Task Force on Community Engagement Meeting Notes: September 24, 2015

Contents

Executive Summary

On September 24, 2015 eleven of the twelve currently appointed members of Task Force on Community Engagement (TFCE) attended the regularly scheduled meeting at the Street Jones Building. They reviewed the 9/10/15 official meeting minutes and approved them with two changes. Mike shared a draft op-ed piece written in response to the Austin American Statesman editorial of 9/23/15 that took issue with removing TOMA requirements from the Task Force. The group was grateful to Mike and others for writing this response and fully supported sending it. They suggested one small wording change.

In order to provide a framework for looking at data collection strategies, and perhaps also to help organize recommendations, the group created a visual to describe what they believe are the most essential components of effective community engagement. That visual is shown on page six, with additional detail on page seven.

The group reviewed the individual and organizational leader surveys compiled by Mike, based on the common questions from all the work groups. They agreed on several changes and also agreed that SpeakUp Austin would be the platform for the survey because it is a known platform and can do all the customization which the group needs. It also does some analytics. The group agreed that these surveys were a beginning. They want the individual survey to be open to all Austinites, to hear what they have to say about community engagement. The surveys are only **part** of each workgroup's strategy and are a tool, not the tool. The individual survey link will be posted on Next Door, which reaches about 53,000 households. (These are people who signed up for Next Door.) The group may also do a deeper dive with some neighborhood organizations. They created a preliminary list of possible priority neighborhood organizations from each district, based on two recommendations from each member.

A number of members have expressed concern about the workload that faces them and balancing this with other commitments. Members are deeply committed to this project and no one anticipated how much time it would take. It appears that the Task Force may be spending more time on its work than some Boards and Commissions. Council members who appointed members didn't know how much of a commitment this might require. The group discussed the workload and agreed that in order to complete their work in a reasonable time frame that they would have to prioritize. One criterion for prioritizing could be to emphasize reaching those who have less access to city engagement efforts. They were reminded that data gathering isn't an audit of what the City does, but simply information to help frame what City community engagement efforts could be. They also agreed to be transparent with Council about what can reasonably be accomplished and a realistic timeline. The language of the revised resolution may give the group more flexibility about their end date. This will be explored in early November.

Each Work Group described what they planned to do, particularly in light of creating a realistic workload. Those descriptions are found on page five. They agreed to revisit the overall work plan at next meeting, to make it a realistic work load. They will also talk in early November about whether the end of January 2016 is a realistic end date.

Member Attendance List

Celso Baez	Chris Howe	Navvab Taylor
Mike Clark-Madison	Ken Rigsby	Sara Torres
Richard Fonte (video-conference)	Margarita Decierdo	Koreena Malone
Andrea Hamilton	Christopher Ledesma	

Decisions Made

- Official meeting minutes approved with two changes –
  - 5B: missing the "n" in the phrase "then provided."
  - 6A: change the word "masses" to "individuals".
- Agreed that the op-ed piece shared by Mike would be sent to the Austin American Statesman in response to their editorial about removing TOMA restrictions. Suggested using "we" rather than "I" when appropriate, to demonstrate that these views come from and are supported by the entire group.
- Made several edits to the individual and organizational leader surveys (see below). Agreed to use SpeakUp Austin to distribute the individual survey.
- The Organizational Leader survey will be sent to identified organizational leaders AND those leaders will also be asked to distribute the link to the Individual survey to their membership.
- The surveys will be translated by City staff into Spanish, Mandarin or Cantonese, Korean and Vietnamese. The non-English surveys will be posted when they are available, rather than waiting until all are available.
- Ken Rigsby will join the Boards and Commissions work group and the Neighborhoods work group.

