Experienced researchers Bill Blazar, Jody Hauer, Marina Lyon and Clarence Shallbetter

What's old can be new; Learn from past success to produce sound new policy proposals

A Civic Caucus Review of Minnesota's Public Policy Process Interview

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Present

John Adams, Steve Anderson, Bill Blazar, Dave Broden (vice chair), Janis Clay, Pat Davies, Paul Gilje (executive director), Jody Hauer, Sallie Kemper (associate director), Dan Loritz (chair), Marina Lyon, Dana Schroeder (associate director), Clarence Shallbetter.

Summary

During their time working at the nonprofit, nonpartisan Citizens League , four former League research associates say the organization's reports on community issues and problems were relevant, focused and respected in the community. The League's nonpartisan study committees produced the reports over a period of months of learning and deliberating about a specific problem or issue and the proposals for resolving it. Bill Blazar, Jody Hauer, Marina Lyon and Clarence Shallbetter, all of whom worked at the Citizens League at various times from the 1960s into the 1990s, agree that the reports included precise, doable recommendations.

Using the Citizens League approach during those years as a model for developing sound policy proposals, the interviewees say a number of factors contributed to the success of the League study committees and reports: (1) a focused, clear charge from the board's program committee to each study committee detailing a limited, specific community problem for the committee to address; (2) the discipline of the formula then used for a League study committee: coming up with clear findings, conclusions and recommendations; (3) accountability to a strong, involved board that insisted on high-quality reports; (4) strong committee chairs; (5) thoughtful, patient committee members willing to stick with a topic for a number of months; (6) efforts by the Citizens League board to limit study committee

membership to mainly neutral, generalist citizens, in order to prevent representatives of special interests from dominating committees; (7) detailed minutes of study committee meetings that were distributed regularly to a larger group of people interested in a committee's progress; (8) a strong staff; (9) media committed to solid public affairs coverage; and (10) substantial efforts by the League to get its recommendations implemented.

The interviewees wish that process for producing sound policy proposals were more in use today. They worry that the media today are bombarded with proposals from a huge number of sources, often from groups representing special interests. The resulting clamor makes it hard for the media to judge the quality of the proposals and for organizations representing broad community interests to draw attention to their proposals. And changes to media in recent years have led, in most cases, to less coverage of community issues while they are being debated. The interviewees also note the challenge of engaging the younger generation in studying and developing proposals for resolving community problems.

Biographies

Bill Blazar is senior vice president of public affairs and business development for the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. Prior to joining the Chamber, he was manager of government affairs for Target Corporation from 1987 to 1992. Before working for Target, Blazar was a research associate with the Citizens League and a freelance public policy analyst, specializing in state and local fiscal policy, economic development and telecommunications. Blazar has a B.A. in political science from Northwestern University and an M.A. in public affairs from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

Jody Hauer is program evaluation coordinator in the Office of the Legislative Auditor in Minnesota. She has been with the Legislative Auditor since 1994. Between 1992 and 1994, she worked as research director for the State Auditor's Office. From 1984 to 1992, she was a research associate with the Citizens League. She was a graduate student at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs from 1980 to 1982. Hauer has a bachelor's degree in political science from St. Catherine University.

Marina Lyon directed the Carl and Eloise Pohlad Family Foundation and the community involvement and giving of Marquette Financial Companies from 1998 to December 2015. Between 1998 and 2002, she also directed the work of the Minnesota Twins Community Fund. Prior to joining the Pohlad Foundation, Lyon worked at Piper Jaffray Companies (director, Foundation and Government Relations), the McKnight Foundation (program officer) and the Citizens League (researcher). Lyon has B.A. and J.D. degrees from the University of Minnesota.

Clarence Shallbetter is a Roman Catholic deacon specializing in prison ministry. He has been active in public affairs with the Citizens League and other organizations since the 1950s. He held a research position with the Citizens League from 1962 to 1963, and then served in the Supply Corps of the U.S. Navy from 1964 to 1967. He then returned to the Citizens League, where he worked from 1968 to 1975. He subsequently worked with Public Service Options, Ridesharing, Inc., the CORE Commission, the Minnesota House of Representatives as a fiscal analyst and the Metropolitan

Council in travel demand management. Shallbetter has a bachelor's degree in political science, with a concentration in local government, and did graduate work in Public Administration at the University of Minnesota.

