it felt, like much more doable. Part of that is because we were more -- we were firm on time, but part of it is that it's not a -- everything isn't so, like, "ahh," right now. Like it was before. I also think that there is -- I mean, a lot of people didn't show up, which is a negative. Especially folks who are working out, specifically, in communities. And through some conversations that I've had this week... I think there's several challenges going on. One is that folks who are in the communities don't see the rest of the network -- they don't understand, like, what's happening out of 520; what's happening out of the kitchen; what's going -- some of them have never seen the website; don't understand what function it's playing. And so they don't understand why they need to talk to everyone else in the network. They're sort of, like, "Well, we're doing our thing. What's wrong with that?" I think that's one of the major reasons, and then there's also just, like, a lack of interest in sitting through meetings when there's so much work. But I think that those two things are hand-in-hand. Like, if you don't think you have a responsibility or a need to communicate with these other folks, then you're not going to be willing to sit through meetings. That, to me, is the fundamental challenge that I'm uncertain how to deal with.

Kristian: I just want to -- it's my opinion that reportbacks are really, really, really important in any organization, or any group of people or community, but especially with a network like us. You know, because we're more of a network than an organization, I would state, and -- my opinion. And it's just my experience with this work. And so, like Tammy just said, you know, the people out in the Rockaways don't necessarily know what's happening in Staten Island, don't know what's happening in the Kitchen, and -- and so... and it's -- it's just really -- it moves -- it makes it easier for us to deliver mutual aid to the people we're trying to help if we're speaking to each other, reporting back, connecting... a lot of things happen casually; this FEMA thing that happened with me the other day is a good example. Someone else was talking to FEMA, hadn't reported it back to the group level, so I didn't know about it. And... you know, it's going to get more dire as time goes on. And we're to the point now where, like, you know, I hear that the kitchen is understaffed; the kitchen is understaffed -- like, at 520, every day, "Send us volunteers, send us people." I spoke to the guy on Tuesday. The Red Cross kitchen lady was sitting next to me in a meeting yesterday. She runs the kitchen program -- all the -- they call it "feeding," which is sort of gross, but --

Everyone "ughs."

Dacey: Jesus.

Robert: That's horrible.

Kristian: She didn't create the name; she's a very nice woman. She's just another volunteer, like us. And so tomorrow, there's an interagency meeting, with all the agencies, on how they're distributing food for Hurricane Sandy. So, you know, it makes sense if one of us goes. And one of us will, but... you know, we need to know if -- the right hand needs to know what the left-hand is doing; and the top needs to know what the bottom is doing. And we are, sadly -- we have a little bit of a hierarchy. We're sitting here, there are 60,000 volunteers on the website; they can't all be here.

Tammy: It's 14,000.

Kristian: 14,000. In that respect -- hierarchy, whatever. It's a...

Robert: I think the reportbacks were pretty reasonably snappy, and that was nice. I think that the breakout groups were perhaps too snappy, and people felt like there was no time to get anything done. And I think a lot of people in my group were kind of frustrated that we couldn't make any progress.

Tammy: Which group were you in?

Robert: ...what was I in? Inter-agency coordination. Or whatever we called it.

Tim: So, one of the things I'm hearing is that the reportbacks are very valuable, and I totally agree with that. Whether it's happening just through someone presenting something to the entire group, or the just kind of natural networking that happens when you see, "Oh, hey, you're with Respond and Rebuild; now I have a face that I can put -- listen, we need to talk about my site situation." That is something that we should try to make happen towards the beginning of the meeting, so we don't have to worry about the attrition, and I think... an important thing about the reportbacks is making people feel like something happens as a result of it. To speak to Robert's point. If we come into a meeting with an agenda that has not a whole lot to do with the reportback structure, I think that's one of the things that's frustrating people. If people are breaking out into stuff that is related to what is discussed -- if three people from three different groups say, you know, "We have these concerns about housing, let me try to do something about that," giving them as much time as they need -- that's cool too. But I don't think that having reportbacks based on those breakouts on the same night is necessarily going to be productive in terms of enough people hearing it or giving ideas enough time to ferment.

Tammy: I'm going to read feedback from someone who emailed me -- Jackie DiSalvo emailed me. I'm just going to read the whole thing, but it's not all feedback:

Could we have a table for literature people are producing?

Could we meet earlier, if not this week, next"? People are leaving half way through?

Lots of discussion on the Occupysandy discussion list. Can some of it come into the meeting?

Less time in discussion in our ordinary work/site groups. We talk to each other outside the meeting. Briefer reports, not all the logistics, just what they think others need to know.

Breakout groups on the same topic, as last week on collective voice, are fine, but there should be enough time for some discussion in the whole after the report backs.

