

EVENT PLANNING TIPS FOR HOSTING COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS

Planning:

- Gather your team to determine your goals. What do you wish to accomplish?
- Who is your audience? (ie: professionals in the field or the general public)
- When selecting a location, chose a neutral, safe space where all feel welcomed. Follow guidelines of the space. (VAM/VCA chose a public library)
- When selecting a space, determine the meeting room specs, including audio visual.
- If you expect a large group or are in a large meeting room, a microphone will be helpful so that everyone can hear comments. A wireless mic allows for attendees to stay in their seats which provides comfort but you will need a volunteer(s) to take mic to speakers. A standing mic requires less monitoring but some attendees may not feel comfortable using it. Know your audience.
- Promote your event where your audience is. Be careful before using social media. (VAM/VCA communicated directly to their members via email and did not use social.)
- Determine how you will take registrations/RSVPs. (VAM/VCA only asked for names and emails but not professional affiliations.)
- When discussing controversial issues such as monuments and memorials, it is important to have a meeting facilitator. (VAM/VCA used an outside facilitator experienced in the preservation field to alleviate pressure on staff and the organizations.)
- Confirm audio visual needs, and update PowerPoint presentation.
- Email attendees: meeting information, directions to meeting location, resources, any advice or guidelines.
- Pack your supplies and print any handouts.

Supplies:

- Copy of rsvp list and clipboard
- Index cards and pens/pencils – to solicit input from guests
- Box to collect cards
- Bottled water
- Clipboards and paper – for note-takers
- Pads of paper and pens – for attendees
- Copies of resources for distribution (if applicable)
- Red/Yellow/Green Signs
- Brochures, banners, etc. for display of sponsoring organization

Suggested Agenda:

1. Facilitator welcomes guests, reviews rules and housekeeping
2. Welcome from hosts who provide statements of why we're here
3. Proceed through three topics (See template slides, edit for your needs)
4. Q&A and closing remarks

On-Site Meeting Facilitation:

- Set up room and audio visual.
- Position volunteers at entrance to welcome guests and check RSVP list and other areas where needed.
- Limit comments to allow for everyone to speak. (VAM/VCA allowed for three minute comments)
- To assist with timing comments, you may wish to create red, yellow, and green signs for use by your meeting leaders to alert speakers that their allotted time. These can be created with colored paper and cardboard handles purchased from a crafts store.
- Note that this is not an exhaustive discussion to keep the conversation going.

Debrief:

- Bring your team back together to determine your next steps. Did you accomplish what you intended? What else would you like to do?
- Stay in touch with your audience

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