Task Force on Community Engagement Meeting Notes: January 28, 2016

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Contents

Executive Summary

On January 28, 2016 eight of the thirteen members of the Task Force on Community Engagement (TFCE) attended the meeting at the Street-Jones Building. **Citizen comment was provided by Mateo Clarke of Open Austin** which is requesting that the Task Force consider their recommendations related to open data and the use of technology for open governance. They will provide a written summary of their recommendations to be shared with Task Force members via the Bloomfire site.

The group approved the January14, 2015 minutes with **no changes**.

Recommendations continue to be based on the group's previously identified **global criteria they wanted their consensus recommendations to meet**:

- It's legal.
- It's an improvement.
- It's easy enough to implement (in our view).
- Whenever possible, it addresses a problem presented to the TF.
- The City has the resources, or it may involve the reasonable allocation of resources, to do it (money, staff, skills, etc.).
- The recommendation is quantifiable, measurable.
- It produces a good return on investment.
- It's based on data.

The group worked on Theme 2 from the needs assessment: "Make it easier for people to give input in ways that are convenient, accessible and appropriate for them." Recommendations on this topic fell into three major categories:

- meeting community members where they usually gather, using mobile options (e.g., in-district office hours, frequent in-district town halls, a roaming "engagement" bus, kiosks)
- partnering with existing community organizations to better reach community residents
- robust, current, easy-to-use, on-line technology that is made widely available

The group agreed to come to **the February 11, 2016 meeting prepared to propose their top recommendation in each of the remaining three theme areas** and that they will start with Theme 3: "Explain how input will be used and show how that input had an impact on the decision made". These proposed recommendations may come from those included on Bloomfire or be a new idea and should be a recommendation that meets the global criteria.

Member Attendance List

Andrea Hamilton	Richard Fonte	Navvab Taylor
Chris Howe	Ken Rigsbee	Sara Torres
Claudia Herrington	Koreena Malone	

Action Items

Who	What	When
TF members	Review the Bloomfire posts for themes 3-5 and come to the meeting prepared to share your top recommendation for each theme. These proposals can be something already mentioned on Bloomfire or a new idea, but they should meet the global criteria agreed on by the group.	2/11/16

Meeting Notes

Citizen input

- Mateo Clarke of Open Austin provided a recap of recommendations that Open Austin would like the Task Force to consider related to open data and the use of technology for open governance. The topic areas addressed by their recommendations include:
  1. Improve access to and completeness of public-meeting information.
  2. Create an issue tracking system for website and digital properties to encourage feedback and productive action in the form of site improvement.
  3. Open Source City of Austin website content and services to encourage community contributions.
  4. Create a policy for IT procurement & app releases that requires an open data plan.
  5. Survey data collected by, or on the request of the City should be "Open by Default."

  They will provide a written summary of their recommendations to be shared with Task Force members via the Bloomfire site.

Consensus Process Used by the Group

1) Agree on a recommendation to discuss.
2) Ask questions for understanding (not hidden opinions).
3) Identify any concerns, unmet needs. (This includes giving opinions.)
4) Brainstorm modifications to the recommendation that might meet the unmet needs/concerns.
5) Determine if there is consensus on any of the modifications.
   - If yes, that becomes a consensus recommendation in the report.
   - If no, decide whether to continue negotiating on that recommendation or move on to another.

Global Criteria for Recommendations

The group reviewed the global criteria for recommendations and refined the recommendation below in bold:

- It's legal.
- It's an improvement.
- It's easy enough to implement (in our view).
- Whenever possible, it addresses a problem presented to the TF.
- **The City has the resources, or it may involve the reasonable allocation of resources, to do it (money, staff, skills, etc.).**
- The recommendation is quantifiable, measurable.
- It produces a good return on investment.
- It's based on data.

Consensus Recommendations for Theme #2: Make it easier for people to give input in ways that are convenient, accessible and appropriate for them.

(A) Encourage Council Members to have regular localized contact with groups and individuals (e.g., office hours in District/Mobile Office, Town Halls)
(B) Create designated meeting space that is accessible to all in each District. Accessibility includes: public transit availability, ADA, physically accessible, ability to access meetings virtually or by phone.
(C) Systematically work to engage and partner with community based organizations that have existing community relationships, community trust and community engagement expertise.

(D) Experiment with non-traditional methods of community engagement, e.g.,
  a. Mobile "Engagement Bus" (dedicated bus, with graphic/logo wrapping); regular routes, times, days
  b. Input kiosk (mobile or stationary) where people gather. If mobile, schedule regular routes, times, days
(E) Ensure engagement methods are designed in a simple, welcoming format, including:
  a. Language
  b. Ease of use
  c. Accessible reading level
  d. Minimize use of jargon and acronyms
  e. Provide mechanism for people to stay informed
(F) Sufficiently fund, prioritize, and implement during FY2017 on-line agenda commenting system for community members to give input to Council, Commissions, Boards, and Task Forces on city issues.
  a. Can be organized by district for Council members by issue – including "for," "against," "neutral"
  b. Input can flow up to Council through task forces, town halls, etc, and through other city entities
  c. Collected from various sources
  d. Organized information is provided in advance of decision-making meetings
  e. Dedicated staff are assigned to monitor the site(s) and maintain system(s).
(G) Sufficiently fund, prioritize and implement during FY2017 an online engagement platform that has the following capabilities (*See as a best practice example Salt Lake City: Open City Hall - http://www.slcgov.com/opencityhall and Peak Democracy*)
  a. An open-data plan
  b. Simple descriptive information on top
  c. Recent developments on topics
  d. Ability for reader to subscribe to issues, including options under consideration and policy tools that are available
  e. Specific questions to elicit feedback
  f. Ability for user to review others' feedback, their demographics and location
  g. Robust search function
  h. Generates "word cloud" of comments
  i. Access to other input channels

Potential Additional Recommendations

The group began discussion on a potential recommendation for theme two regarding the use of innovative meeting practices that enable virtual (telephone / online) participatory processes at live meetings. The recommendation was not finalized and will be discussed at the next meeting.

The group also discussed a potential recommendation which they ultimately felt was more appropriate under Theme 5. The following is a recap of that suggested recommendation and some concerns that they would like to address when they take this up again when discussing Theme 5.

Proposed recommendation language:
  Invest in community outreach workers as a method for gathering feedback. Outreach workers must have local knowledge, community trust, and are culturally competent.
  Concerns to consider:
  o This could be used politically
  o Perhaps better to hire permanent, full-time staff
  o Who will manage them?
    ▪ Don't know if city staff has capacity/skills
  o Don't know the best combination of people – may need specific people based on issue so they have issue expertise.

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Notes for Executive Summary of Recommendations Report

- Want engagement opportunities to be conversational; meet people where they are. Conversations that anyone can follow – no jargon.
- Identify things that need time and money.
- Include data about percentage of survey respondents who want more/better on-line options.

Meeting Evaluation

What we LIKED	What we would CHANGE
• Had a quorum • Precipitated actions • Cookies • Note taking • Collapsed things into topics • Highlighted system challenges • Handling online issue was a big deal • Inspired thinking of neat ways to gather input in districts • Important to have someone present who does the work (within city structure)	• Spent entire meetings on one topic • Meeting too long • Concern about perceived disrespect to CPIO