Background

The Civic Caucus is currently reviewing the quality of Minnesota's past, present and future public policy process for anticipating, defining and resolving major public problems. The Caucus interviewed Bill Blazar, Jody Hauer, Marina Lyon and Clarence Shallbetter for their perspectives on how Minnesota's public policy process worked in the past and their assessments of how well that process is working today. All four interviewees worked as research associates at the Citizens League sometime during the period from the 1960s into the 1990s.

Discussion

Each panel member made opening remarks to start the discussion.

Opening remarks by Bill Blazar of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

Blazar outlined what he saw as the three-part assignment to the panel of interviewees:

1. Provide some context based on their experiences working at the Citizens League ;
2. Reflect on what they see as the problems today relative to moving to and adopting solutions relating to community problems; and
3. Propose what to do going forward.

The Citizens League reports raised ideas with immediate relevancy. Blazar worked for the Citizens League from 1976 to 1980 and staffed committees that produced reports on county government, the Twin Cities economy, the relationship between taxes and economic development, how the region discusses and resolves community-wide problems, local government, and public-sector pensions.

"These reports were worth every minute," Blazar said. "They had ideas with immediate relevancy and a long-term life, as well. That was largely true because of the way we developed the reports."

(Note: All Citizens League reports are available from the digital Policy Report Library on the League's website.)

Presuming the politics when developing proposals is harmful to the process. Blazar thought about organizations today that make recommendations on problems affecting our community, such as the Itasca Project, Growth & Justice, Center of the American Experiment, and the Citizens League. "The problem is not a lack of proposals," he said. "It's not that there's a lack of recommendations. These organizations and others provide plenty of those."

"But if I step back and look at the process of developing recommendations, it may be that the proposals that are coming out today go beyond just developing the proposal and try to presume the

politics. I think that's really dangerous in terms of coming up with ideas that the community can use, wrestle with and ultimately adopt over a period of time."

We need to think about the process for developing proposals and recommendations. Blazar laid out four ideas for improving that process:

1. Somebody should remind everybody in the public affairs business what a recommendation looks like. It has to be actionable. A great test as to whether you've come up with something substantive is to see whether you could tell the legislative reviser of statutes how to draft a bill based on a recommendation. The other test is whether you can explain it in 30 seconds.
2. When there is a problem affecting the Twin Cities or the State of Minnesota, we can certainly go to the Legislature, but we should also keep alive the notion of trying to solve the problem without the Legislature. "At the Chamber of Commerce, none of our workforce initiatives today (excluding the pre-K-12 education portion) depend on the Legislature," he said. "After five years of going to the Legislature, we concluded that the solutions to the workforce problem don't rest with any legislative bill. There are things other than legislation that need to be done. People trying to make proposals and recommendations should consider whether there's a non-legislative solution. Could we just fix this without going to the Capitol?"
3. We need to rethink the way we analyze problems and come up with solutions. The trend in the last 15 to 20 years has been to create stakeholder groups. "I can't think of a worse idea. Right behind that is the notion of a public/private partnership," he said. The partnerships might be important in implementing something. "But to use a public/private partnership or a stakeholder group to actually think through a problem and come up with a solution is a ticket to not understanding the problem and compromising the solution before you've even come up with it. It doesn't make sense, but we do it with increasing frequency. It's very hard to convince people that it's a bad idea. The vested interests and subject experts are resources in understanding how community systems work, but they aren't the best at seeing the real problems and coming up with solutions."
4. People need to work on their writing skills. "The best thing I learned when I was at the Citizens League," he said, "was to write clearly: to have a clear statement of the way the world was, the findings; and then to reach a clear set of conclusions; and then to come up with a clear set of recommendations. A lot of that has gotten lost. I would not neglect the presentation and the writing."

Opening remarks by Jody Hauer of the Minnesota Legislative Auditor's Office.

Working at the Citizens League was a unique experience. Hauer worked at the Citizens League from 1984 through 1992. "I worked with some smart, wise, articulate people," she said, such as Paul Gilje, Steve Alnes, Peter Vanderpoel and Curt Johnson. And she pointed out the importance of study committee chairs she worked with, including Ann Wynia, Jay Kiedrowski, George Latimer, John Cairns, John Rollwagen, Dana Schroeder, Allen Saeks and Tom Swain.

She staffed committees working on tax-increment financing, airport location, the party caucus system, how to finance state and local programs, the barriers to elective office, and the structure of K-12 education. That education committee ended up recommending the chartered school model, she said. She was given a lot of autonomy and a lot of authority during her time at the League, Hauer said.

Working at the Office of the Legislative Auditor has similarities and differences compared with her time at the Citizens League. Hauer has been at the Legislative Auditor's Office for 22 years, working in the program evaluation division. Every year the Legislature gives the Auditor's Office a set of topics it wants to know more about. The program evaluation staff members then spend eight to nine months evaluating each topic.

Hauer mentioned several similarities between her current work and her previous work at the Citizens League:

- Hauer said the Legislative Auditor's Office deals with a wide variety of topics. She has worked on reports that include public pensions, transportation, education, special education, workforce development and housing. She is currently working on an evaluation of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB). That variety is similar to the variety of topics she worked on at the Citizens League.

- In Hauer's current job with the Legislative Auditor, she said, she's always thinking about how to inform the legislators. "That's very much in line with what we did at the Citizens League," she said. "Many Citizens League proposals relied on something happening at the Capitol for change to take place. I saw part of our role as League staffers to put together reports that could inform legislators. That's certainly what our role is as program evaluators in the Office of the Legislative Auditor. Our primary audience is the Legislature. In that way, it's a well-established bridge between my previous work and my current work."

- As at the Citizens League, she said, her current job has accountability, but to different people. At the Citizens League, the staff was accountable to the executive director and to the board of directors, who made the final decision on whether to approve each report. At the Auditor's Office, she still has layers of accountability, including the legislative auditor and legislators themselves. She and other evaluators must make the end result something that can be useful.

- At both the Citizens League and the Legislative Auditor's Office, Hauer said, she has worked with good, smart people.

Hauer listed several differences between her current work and her work at the Citizens League:

- Most of our time at the Citizens League was spent working with the citizen research committees, she said. Now all of our work as program evaluators is done in a team within our office. All the analysis and recommendations come from the work the team does internally, rather than with a citizens committee. But, she stressed, part of the evaluators' research includes interviewing dozens of people. The research also involves deep analytical, quantitative work, probably to a depth greater than at the Citizens League during her time there, because of the availability now of personal computers.

- The evaluators get input from a wide range of people and sources, as we did at the Citizens League. But, she said, it's a different environment. A citizen-based committee brings many insights and perspectives, which we don't have at the Auditor's Office. "We must be sure to

generate that ourselves," she said. "I must be sure that I hear a variety of perspectives, viewpoints and angles. That largely means holding focus groups and conducting large numbers of interviews."

- The Legislative Auditor's office is not involved in advocacy. We produce seven or eight evaluation reports each year, she said, but we don't work with legislators on getting something passed. "The ball is in the court of the Legislature once we release the report," she said. In contrast, at the Citizens League, we had to work with legislators to convince them why a change was important. "At the Auditor's Office, we'll certainly talk with legislators if they ask for it, but advocacy is not our role. Our work is nonpartisan and we're not in the world of advocacy."

Communicating today with millennials requires a different way of thinking. Hauer said things are a world apart today in communicating with millennials than in communicating with baby boomers when they were young. "Everybody today has a phone, but they don't like to dial and talk to someone," she said. "Skype is normal for them. It's not as normal to come to face-to-face meetings, even in the work world." To embrace and bring in millennials will mean thinking of communication methods more common to their generation.

Opening remarks by Marina Lyon of the Pohlad Foundation.

The Citizens League always had a very strong and involved board, which any good nonprofit needs. Lyon worked for the Citizens League from 1984 to 1990, and she said the League always had a strong board then. "This was not a 'Kumbaya' board," she said. "They asked hard questions; they really made us think." The reports got better because of the board's involvement. The board included substantive people who were very politically savvy.

The topics for Citizens League study committees were always very thoughtfully chosen. Lyon noted that the League's program committee, which was chaired by a board member, met numerous times during the year. "It delved into the questions: what really is the issue here, is there a way to solve it and do we think it's possible? It was another part of the process that was extremely important. It wasn't just what's hot today. It was something that potentially had long-term impact."

Lyon staffed study committees on the following issues: state civil service reform, health care for the uninsured, cooperatively managed schools, tax expenditures/exemptions and the child protective system.

Study committee members were very patient. Lyon said study committee members would faithfully attend meetings week after week. They'd sit through sessions with good resource people speaking and some with speakers who didn't have the information we thought they might have.

Don't look to foundations to be leaders in public policy. Lyon said large foundations usually look to their grantees for work on public policy and fund them. She noted two examples, though, of foundations working together on public policy issues:

- Minneapolis Saint Paul Regional Workforce Innovation Network (MSPWin), which was established in 2013 to strengthen the workforce in the seven-country metro region and to advance statewide policy recommendations that benefit all Minnesota businesses and workers.

Ten foundations and the Greater Twin Cities United Way provide the funding and the leadership for the organization, which has come up with a way of evaluating workforce-training programs.

- Homelessness improvement and reduction. A committee of foundation members provides financial support to assist Kathy Ten Brook, a special appointee of Gov. Mark Dayton, in her efforts to better understand and account for all the ways the state provides financial support to address homelessness. The goal is to coordinate all the efforts to improve outcomes.

The Pohlad Foundation doesn't look to government to solve things, but rather tries to find areas where it will be able to have a small impact. Lyon said during the recent recession, the Pohlad Foundation worked with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce to get $6 million in loans and grants to a number of small businesses throughout the state that had been denied loans by a bank. "It was a huge success in that many small businesses had no other place to go," she said. "A lot of jobs were saved and created. We lost money, but we expected that."

What should the Civic Caucus do differently to be more effective? Lyon mentioned several ideas:

- What's old is new: Maybe it's time again for people to start sitting down and spending thoughtful time on issues. That's different in a time where everyone wants things right now.

- Involve other generations in the work of the Civic Caucus. Perhaps grandparents could bring their grandchildren to meetings.

- The Civic Caucus could align itself with some newer groups in town, such as Educators for Equity, which is a spinoff of Teach for America. They've focused in on teacher licensing. "They're making good progress in ways most of you would like," she said.

Opening remarks by Clarence Shallbetter, Catholic deacon involved in prison ministry.

The study committees were the strength of the Citizens League. Shallbetter was first involved with the Citizens League as a high school intern in 1955 and 1956. At that time, he said, there were small study committees operating at noon throughout the week. Between 1962 and 1964, he served as a research associate at the Citizens League. He staffed a study committee reviewing the rebuilding of Minneapolis schools. The committee ultimately recommended against a school district referendum for the rebuilding program and voters turned down the referendum. "It was dynamic and fun to be involved in an organization that seemed to have some insightful, active role in the community," he said.

He returned to the Citizens League in 1968 and worked there until 1975. He staffed League study committees on transportation (*Transit: What to Build is Usage*), development of neighborhood councils in the central cities, the organization of Minneapolis city government (marking the third time the League had approached the topic), campaign financing, school building proposals in St. Paul and airport financing. He came back to the Citizens League in 1984 as a consultant and staffed a committee on development finance, which made the controversial proposal that tax-increment financing (TIF) be used only for redevelopment, not new economic development.

The Citizens League developed and refined a process for approaching community problems. Throughout all the time he was with the Citizens League, Shallbetter said the process that was

developed and refined, the League study model, was central to its work. It consisted of initially identifying a topic, an issue that had seen growing concern in the community. The League's program committee tried first to narrowly focus the topic and then wrote a charge to the study committee. The challenge to the program committee was to define the issue narrowly enough so that a group of citizens could go to work and within a few months understand the topic, analyze it, come to some conclusions and make some recommendations.

Once it had a charge, the study committee went through a process with three parts:

1. The committee developed findings, based on presentations by resource people and other analysis. "The findings were critical, because they gave the report at the very outset a level of credibility signaling that we understood the topic and knew what we were talking about," Shallbetter said.
2. The committee came up with conclusions. "This was often the most challenging, but also the most important step," he said. "Conclusions followed intense analysis that interpreted the findings in terms of factors influencing existing policies, consequences of existing directions being considered, figuring out what's missing and the direction the community should take as it grapples with those issues."
3. The committee developed recommendations. They were often directed at the Legislature for action. They were so specific that you could go to the reviser of statutes and assist in the drafting of a bill that would then be introduced.

Staff, working with study committees, drafted the reports. Knowledgeable study committee chairs presented the reports to an engaged and politically savvy board. The board then deliberated about each report, especially its conclusions and recommendations, and decided whether to approve the report, revise it or return it to the committee for more work. On occasion, a minority report developed by some members of the study committee contributed to the board's discussion and decisions.

After the committee's work was done, the recommendations moved on to an implementation committee, the Legislative Action Committee, that worked with legislators on a weekly basis. This group identified potential authors for legislative bills and helped get proposals passed.

"It was exciting and fun, and also very demanding," Shallbetter said. "The question today is not only whether this kind of process is being done, but whether it is even possible. I don't see any evidence of it being done. It might be happening in a few areas, but if it were in any significant manner, Minnesota would be in the forefront of original ideas and institution building, as it was in the past."

There were recurring questions of who should be on the Citizens League study committees. "The Citizens League was a fairly important organization," Shallbetter said. "As its influence and impact grew, the specialists and those directly affected by a review of existing institutions and policies came out of the woodwork. They included those who had professional and sharp, narrow interests. They all wanted to be on the committees."

It became clear that those special interest representatives slowed down the study committee process, he said. The interest groups were very defensive. We eventually said maybe they could be recipients of information developed by the committee, but they couldn't sit at the table because they weren't neutral, generalist citizens.

"Do I think that process has any applicability today?" Shallbetter asked. "Certainly I do. There are a lot of issues out there needing attention: equity, prison reform, affordable housing, transportation finance and useful transit investments. Who's going to deal with these?"

Blazar added that the Citizens League board would actually approve study committee membership. "There was a tension about who would sit at the table and who would be resources around the room," he said. Staff members took minutes during the study committee meetings, which were an important part of the process. He said the League tried to develop a following of the committee's work by sending out the minutes to lists of interested people.

How do you create an audience and interest in the community on various issues? An interviewer noted that a joint legislative committee on prison population has been meeting for several months and it's received no coverage in the *StarTribune* or *MinnPost.* Hauer responded that a lot of legislators maintain online blogs and many people pay attention to those blogs. It's a way to get the conversation out and they usually have a wide set of readers. Lyon suggested trying to find a reporter to come to meetings on particular policy issues. *MinnPost* prides itself on covering things no one else covers, she said.

"How do you create an audience and interest in the community that will lead to solutions?" Blazar asked. "Creating that conversation early on and then sustaining it is just as important as having somebody who's analyzed the problem and come up with recommendations. We may be more short of those mechanisms than we are of ideas."

Shallbetter said he sees some effort on the part of the media, especially Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) and the *StarTribune,* to take a targeted look at specific issues. He noted the *StarTribune's* series on child abuse and on special education and MPR's reporting on the hiding of sex abuse by priests in the archdiocese. He said these stories have an impact similar to what we saw from some of the Citizens League's efforts.

Blazar pointed to good regular reporting in the *StarTribune* business page on health care and energy issues.