Marisa: Yeah. So I think people being able to see each other and access each other... will enable more horizontality. Because they'll be less dependent on, like, 520, or other structures, and be able to talk to one another. Which is really key. And... I think... solidifying, yeah -- like, what Occupy Sandy is -- what, you know, the comments or principles are -- guidelines -- that that... like, once you have that, the coordination becomes a lot easier. Because then people know, like, you know, sort of what they're, like, charged with or not -- like what the sort of scope of, you know, decision-making, you know, is for them. And... yeah, I don't know. So if we can, like, just get out of this hurdle -- get it out of the way -- then we can be... I don't know. Less concerned about these things. Because otherwise we'll just be spinning wheels. It's this constant thing with, like, "Can I do this? Am I responsible for this? Am I empowered to do this?" It's like, you know, once we have some kind of framework then we don't constantly ask these questions.

Bre: So, I have a few proposals that I think might be helpful -- I'm not sure if these are good ideas or not, but... if we could have meetings at the different locations? So, we could have meetings on-site in the Rockaways, and so people could see what it's like in the Rockaways on the ground; we could have a meeting in Staten Island on the ground. We could have a meeting in each of these locations. And it would also develop a need to have a hub at each of these locations. Which seems to be, logistically, what needs to happen in these locations. So it gives incentive for all of those things to happen. And then... an idea of how to structure these would be that you'd have a reportback session, so that you'd know who's doing what, and then you'd have a period of time where you could go and just informally talk to people -- like a Coffee Hour kind of thing. And then you would have people that wanted to come back and have the discussions about voice, that don't want to sit through -- and then everybody that doesn't want to sit through a long meeting gets to leave. And so you have -- you're separating them into those groups of people, and you're getting people that just, like, don't want to deal with long meetings out of the way, and everybody else can... just hang out and talk.

Bobby: I just had a kind of -- much smaller things to say. Is there a point in the beginning where people can approach the facilitators and say that they have a reportback? Was there... maybe that would help. I know there was a little bit of confusion as far as people being -- they were like, "I have a reportback," and then, like, "No, that's not a reportback." So, I don't know if -- if that makes sense, to open up the room to, "Hey, the next five minutes, if you

have a reportback, can you approach facilitators and we'll let you know if that's already covered or something? Maybe that's obvious. And my other -- I had a question -- where's the next meeting?"

Tim: "Same time, same place."

Tammy: "Oh, although I don't know if anyone asked Juan Carlos. I'll text him right now."

Tim: "I'm pretty sure he'll be okay with it, but let's give him a couple of days' notice."

Bobby: "I really liked -- I didn't go to the meeting in the middle, but the -- in Jacobi, upstairs, when we had like a whole line -- a lot of space for the facilitator to write? And there didn't seem to be much space for you guys to put up documents, and then, when you put up things, one side couldn't see. I don't know if, like -- if whoever facilitates that meeting can go on the wall, just to, like, put up that -- so there's a visual structure. I mean, because I really liked that the first time around. I think it works well that way."

Tammy: "Are people OK with closing stack on this section, and moving on after that?"
OK.

Dacey: "As far as, like, kind of recognizing that some people don't want to participate in really long meetings -- I wonder... I mean, I don't know -- in the Rockaways, is there any kind of a local decision-making forming, or, like -- like a Spokes or anything like that?"

Bobby: "Yes."

Tammy: "Mm-hmm."

Dacey: "Because that would be -- like, it might be a good look to make sure that this stuff is, like, getting down to that structure, so that people who don't want to come all the way to another meeting, or sit through it, can, like, trust their spoke to do it. Or a small group of people that's actually interested in a big meeting. And that way, there's actual -- like, it makes me nervous that we don't have something like that, and we encourage people to leave if they don't want to stay. Because then they're not going to feel like -- in the outcome, they won't feel like stakeholders. Whereas if there's, like, a process that leads into who does stay, then maybe there will be a sense of buy-in -- a sense of, like, being connected to it."

2 more on stack.

Tammy: I just got a response from Juan Carlos about space, and he said it's OK to be downstairs. I just want to run that by... OK.

Kristian: I can also ask 520, if you want. I don't know if it's available.

Tammy: OK, we can talk about it. Cool. Awesome.

Kristian: And just one last comment about reportbacks -- I -- the first meeting I ever went to in Jacobi -- the first poster -- like, it was very organized. Like, the different segments of information. And the way I see the network having developed, there's -- it's a matrix of different regions, but then, across the whole network, there's different topics. There's housing, there's food, there's volunteer attraction and retention, there's maybe three others. And I'm a little bit of an organizational nerd, just because it's helpful for me -- it's how my brain works -- like, if we can expect a reportback from each region and each topic once a week, that would be so useful, in my opinion. And just -- instead of an ad-hoc. And then we could have ad-hoc extras, or....

Tammy: I liked that we were sitting in a circle and could see who was working in what group. I mean, we were trying to settle in towards a spokescouncil without saying it, and I... but I really liked being able to look around the room and be like, "Oh, that's the group working on this. And when we've done this in the past -- when we did reportbacks -- everyone circled back up, and people came to the front -- it also felt more dynamic. I think that part of why reportbacks felt better is that we're moving around the room, and it wasn't -- we weren't putting our attention in one place the whole time, and it was like we were moving our attention. So those were some things that I liked that...

Marisa: Yeah, I was going to say something around the circle. And then -- also, I'm wondering... because there are different layers here. There's the spokes, or whatever you want to call them, from the different hubs. But then there are also these projects that span the locations. And so, how do we create space for both of those? Because there's overlap. And I don't think -- I actually don't think, like, just organizing around spokes for the hubs is going to be enough. I think maybe -- maybe you just break it down -- like, in... I was just in Madrid, and what they do in Madrid is that they don't actually have these groups that are always the same formation -- they just -- they randomly break down into five or six people at a time and

discuss whatever political issue they have. And they report back from there -- so it's, like, constantly changing; it's not, like, so rigid, of, like, this group -- but it is small groups. And so, maybe for questions of, like, "What is Occupy Sandy?", "How do we deal with resources?" -- things that, like, concern everyone -- having that kind of form. And then, if it's something that concerns, like, the sites themselves, then maybe, you know, shifting gears. So, just being, like, more flexible, and taking into account who's a stakeholder in what conversation, and the different... I don't know. I don't know what else to say.

Bre: So, stack is closed, right? So that's the end of stack.

Tammy: Cool.

Dacey: Can I say one other thing that I forgot to say? Am I --

Devin: If you do, I want to say one more thing.

(laughter)

Tammy: Can we really close stack after that?

Dacey: Yeah -- I would -- thank you. I just want -- yeah, in sort of the same -- like, in terms of dichotomy of, like... of, like, what needs to be talked about, I think that, like -- the reportback thing is one very important piece of -- like Marisa said, it makes decision-making possible; it means that somebody can access a person who's making a decision and communicate with them, and so there is, like, a decision-making component to the reportbacks, in that it enables more horizontality. But then there's a separate piece that I just wanted to lift up explicitly, because I've heard different things from different people in the circle, about the collective resources -- like, the projects and resources that span the network. And that's, like, I think the reason why we really need to be doing this, even more than the reportbacks maybe, because reporting back can take different forms. But that's -- I don't know, that's the challenge, is how do we do that?

Devin: Yeah, I think mine kind of ties into that. Like, I'm -- I think I've got some confusion -- I'm confused around... I think some people -- when we talk about outcomes from one of these meetings, it's like, is the goal of this group -- or, is the goal of these meetings to create a collective outcome, where we do something like define, "What is Occupy Sandy?" as a statement that people all consent to? Or are we focusing on creating an environment for

individual outcomes to take place, where people are basically, just, like, given the space to connect, to coordinate, to do their thing. And I think that those two directions are different, and that that's something that is going to -- it's going to be difficult, I think, to -- and I think both could be done, but I think we have to, like, look at both as separate goals, and we have to be clear and maybe discuss here, like, what the purpose is. Because, like, there's, like -- What is Sandy? -- as, like, a thing we all consent to. But there's also, like, what is Sandy -- like, what does Occupy Sandy believe? And that's -- that could be the same question, but from a different frame, and I think, like, the way that -- like, what success looks like when you talk about these meetings is dependent on clarity around that. Like, these reports are, like a good outcome, you know? Like this is, like -- I mean --

Bre: This is awesome.

Devin: Yeah. I think it's a really good example of an outcome that isn't decision-making but is... a service.

Dacey: I just passed those because they have pretty good notes on the back of stuff that came out of the breakouts.

Tammy: So, I think the next thing we talked about doing is just running through the case study. I can do it really quickly. We could try to do it, like, together -- do the same thing this group of folks did -- or I can just run through what we came up with, and then if people want to add, they could add? I don't want to spend too much time on this, because I think it might be a slight tangent, but I think it could be useful. But I need you to move your head, Bobby. So, basically this is, like -- this came from a training program that a few of us have been in since before Sandy, but actually because the second time to go and do the training was the weekend after the storm hit, a lot of us didn't go, and this was, like, a makeup session, basically. And so there was this exercise... and so the first thing was, like, to.... it's hard to do this without the background, but... basically declaring what the problems are? Like, what's the -- so, the breakdown is that -- the breakdown, according to this exercise, is that... is that we are having difficulty making collective decisions when collective decisions are necessary. And so, what's the problem? So, the problem is that there's large numbers -- there's many agendas that sometimes conflict, that it's hard to see the whole; we talked a lot about an elephant, and how we're all a different piece of the elephant, but the elephant can't walk in a direction unless we all know which direction we're going. We talked about urgency and pressure, and understanding that there's different stakes, and some people as willing to compromise because of the urgency, versus other people's unwillingness to compromise even though there's urgency. Collaboration

is difficult; we don't know or trust each other; decentralized -- there's difference in levels of accessibility. There's no process; there's distinct groups; there's the idea of what we want versus the day-to-day -- like, making things function, and interconnecting -- I'm not sure what that means. So, that is the first question.

