ASP NONPROFIT CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

FIRST MONDAYS DISCUSSION

TOPIC: Defining the Board’s Role in Strategic Planning

DATE: MONDAY, MAY 1, 2017
First Mondays, May 1, 2017
Topic: Defining the Board’s Role in Strategic Planning

Please click here to access the recorded discussion.

Discussion Background:

The people sitting around the board table have the capacity to be the sail that helps drive a nonprofit organization forward, or the anchor that holds it back. The way in which the board of directors engages in the strategic planning process can have a significant impact in defining just which direction the board, and the organization, goes. In May, we’re dedicating the First Mondays discussion to examining the question of what is the appropriate role of the board in nonprofit strategic planning. We’ll also seek to identify effective practices to guide the board’s engagement. Plus we will have a quick presentation from Dr. Lewis Atkinson, from Haines Centre for Strategic Management, click here to see his bio:

- The Carver Model of board governance has been interpreted by some to suggest that boards are responsible for setting the strategic direction of a nonprofit organization, and staff is responsible for implementing that direction. Others strongly disagree and believe this is a misinterpretation. Whether you’re an adherent of Carver or not, the bottom line question is: what is the board’s role in defining strategy, and what is the staff’s role? Should one “voice” be louder than the other? What do you do if board and staff have differing visions of the future and how the organization should get there?
- In his book, “The Strategic Board” one of the “realities” author Mark Light points out is the limited amount of time most board members have to devote to their board work (20 hours/year vs. 2080 hours/year a full-time staff member spends.) Given this reality, what is the best use of the board’s time in relation to strategic planning? How have you engaged board members in the planning process?
- Many nonprofits, and many nonprofit board members, have no or limited experience with strategic planning. What should they consider before starting the process? What resources or tools might be helpful to them?