It's important to understand the problem and its causes before attempting to come up with solutions. An interviewer commented that today people start "spouting off " with the solution before they understand how things really work. "People see symptoms of problems. But they don't want to go to the root of the problem and figure out what can be done at the root," he said.

Hauer responded that she and other Legislative Auditor program evaluators are supposed to be explaining how things work. "We can only work on six or seven topics a year and there are hundreds out there," she said.

Lyon agreed that a lot of people don't get informed enough about issues. She said also that some problems are very complex and have no easy solutions. There aren't one or two buttons to push to get something changed. "The bigger issue," she said, "is that you really have to have a lot of patience and interest to stay with something long enough to try to get to the roots."

"That's where the discipline of findings, conclusions and recommendations comes in," Blazar said. The interviewer interjected that today people want to jump to the solution without understanding the problem. "It's very difficult to get a conversation going on what the problem is," Blazar said.

Shallbetter quoted some of Ted Kolderie's comments from his "Cold Sunbelt" presentation: "Somehow Minnesota needs to retain the ability to understand and to deal with the causes of problems. This state has had the unusual ability to see why things happen and to change the systems that determine why organizations behave the way they do." Often, Shallbetter said, committees discovered the behavior was caused by how organizations and services were structured and/or financed.

Too often today, he observed, many in the media don't attempt to understand the issues or inform the public. Instead, they too often focus on the political response to a problem or proposal, looking at who the winners and the losers are or who is helped or hurt by the proposals. "This isn't a very helpful game," he said.

In response to an interviewer's question, Blazar said in the last year or so, there seems to be more willingness for Republican and Democratic legislators to talk together and to try to figure out what they can get done.

Public discussion tends to be on what's very visible, i.e., the near-term problem, instead of looking at long-term policy problems. An interviewer asked how we get back to recognizing a near-term problem as just a symptom of the overall policy problem that is of broader scale and more nebulous. Sometimes, he said, we solve the more doable short-term problem without moving on to the broader policy problem.

Hauer said part of the difficulty is the way the system is structured. "Legislators are in office for a limited time, so they tend to look for a solution that can be accomplished during the time they have some control over the issue. The structure is forcing more attention on short-term quick fixes than might otherwise be the case."

Part of the problem might be with the things are financed, Lyon said. "Federalism is not what used to be. When you are on a school board, the first thing you learn is that you control very little of the money, because a lot of the money comes from federal sources and has its own requirements. So, you can't always fix a problem even if you want, unless you're also in control of the financing of it."

"Most steps are incremental," Blazar added. "The key thing is if you've got some sort of vision about where you want to head." As an example, he pointed to a 1978 Citizens League report on public pensions, whose recommendations have not yet been realized. "But if you had a policymaker around who thought the vision was correct, they could work over a period of years to incrementally move us toward that vision," he said. "I don't think incrementalism is bad. I think it's probably the reality. The key thing is to have the incremental action based on some vision of the larger policy solution."

Shallbetter commented that the Citizens League did not, unlike many efforts do today, focus on setting goals. The League was, however, sometimes tempted to fix the whole system, such as the delivery of human services. "It's a monster task to begin with, whether or not you can do it. When you

try that, you discover you hit the limit of the community and the Legislature to deal with change. You have to figure out the pieces that are likely to change. Whether you'll have any success in totally revising the system is another question. But there is a temptation to do that." He said some big national foundations and even local foundations "do that all the time. They spend millions of dollars attempting to fix the system."

Is the Civic Caucus's current focus on public policy infrastructure worthwhile? An interviewer asked the panel to reflect on the effectiveness of the Civic Caucus and on the importance of its current focus. Hauer responded that she thinks what the Caucus does is well intentioned and an important thing to be doing. Looking at the quality of public policy proposals and how they are being developed today is something that should be done. "I applaud the effort," she said.

Lyon suggested the Civic Caucus review old Citizens League reports to see what's still relevant and important today, noting the League's child welfare system report and its chartered schools report as likely examples. Perhaps in partnership with the League, the Civic Caucus could revisit and re-energize those issues and proposals and put a spotlight on them.