Marisa: Whew! (pause) It's just.... a huge problem.

Tammy: Huge problem. And then, create a space for people to see for themselves that doing more of the same won't lead to a -- won't lead to a breakthrough. So... that's not something to work through, but knowing that if, like, we keep doing what we're doing, we're not going to have a breakthrough from that. And then the third thing was... what is the commitment or vision in the background that gives rise to the breakdown? So, like, what's the thing that we're all committed to that makes this so hard? And so some of the things we came up with were equity, accessibility, decentralized decision-making, capacity to participate, efficient distribution of resources, building power, autonomy and solidarity, shared goals, and mutual respect. So, those are the things behind the reason that this is so challenging. And then the last piece, which is what I really wanted to get to, and what I think could be interesting for us to work through a little bit, is... to basically break down statements.... so, not, like, our interpretation of what's happened, but distinct challenges, and what have happened. So, instead of, like... instead of saying something like -- for a different example -- morale was low, you would say that there's -- people are getting in accidents, people are getting sick, people are late. And basically the idea here -- unless I'm being really confusing -- is just to try to find the discreet problems so that we can start addressing these problems one-by-one, but what they actually are, not our interpretation. The things that we came up with were: unilateral decisions are being made without input from affected groups and without transparency. It's not clear what decisions need to be made with consent from the network. There's varying interest in having a large-group decision-making process. There's a lack of understanding of the network, and the perspectives vary very greatly. And things like, we've lost mass-media opportunities... because we haven't had a way to decide on putting out a statement. And unilateral decisions to fund one specific piece of the network in the name of Occupy Sandy. So, this could probably go on, but I just wanted to share this, because I found it really useful in thinking about where the challenges lie. And some of the distinct problems. So, for instance, accessibility -- I think this is a good start for that. Right? And I just thought for some of these other things, we could maybe try to tackle what -- like, there's varying interest in having a large-group decision-making process. How do we tackle that problem, as opposed to sitting here and thinking about creating a good meeting. Seems like we need to attack that problem. Like, what decisions need to be made by the consent of the network? How can we attack that specific problem? So, that's why I wanted

to bring this to everyone. I don't know where people want to go with it -- we could try to spend some time, like, looking at these different problems, and thinking about how to, like -- deal with each individual piece of it. Or we could just have it up there on the wall as we keep talking, to keep in mind -- whichever is fine with me. I just wanted to share.

Marisa: I like breaking it down. I don't know -- it would feel more manageable for me to just, like, take one piece and... I don't know.

[2:59:07]

Bre: Are there any -- I see, moving forward, facilitating this conversation -- I feel like I'm cutting people off, so I apologize -- but I think that if we can get two or three people that seem to have a concrete idea about what they want this to look like, and everybody has consented to the general concepts that they've heard in this room so far, that those two or three people can sit down and hash out the details, as long as that structure seems to make sense to people. Is that -- can we twinkle on that statement?

Dacey: I would love for us to have a quick discussion about this piece [the voice] -- I'm definitely prepared to agree to that structure, but I'd want us to all talk about this for at least a second.

Tim: I like the general structure, but I have a question about -- how do we allocate the time for that? Because I don't think we can... empower people to go figure it out by themselves if they don't know how much time they're expected to work with. So.

Marisa: Didn't we already --

Bre: Yeah.

Marisa: Tammy gave time breakdowns.

Bre: She -- she had 7:30 to 8:30 was voice, 8:30 to 9 was a break, and then 9 to 10 was resources. But that didn't include reportbacks.

Marisa: So, add a half-hour to the beginning for reportbacks, and...

Leah: What do -- can we --

Dan: One thing we might -- I'm sorry.

Leah: I was just going to say, maybe we could -- I know that the people in Rockaway don't -- can't be -- or the people in somewhere said that they can't be there until 7:30. But considering we start meetings half an hour later than we say we're starting them, can we call the meeting at 7, and start at 7:30? Is that, like...?

Devin: Yeah, let's call it for 7. I mean, we need time for these various programs.

Marisa: I have a solution. So, when Drew and Becky facilitated, and they put the boards up -- the papers up, whatever -- that was the whole point, right? That, like -- you could... it was kind of an open space model where, you know, people would just self-organize around the breakouts that they wanted before the meeting began. So I -- we could do that again, as a way to --

Robert: I suggested that, and everybody yelled at me.

