



**Work Group 3: Citywide Community Engagement Policy
Notes for Meeting 5: 6 to 8 p.m., October 16, 2018
Crown Roller Building**

Introductions of Work Group members and Check In

- All group members, staff and guests were asked: what is one thing that helps you in change or making it stick?

Handouts referenced during meeting -

- Citywide Community Engagement Policy Work Group Recommendations
- