

## **Marcy Holmes Community Engagement Discussion**

(1/31/07)

### **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 to cross-pollinate

Build a huge spirit of inclusiveness that people believe

Invite everyone to the table

City council meetings should travel to neighborhoods

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

Go beyond "written word" to build consensus

(Continued on page 2)

---

---

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

Priorities and goals should underpin all decision-making (core values)

Make rest of state proud & supportive of our city

People are too busy / how to engage?

### **What is working now?**

Parts of NRP

Neighborhood organizations

- more participation at neighborhood level vs district level

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

311 system

Local police precinct cooperation

Engaged city council members / good relationships

Council members' e-newsletters/updates

Third Ward Summit w/residents & city officials

NRP

Neighborhood orgs.

Odemtotu pf meogjbprjppds

Neighborhood initiated proposals for change

Community input and control over how resources are spent thru NRP provides important information for what's really going on

Community orgs. Provide greater access to information about what's going on.

### **What needs to change?**

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

Quit using "lack of funding" as excuse for 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

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

Ombudsman 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  
 Council members recognition of NRP  
 Council members that are "home grown" from the neighborhood and community  
 Property info on website  
 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 should be fair, balanced, transparent  
 Civility - respect  
 Better communication & notice of citywide issues to citizens  
 Need non-geographic groups/boards  
 City should 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 over time  
 current process went to quickly 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  
 Hearings are not public engagement  
 Front end is defining - community and communication. Engagement is formality  
 no way to revisit  
 more of a show than authentic conversation  
 no chance to shift direction  
 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 when community input is  
 required (i.e. zoning)  
 Give citizens knowledge of the tools they have to work with  
 Broker priorities by having control over resources  
 Public hearings should be held at times when people can attend. Other opportunities  
 should be available for input other than at times of decision  
 Improve ways that information is disseminated  
 Be clear about the 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.

### Somali Subgroup

Very important to be involved  
Information is a key  
Immigrants attend meetings and want elected officials to come to their meetings  
Regular meetings are needed with officials and organizations that can assist with meeting  
community needs.  
Direct relationships are needed/cut out the middlemen  
City needs to establish a relationship with SWIM to help better solve problems  
Direct contacts are needed with decision makers  
More information and education is needed to help address community needs

---

---

---

---