Devin: I thought that -- I think that was great.

Tim: I can... tell you what we yelled at you about, and --

Robert: OK. (laughing)

Tim: -- we can open a conversation around that. No, I -- I think it's... what happened with that particular meeting is no one knew what to do with these big pieces of paper.

Robert: Right.

Tim: They didn't understand that the point of it was to prepare reportbacks. We have the luxury of planning a whole two days in advance -- I guess one and a half -- so we can actually make that as clear as possible, and make sure that it's not just one greeter faced with 50 people, trying to direct them to all that -- if enough people -- like, maybe even 10 -- know... you know, people that wouldn't be participating in that breakout that are not here at this meeting are aware of that. I think it could work. It moves us into reportbacks more quickly; it allows people who just need to get in, say their piece, and

get out, to write it on paper, hopefully having someone they trust and know standing near that paper, so it's not just turning it into a facilitator, who they may or may not know. And that allows us to get the reportbacks kind of all together, in one place, and synthesized into shorter statements or -- you know, hitting all the important stuff.

Bre: That sounds like a proposal.

Tim: I propose we do that. (laughter) That thing I just said.

Bre: Is that -- can we consent to that?

Dan: One other idea that just came to mind was, John from 520 was going around to do sort of -- you know, needs assessments for a lot of the regions, just with site coordinators. So maybe those reportbacks are already compiled.

Devin: That'd be great.

Dan: And could be just done, you know...

Devin: There might be even another meeting. I think that's great. I think any time you can be like, this is what the system...

Bre: No, but I think people need to buy in.

Devin: Yeah, I agree. I mean, I think it's a different thing.

Bre: OK.

Tim: To respond to that, and the point Robert was making earlier, I think that... we can have both. We'd like to say who you're reporting on behalf of, here's where you email it to if you can do it in advance --

Marisa: I love all of you. I can't -- I can't do this anymore. But --

Tim: I know, we understand.

Marisa:-- I love you, and I'll -- I'll help if needed.

[Marisa leaves]

Tim: Yeah, so we have that space for people to do their reportbacks at the very beginning. We set up a system for people to put it in advance. Tuesday meetings probably should have at least some space for reportbacks that weren't able to get to someone via phone or email beforehand, but if we have a... if we have this system in place, so people buy into it over time, that amount of time can... can shrink. And that's our long-term goal for how these Tuesday meetings should work.

Bre: So, it sounds like what we -- the only last conversation we need to have -- well, first of all, who wants to facilitate? I'm willing to facilitate. But...

Evan: You might just have, maybe, some resistance to that, from -- I imagine -- just in terms of --

Devin: Politically.

Evan: -- conflict of interest.

Devin: Yeah.

Evan: I mean, if it's a resources meeting.

Leah: I'd happily co-facilitate, but I think that might be a problem. (laughing)

Tim: I think it's reasonable to propose one person from the Incubation Team facilitating as long as it's not both facilitators, are from that team?

Devin: Can I also propose that we're -- we're looking at a -- kind of a three-part structure here, with reportbacks, the voices, and the resources? And that, like, resources should facilitate resources, voices should -- someone from voices should -- basically, resources should bottomline the success of the resource part. Someone from the voices part should bottomline the success of the voices part, and then someone should bottomline kind of the -- the co-habitation of these things, as well as the reportbacks (inaudible).

Dacey: Hmm...

Devin: No?

Dacey: Can we --

Bre: What if I just agreed from the beginning to not say anything about money?

Devin: You can't -- you can't get off that easily. (laughter)

Bobby: Wait a second -- that's her plan! (laughter)

Robert: Wow, she's crafty. (laughter)

Bre: I did that at OWS a number of times, when I was on Accounting and Facilitation. And it seemed to be -- people seemed to be okay with that. But that was also a decision-making structure as opposed to just reportbacks, so...

Dacey: I mean, I feel like the facilitator -- I feel like people will feel best if the facilitator is -- appears to be neutral for any given topic.

Bre: Cool.

Dacey: So, that's the only thing, is like -- like, I totally think Devin's onto something, that we can break the facilitation up. But I would say the opposite, that it should be somebody who's not involved as much in that thing who facilitates that part.

Leah: On one hand, I can see that; on the other hand... dealing with resources doesn't mean one is, like, actively making decisions about it, so much as, like, one has, like, thought a lot about it. And thinks a lot about how to have conversations about it. You know what I mean? Like... I don't know. I just, like -- I -- whatever. Sorry, I'm cutting -- I'm jumping stack right now.

Robert: First, I want to ask if we're clear on what's happening during the resources discussion.

