

Van Dusen Community Engagement Discussion

(1/29/07)

Comment

What can city do to help us better participate in decisions

Buck stops??? Here?

Clear lines of responsibility

Like idea of "President's Council" from neighborhood associations/cross pollinate

Build a huge spirit of inclusiveness that people believe

Invite everyone to the table

City council meetings travel to neighborhoods

Complete budgets need to be transparent, clearer to people & in timely manner

Go beyond "written word" to build consensus

You'll get more participation if people feel their voice is important / being used in decision - making

Offer leadership in getting communities more engaged w/their schools.

More interaction / cooperation between neighborhoods

City priorities/longterm goals should be:

The understanding of importance of education as crime prevention

These should underpin all decision-making (core values)

Make rest of state proud & supportive of our city

Working Now

Parts of NRP

Neighborhood organizations

- more participation er neighborhood level vs district level

City should support - Neighborhood newspapers, neighborhood websites, newspaper websites

People are too busy / how to engage?

Not working

Lack of accountability / follow-through, esp. Housing Inspections outstanding orders

Quit using "lack of funding" as excuse of inaction

Develop more/new leaders - not same old folks

More "proselytizing" / outreach

Other methods

Govt. 101 primer needed / start @ grade school level & new immigrant communities

Everything takes so LONG...

Why are all the boards separate (MPRB, Library, Bd of ED, etc.)

Some public hearings don't function well

- Better technology

- Bigger room

Differentiate jurisdictions / what each does

Works

311 system

Local police precinct cooperation
Engaged city councilmembers / good relationships
Council members' e-newsletters/updates
Third Ward Summit w/residents & city officials

What can City do better ...

Help with Independent zoning from an attorney
Money to hire outside person to help with process issues
Meetings that affect you should happen in the neighborhoods & at night
Omundsmen for zoning & planning issues
Grievance procedure for planning actions (& other boards & commissions)
Recognize, support & fund NRP
City leaders & staff have respect for community members
Review policies that bypass community input like administrative review
NRP
Council members recognition of NRP
Council members that are "home grown" from the neighborhood and community
Property info on website

What Works

Neighborhood orgs.
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What needs to Change

If city asks for input needs to be valued not ignored
311 (weekend hours)
Earlier public release of agendas & reports
Use of consent calendar (Planning, zoning board of Adj.)
Boards & Commissions Fair, balanced, transparent
Civility - respect
Better communication & notice of citywide issues to citizens
Neighborhood initiated proposals or change
Need non geographic groups/boards
City provide resources to make neighborhood orgs. Work
Inform of budget/money ahead of time

Review successes and failures of past
apply principle of measurable outcomes to develop best practices from previous system

Concern that we are "throwing" the baby out with the bathwater"
don't start all over - improve what we've got
Would like to have full picture over entire decision process
communicate input up front
less information overtime
went from planning to reaction
communication broke down - not consistent
Have info ahead of time so community is able to plan - not react

Need to understand the whole process to effectively influence decisions
How is input used in decision process
Hearing but not public engagement
Front end is defining - comm. Engagement is formality

no way to revisit
more of a show than authentic conversation
no chance to shift direction once
Arrogance from elected officials

City controls questions, expertise ____
Charge is framed to what they want the answer to be
Citizen involvement to define scope of work

Community needs to understand regulations and questions that community input is required (I.e. Zoning)
Give citizens knowledge of the tools they have to work with
Community input and control over how resources are spent thru NRP provides important information for what's really going on
Broker priorities by having control over resources
Community orgs. Provide greater access to information about whats going on.

Public hearings should be held at times when people can attend or other opportunities for input other than at times of decision
Improve ways that information is deceminated
Be clear with critical question for decision
Speak to that issue
Report back to community how input was used - rationale for decision
Explain limits of power - both city and community
Clear expectations

Assure that there are as many ways / options as possible to participate
encourage everyone to participate.
Everyone must be included in the decision process.