Action Items

Who	What	When
Diane M.	Email TF members instructions on how to access and use Bloomfire (no other content).	9/29/15
Larry S.	Get the two surveys translated into Spanish, Mandarin or Cantonese, Korean and Vietnamese. Post the translated surveys as they become ready.	1 – 2 weeks
Larry S.	Program the surveys onto the SpeakUp Austin site.	1-2 days after surveys ready
Mike C-M	Edit the two surveys based on agreed-on changes. Send revisions to TF	9/28/15
Richard F.	Share the B&C questions with members of the Under-represented work group (Margarita D., Christopher L., Sara T.), so they can consider if they want to ask similar questions of the Boards and Commissions they contact.	9/29/15
Task Force	Use Bloomfire in order to share information with each other.	Ongoing
Task Force	Provide feedback to Mike on revised surveys within 48 hours.	9/30/15
Task Force	Revisit the big picture work plan in light of tonight's discussion about workload and project time frames/ end date.	10/8/15
Task Force	Explore with Larry Schooler how the CPIO interns might assist with gathering information about best practices.	10/8/15
Task Force	Revisit work group outreach strategies after the two basic surveys have given us some information.	11/5/15
Task Force	Share project work plan and realistic time frames with Council.	11/15

Consensus Changes to the Individual Survey

- Allow comments on all questions.
- Q. 2 – separate into two questions, one about job and the other about volunteer service.
- Q.4 – add an option "Use online tools"
- Add standard demographic questions including education level and zip code, then a question that asks if any of the following applies to you with the list from question 15. Add "homeowners" to the list in this question.

Consensus Changes to the Organizational Leader Survey

- Allow comments on all questions.
- Q. 3 – add an option "Use online tools".
- Correct the numbering (two number 6s)
- Add a question that asks something like "How should/could the city most effectively engage your members?" The group envisioned this with a multi-box checklist and option for open-ended comment.
- If relevant, add questions about education level and zip code or other demographics.

Work Group Plans

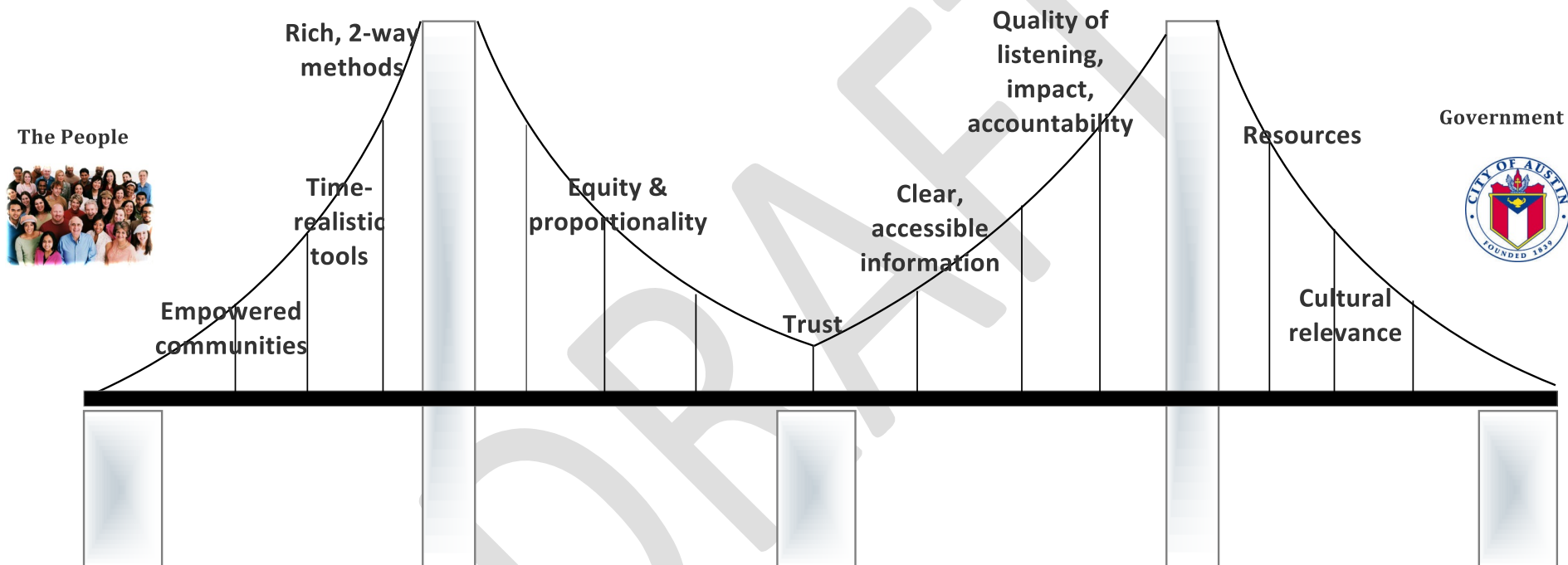| Group	What They Plan to Do
Business	Have created a list of business groups, Chambers, etc. We need to divide up the list among our work group members and have them make contact. We want these organizations both to distribute the individual survey to their members and for the leaders to complete the Organizational Leader survey.
Civic/Nonprofit	We have 35 groups on our list. We may divide the list into categories and prioritize. We are considering giving work group members one category (e.g. environmental groups) and letting them make contact to 1) ask them to distribute the individual survey to their members, 2) invite the leaders to complete the Organizational Leader survey, and 3) invite the leaders to participate in a focus group. We hope to have four focus groups. We think we can do this work by early November.
Under-represented	We have identified 9 Boards and Commissions for focus. We will divide up the contact work among work group members. We may attend meetings (not to get on the formal agenda, but to share information about the Task Force and the available surveys) or we may reach out via email.
Neighborhoods	We will use Next Door to distribute the survey link for individuals. We may contact a few neighborhood groups for a deeper dive through in-person or phone interviews or other methods.
City Department Staff	We have identified 5 key questions and have the Department list. We will prioritize contact with Departments based on the amount of community engagement they do. We will make phone calls to gather information on our five questions. We think it will take about three weeks.
Boards and Commissions	We have selected 21 Boards and Commissions for our data-gathering focus. We will send a tailored survey both to the B&C members and to City staff who work with these Boards and Commissions. We hope to send it next week and expect it to take about 2 weeks to get data back. We will then select a subgroup of 12-15 Boards/Commissions to do individual interviews (phone or in person) with the Chair of the group, to ask additional questions. We suggest the Under-represented Work group may want to use similar questions of the Boards and Commissions they contact.