Devin: There's going to be -- we're going to get a reportback -- we're going to give a bunch of reportbacks, and then we're going to go out into breakout groups.

Robert: On what resources exist? And what people are doing with them?

Dan: Reportbacks on basically what -- what new sort of access to resources we have through

different VOAD partners?

Robert: Right.

Devin: That's what he's going to do...

Dan: Yeah, what we can do with them...

Devin: But then we're also -- we're going to talk about fundraising; we're going to talk about projects. There's going to be someone who's going to go up and give a reportback on fundraising; someone's going to go up and give a reportback on project support; someone's going to give one about allocations; someone's going to give it about participatory budgeting, and then each one of those reportbacks will involve something like, "Hey, let's talk about this during the breakout group." Like, this team's open; we're trying to get people to do X, Y, and Z. Or, like, it'll be, like, this is a conversation --

Robert: Cool. So, series of reportbacks, and then, come see us if you want to talk about it afterwards. And then that's the end of the meeting?

Devin: Well, that's the breakout groups. And then the -- and then the meeting is then -- and then the breakout groups. Which would be, like, people being like, OK, that sounds good to me.

Bre: So, the meeting ends after the reportbacks. Anybody that wants to stay after the meeting...

Devin: Right, understood. But, like, we shouldn't give it a hard cutoff; we should be, like, "Stick around; we'll talk more about this stuff." Like, we want to get feedback. We want to hear people.

Dan: Well, I -- I think the breakout groups should actually focus on defining ways -- defining ways to sort of approach this, in the same way that each of the hubs sort of thought about how they were going to set up -- how they were going to deal with the wedding registry and the UPS trucks. You know --

Devin: Yeah, I mean, I think it's --

Dan: There are -- there's just people in operation (inaudible) --

Devin: It's the responsibility of the person giving the reportback to frame...

Dan: (inaudible)

Devin: Wouldn't you say it's that person's responsibility to frame the...?

Bre: We still have a question about who's facilitating this meeting.

Leah: Yeah, and it's --

Bre: And I'm totally fine not doing it; I just want to make sure somebody is.

Robert: All right, I'll do it.

Leah: Cool. Do you want to facilitate the whole thing, or -- or do you mind facilitating the whole thing?

Robert: Sure, but I'm going to want help.

Bre: Yeah.

Robert: Great. Is this what we're -- with the possible exception of the coffee time, where that's going to be, is this what we're talking about? Collect reportbacks prior, distribute them, and then let people give urgent reportbacks in person if they have them. Pose the question regarding voices, then break out into small non-affiliated groups to discuss. Get reportbacks from those small groups, and then there's the coffee time, but that could also be earlier, whatever we decide. And then the resource discussion, broken out as we just described. Is this what we're doing?

Leah: Well, resources discussion unless -- sorry, I meant -- it's longer reportbacks, not discussion, right?

Devin: Right, it's resource reportbacks.

Robert: Right, resources reportbacks.

Leah: Yeah.

Devin: And then conversation --

Robert: And then --

Leah: Yes, which can -- or it can invite followup. Maybe more than -- more than conversation.

Evan: When you make the call for the meeting, too, that last section is, like... that's where the section to, like, get residents to Jacobi. Hell or high water.

Devin: Well, this is -- what they're saying is that we're going to have the next one -- the next -- we're going to introduce the ideas this week, and then next week it's going to be more -- we're going to have, like, the first section.

Evan: But even if you announce it the first week, and the people who come back will be like, "Yeah, they really did talk about that shit, you should come next week."

Devin: Right.

Evan: And then you're going to need, like, some, like promotion for that. Because there's people on -- and then there's --

Leah: Yeah.

Dacey: Yeah.

Robert: But does this -- is this what we're talking about? With the addition of optional breakout groups post-meeting?

Devin: Yeah, I mean --

Robert: Is this correct?

Dacey: I have two...

Dan: I -- I think we actually need working groups. Not optional -- I think we really need to set, you know, approaches and come up with ways that we agree that we, you know, are going to or not going to access resources. Because if we don't, it's...

Bobby: That's a six-hour meeting.

Leah: I think that's -- I think that's the meeting --

Devin: Can we talk about -- I need a cigarette. Can we talk about this outside, about autonomy, and how that can work?

Tim: I think the point we've been trying to make earlier in this, and I don't know if you missed that, is that this discussion of resources at this meeting on Tuesday doesn't mean that we're coming to any conclusions then, and that we're going to be revisiting those very things the Tuesday after.

Robert: Just like we're doing this.

Dacey: So -- OK, so that's -- that's what I want to say, is that --

Dan: Well, so -- we're also not in a -- I don't think... what I was saying earlier is that Tammy and I have tried to bring this... we tried to bring this to the past three Jacobi meetings, and we have not had any actual more discussion about it. We now have the option to access a million-square-foot warehouse in Islip. Just tomorrow afternoon -- we show up with trucks.

