

From: **Yousef Rabhi**

Date: Wed, Dec 4, 2013 at 4:12 PM

Subject: [aa better local politix] SPARK Transparency Update

Hello All,

As I indicated in my previous communication to this group, I have been hard at work over the last month or so working with SPARK for greater transparency. After a productive series of meetings between Mr. Krutko and myself, the topic of financial transparency was included as a discussion item on the SPARK Board's November 25<sup>th</sup> agenda. In this communication, I would like to update you on how that meeting went and what you can expect to see moving forward.

At the SPARK Board table, I took a firm position in advocating for greater financial transparency. It was made clear to the group that when it comes to public dollars the people deserve full access to financial statements and other financial information. Above and beyond posting the financial statements and 990's online, which I consider to be a bare minimum requirement, I asked that SPARK create a more comprehensive transparency platform to allow for the posting of other relevant information, FaQ's, and a place where SPARK can explain what they use their money for and why they feel those investments are meaningful. The public deserves to know where their money is going and what it is being used for.

The meeting was lengthy and certainly tense but the dialogue was productive. By the end of the meeting, staff were empowered by the board to develop a comprehensive recommendation on how to move forward and to begin with initial implementation. In my perception, staff actually seemed energized by the way in which I framed up the issue and the ensuing discussion at the board table. My perspective is that this is about the future of SPARK as an organization and its place in the community. The community dialogue that evolved from this transparency issue is, in my mind, an opportunity for SPARK to change the course of their organization to be more accessible and accountable. I also discussed some of my own ideas of how they could move forward with providing clearer and more accessible information. By the end of the meeting, staff were clearly eager to move forward with building a more open organization. The policy of non-disclosure dates back to the early days of the organization. It is a policy that staff do not seem particularly attached to, speaking of it as an "inherited" policy.

At the close of the meeting I requested a written letter from staff with some initial actions that SPARK would take to change their course. I requested that this information be provided soon after the holiday break so that I could share this progress report with you. SPARK staff sent me that letter and it is attached for your review.

While the changes may seem elementary to some, please bear in mind that this represents a significant change in the way that SPARK functions.

As the next board meeting approaches I will continue to work with SPARK staff and board members to advocate for a more robust public transparency and outreach platform. In the meantime, SPARK has agreed to post its financial statements for 2012 on its website AND has pledged to post its 2013 financial statements once the auditors have completed their work. Again, this has never been done before and I am proud that we were able to move the needle enough to make this happen.

Thank you to all of the members of this list who have been strong advocates for these changes. I am proud

to call you my friends and look forward to our continued work with SPARK and other organizations to create better transparency for public dollars. I also want to thank Kai again for his tireless efforts on this and many other issues of community importance.

I will keep this group posted as further developments arise. Thank you all again!

Yousef Rabhi