Future Agenda Items

- Revisit the overall work plan at next meeting, to make it a realistic work load.
- Talk in early November about the project end date. Is 1/31/16 realistic?

Meeting Evaluation

What we LIKED about today's meeting	What wasn't so great, what we would change
- Facilitators asked the question about workload and feeling of overwhelm. - The "bridge" exercise - Some work groups now have specific goals. - Copies of handouts provided by City staff.	- End on time (ended at 9:15.) - Send exercises out in advance.

Key Elements of Effective Community Engagement Visual

Key Elements of Effective Community Engagement

The People

Rich, 2-way methods

Quality of listening, impact, accountability

Government

Resources

Time-realistic tools

Equity & proportionality

Clear, accessible information

Cultural relevance

Empowered communities

Trust

Purpose:
Quality public engagement offers opportunities for all voices to be heard and respected,
which leads to better representation of the community,
which in turn results in better decisions and policies

V1, created by the City of Austin Task Force on Community Engagement, 9/24/15

Key Elements of Effective Community Engagement with Detail

Purpose of quality engagement

Quality public engagement offers opportunities for ALL voices to be heard and respected, which leads to better representation of the community, which in turn results in better decisions and policies.

Empowered Communities	Time-realistic Tools	Rich 2-way Methods	Equity & Proportionality	Mutual Trust	Clear, accessible information	Quality of Listening, Impact Accountability	Resources	Cultural Relevance
Communities take ownership of their issues and concerns. Empowerment for disenfranchised populations Overcoming your fear of participating Knowing HOW to have influence (what does it take?) Stability, e.g. housing, food, work, etc.	Ability for people to participate even if they have limited time.	Opportunities for dialogue & consultation, not just 1-way communication Willingness to meet in the middle, find common ground Make it easy & welcoming. Culturally relevant methods	Equitable methods AND outcomes Fully representative, not just loudest voices Proportionality, not just those with access Physical access, opportunities to be heard.	Residents have more trust in facts, experts and City government has more trust in feedback from the community.	People know how to have input Full & organized information Easily understood information Transparency Accessible information for those with special needs.	Listen Adequate follow though, promises are kept Explicit commitment about how input will be used Input directly to decision-Makers Clear time table and end point for projects Show the results, impact of the feedback	Staffing Budgets Other resources	Use culturally relevant methods Understand community strengths and weaknesses to understand capacity Help people overcome their fear of giving input