Robert: Yo, let's do that.

Dan: We can supply every -- supply every one of our sites.

Robert: Nobody's opposed to taking resources that are given to us, though -- there's been no mechanism to prevent that, so I don't think we need to not act on that.

Bre: Yeah.

Robert: Take it. (laughing)

Dacey: So, the question is -- my question is -- I mean, we have to figure out how we're going to make a decision about the voice piece. Because we're probably going to want to use the same process the following meeting, to make decisions about the resources piece. So, I'm fine with, like, a smaller group figuring that out, but it might end up looking like a Spokes Council. So, as long as people are OK with that.. I mean, the problem is we don't -- the only structure we have is... is those -- the groups that we've been coming into every week, and they -- they seem to form a spokes. Like, that's the thing -- like, that's what we've kind of been intentionally easing into with these meetings, is, like -- and it didn't -- it wasn't, like, a plot from the beginning, but it seems to make sense, as things emerge, that things are

going to be like that. So, that's the one thing. The other thing is, I would love for there to be, like, actually like an open floor after -- if we're going to do breakouts at the end, I'm cool with that, but I would love for there to be actually, like, a question and answer session. I think that the -- the resources discussion needs to be more interactive than just reports, because people are going to need more information than people might give on their reportback. Like, people are going to have a desire to ask questions --

Devin: Isn't that next week?

Leah: Yeah, wouldn't it be the week after?

Dacey: Well, but I feel like that's still part of the information getting out, which is, like, the first part.

Devin: The thing -- there's so many variables -- there's, like, you could spend -- talking about inventory and FEMA, and you could talk about money, you could talk about the local registry -- there's so many question and answer sessions that need to take place that, like -- the breakouts after the reportbacks are going to be the question and answer time. I mean, I'd be -- we could frame it as that.

Evan: I -- is there someone else on stack? No, OK --

Bre: One --

Evan: Oh, Robert -- go ahead.

Robert: I have a really good idea on how to punt this... that actually makes sense for, you know, getting the group involved. We do, as we discussed, present this, breakout into small groups that discuss it, quickly report back the overall sense, so that way everybody collectively talks about it, but after that -- say now we're empowering a small group to finish working on this and bring it back to us as a proposal.

Tim: Who's in the small group?

Robert: Whoever wants to be. And they'll meet outside of the big meeting at some point during the week.

Devin: Yeah, like -- use this to launch a series. Because this is a lot of conversations.

Leah: How do -- (inaudible)

Evan: Yeah -- can I follow up on that? I think that this is... were you on stack? Yeah, this is a long conversation, right? I think if you present this -- the voice, the collective voice -- and say, look, I think everybody -- you know, there's a conversation to be had about whether collective voice -- the first conversation about collective voice is about resources. So, it's like, even though it's fifth on the list, it's like, hey, all right, we're coming together and saying, here's all the things we're probably going to have to talk about whether we speak with a collective voice or not. Now, that's a longer conversation. Can we all agree that we want to get -- make collective decisions about how we're distributing resources? And I guarantee you, you're going to get consensus. And then we go into that conversation, and then the longer-term thing with all the other issues become, through -- so, people who want to empower that -- to perpetuate that conversation -- but we can actually start having the collective conversation if we can get consensus that this is one. I mean...

Leah: Just -- we had a lot of back-and-forth on this before you arrived, and so this is sort of a compromise -- that we would talk about the political... identity piece, and then introduce the resource conversation. But we -- we've gone back-and-forth on that a lot today. So... it's just...

Evan: Yeah, yeah. So that's just... figured...

Leah: I agree.

Devin: Yeah, it'd be nice -- it'd be nice to have that.

Dacey: Well, I wanted to clarify that this -- this conversation we had last week, was not about political identity; it's not about resources; it's not about... this is about -- like, collective voice being how we present ourselves to the outside world; what kinds of, like -- basically, having the ability to make statements as a network. And deciding how we speak for --

Evan: You mean statements with words?

Dacey: With words, like, speaking. Like it's actually, like, voice like talking.

Evan: All right, but we can make statements with actions.

Dacey: That's true. But -- and maybe that's part of it too. But I just wanted to clarify that what we're talking about continuing in this section is, what is the protocol for speaking, which I think the answer is -- and we have almost an actual proposal, which is the first thing that was said in the reportbacks, which

was big-upped in other groups. Which is: individuals can speak for themselves, smaller groups can decide amongst themselves, statements made by Occupy Sandy as a whole should be brought to in-person community meetings. So, like -- and that's just the statement of autonomy from Occupy Wall Street -- it's not really... contentious.

