

## To Reinvent Community as Citizens, We Need New Practices and Vehicles for Getting Stuff Done

Image



Pre-launch gathering for Peterborough Dialogues surfaces key energy point

In the sun-dappled room of an unlikely Peterborough building, a small group of smart and caring residents laughed and cried and spoke with passion as they explored what it could mean for our city to be a “local, living oasis in a global storm of shifting sands.”

As folks shared their thoughts, energy around a few different things began to bubble up.

One of these energy points was that in order to do this work of co-creating a brighter

future as citizens we need new vehicles and practices for getting stuff done.

In other words, to reinvent our community as citizens, a different kind of conversation is important, one that doesn't end up being just another talk shop.

That resonated strongly with us at Axiom News, the folks who are launching this series of local, grassroots dialogues and media-making for the purpose of community building.

We have had the privilege of connecting with people around the world who are creating, prototyping and working with some very promising new practices and vehicles for community building. People will likely recognize some of them: Peter Block's Six Conversations, Appreciative Inquiry, Open Space Technology, Art of Hosting, amongst others.

Our intent is to give people an experience of a mix of these approaches through the Peterborough Dialogues.

We'll be coupling that with what we believe is another vital element to drawing out the full possibilities in a conversation so that it becomes more than a conversation — media making that both makes visible what is unfolding and provides the next iteration of that conversation. Creating and sharing this media is important for drawing in others who may not have been able to join the in-person conversation, connecting folks who want to work on similar things and showing what's possible.

While the express purpose of the recent gathering (one of three) was to hear from people about what they see as important to address in Peterborough, we also sought to give folks an encounter with some of the above. One person said she'd felt she'd had an experience of a community taking shape in just 90 minutes that she'd never had before and she was leaving with a fresh sense of hope about what might be possible for Peterborough. Yay!

A few of the ways of being that both shaped these gatherings and people can expect to experience in the upcoming Peterborough Dialogues:

- Change happens at the speed of relationships.

- The greater promise is in citizens doing what we can with what we have. That is, dedicating ourselves to swaying or working through established powers and structures is likely to be both less effective and energizing than actualizing our intentions with whatever we have in front of us.
- It's through unexpected, random encounters that new ideas often get sparked and spread.
- Change comes from strangers.
- We already have what we need to create our preferred future.

Thanks to all who took time from their busy schedules to join us. We look forward to crossing paths with you again soon as this vision for a new way of being in community comes to life.

*For more information, join the mailing list at [peterboroughdialogues.ca](http://peterboroughdialogues.ca). You can follow this project on Twitter at [@ptbdialogues](https://twitter.com/ptbdialogues).*

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