Shallbetter, again quoting Kolderie's "Cold Sunbelt" presentation, noted this state and region "need to find new discussion mechanisms for turning 'problems' into 'issues' and for generating proposals for action. This area has had and can again have an advantage created by institutions that can see ahead, that know how to get to the causes of things, that can explain the choices the public faces, and that can act with vision and with courage."

Blazar added that it's good for the region and the state to have a public discussion of how we analyze problems and develop recommendations. Every once in a while, we should have a public discussion to see how we're doing.

Perhaps, Lyon said, the Civic Caucus could get the University of Minnesota (U of M) to help in this process. In earlier Caucus discussions, she noted, the point has been raised about whether research at the U of M is applicable to community problems. Maybe the Caucus could develop a partnership with the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the U of M.

In the past, the media gave prominent coverage to Citizens League reports, which helped to engage the public quickly. Shallbetter said he's intrigued with the issue of the media, which Ted Kolderie addressed in his Jan. 22, 2016, interview with the Civic Caucus . Shallbetter said the media were key in the past. "They were just waiting for these Citizens League reports to come out and gave them prominence. Editorial departments responded quickly. The public was really engaged quickly. Things have changed so much with the media corporations now that I don't know how you can do that today."

It's difficult to get back to the model of having citizen generalists, rather than stakeholders with a direct interest, leading in the analysis of community problems and the development of proposals for resolving them. An interviewer asked how generalist citizens could lead in the development of policy proposals, as they did in the past at the Citizens League, if stakeholders are allowed to be part of the process. Blazar responded, "I don't know. It's a huge problem."

He said if a company joins the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, it can have a representative on each of the Chamber's committees. But companies prefer to specialize. For example, the energy companies want to be members of the energy policy committee. "It's a huge struggle," he said. "It's not that we don't want to hear from them, but you need a time when the customers can speak as well. When we're talking about health care, I want the customers, the people who are using health care, to be at the table. I certainly want the doctors, the hospitals and the insurance companies to be in the room, but not at the table. I don't know how to do that. It's a very hard thing to do. We don't get nearly as many generalists as we need and the folks with vested interests in the topic are very articulate."

Lyon recalled that companies used to employ generalist public affairs people, who had a much wider range of things to deal with than just the business matters. "I don't know how that could ever be recreated," she said, "but I think it could be very helpful in terms of getting businesses to think beyond their organizations and their bottom lines."

Blazar pointed out that many companies today have broader interests than just Minnesota. He said the Chamber's experience is that it's helpful to get smaller companies with somewhere between 25 and 200 employees involved in the process, along with the larger national/international companies. They tend to be locally owned and managed. "Minnesota is a much bigger part of their equation," he said.

Hauer said stakeholders must be part of the discussion, but generalists should come up with the solutions and the decisions. "Having the Citizens League board to think about things from a broad perspective, without those special interests, was a model that worked," she said.

The Citizens League board in that past era, Shallbetter noted, was free to come up with recommendations that they knew "would fly in the face of a major organization in town."

It's important to keep a wider group of people informed when deliberations are taking place on a major community issue. An interviewer commented on the critical importance, when a study is taking place of a major community issue, of keeping people significantly beyond the working group informed of the study's progress. He said when the Civic Caucus distributes notes of interviews, the notes are written for the people not present at the meeting.

The interviewer noted that the Citizens League is undertaking a major study of the Metropolitan Council, but, while the minutes are available to the public, you have to look for them. "They're not in your face," he said. "There's an urgent need to broaden the audience at the time the work is underway."

Blazar commented that it is his experience that it is very difficult to convince 28- or 30-year-olds of the importance of taking minutes at a meeting on public policy. "So little value is put on creating a meaningful record for the people who aren't there, but without this, the discussion gets very narrow, very quickly," he said.

How do we engage the next generation? An interviewer commented that we've been focused on how people in the older generation were involved and how things happened in the past. "But," he asked, "how do we engage the next generation, those who will inherit the state? Will they accept our

solutions?" Lyon asked whether that generation believes the same issues are important. Shallbetter questioned whether young people today know what it means to be a citizen.