Devin: Can we -- I --

Dacey: An easy -- an easy way to make a decision about this is just to start with this -- say, here is the clearest proposal that came out of the reportbacks last week, was this three-point agreement. Can we agree on that? And just having -- and just having the existing breakout groups use -- do it spokes style, and consent to those three points.

Leah: What are the three points?

Dacey: They're the first three things under statements/press.

Devin: I deal with resources; I feel like this whole thing is the responsibility of people who aren't me. And it's great, and I want to end this meeting, because -- like, quickly, because I haven't eaten dinner. And I also want to smoke a cigarette. So, like, this is great. And, like, we should -- you know, yes. You guys should figure out, like, what the next steps are on this item. Because, like, I'm here because I want to see the resources part, like, get flushed around and stuff. And I've got to -- I've got to -- go smoke a cigarette.

Bobby: Can I bum a cigarette? (laughter)

Robert: Let's finish.

Evan: Dacey, just to clarify the intent behind that, as I understand it -- is that these sort of -- because I'm all for finding the simple statements that there's going to be problems getting consensus on. So you're saying that doing those three statements sort of, like, sets the ground, like as an example -- here's three things that we're going to agree on, and we sort of, like, break ourselves in with something easy. OK, yeah.

Dacey: Yeah, that's basically the idea. And that was the idea --

Tim: That was the intent behind that meeting, was to, like --

Dacey: -- to be -- to even have this conversation, that was the idea.

Bobby: So we need another facilitator, right? Right now? For the meeting?

Dacey: So, I guess my other thing is, how -- can we just think for a second about how the resources conversation could generate something that starts a productive decision-making conversation the next time around? Because --

Devin: I've got flow charts for you. It's, like -- (laughter)

Dacey: OK. I don't know, maybe it doesn't have to be a decision. Maybe it's just a conversation. I don't know.

Bre: We're going to have, like, a whole document, basically, on what we've done.

Devin: Yeah, we want you -- please, if you can produce this. And, like, we need to start a mail service. I mean, the American Mail Company? (laughter) Yeah, that's what we're going to do -- we're going to distribute this shit as a newspaper --

Evan: The bike mail service.

Dacey: I did want to talk about that... distributing this was a pain in the ass, and, like, mostly unsuccessful.

Devin: We've got to do it a lot better.

Dacey: Yes.

Devin: Like, this is a type of challenge that me, personally -- like, makes me really excited. This is the beginning of the newspaper -- of the actual consistent Occupy Wall Street newspaper. It's, like, notes instead of news. We'll talk about it --

Dacey: OK. That would be really helpful.

Rob: We have to get Devin a horse.

Tim: This was great. Yes.

Bre: We've just got to (inaudible) with Times Up.

Devin: That's -- that's great. We need to produce -- we need to get a printing budget for these things... I mean, that's what I would say.

Bobby: What are we doing about the facilitation team?

Leah: Robert, don't you want somebody else?

Bre: (inaudible) going to find somebody?

Robert: I mean --

Dacey: I asked Brett if he would consider...

Robert: We'll probably find somebody at the meeting who would be happy to jump on board. Is that a safe bet?

Dacey: I would prefer that we warn somebody.

Robert: That's true. But we can just send out an email to the list? Saying can somebody help facilitate?

Dacey: How do we feel about Brett, if he just wants to do that?

Bre: That's two men.

Robert: That is two men.

Leah: Yeah, it'd be better if there were...

Dacey: Yeah, that's my only....

Bobby: Bre, do you want to start? Since Brett's --

Dacey: You could do the first part, and Brett could maybe hop on the end?

Bobby: Yeah.

Robert: That sounds rad.

Bobby: Just to mix it up more?

Bre: The only last thing that I would like to add is that I envision it being successful if we start the idea of getting reportbacks online, that we can get those on paper, so we can do Rockaways reportbacks, we have the reportbacks that they've done so far; when people walk into the room, they can add their reportbacks to the paper. And then, if they want to say the reportback, they just stand by the paper, and then we call for reportbacks, and those people with the paper come up and read all those reportbacks off of the paper, so we have all those reportbacks. We have them in an in-person format; we have a voice attached to those reportbacks; but they're very well-structured, rather than having 5 million people who all want to say something about the Rockaways. So it gives people buy-in. And then we have this conversation, where we're dealing with these three statements. I would love for that conversation to be -- physically moving if they agree with it or if they don't. And then after that, we can have more of a discussion aspect. But I think that people physically moving and seeing that everybody's in the same place has been -- is really successful.

Dacey: A power shuffle.

Bre: Yes.

Bobby: A spectrum.

Dacey: Yeah, word. I haven't done one of those in a long time. That would be fun.

Bre: So -- yeah.

Bobby: Spectrum's always fun.

Bre: OK. Cool.

Robert: Yay.

Tim: OK - the last, last thing is about the space.

Robert: Clean up!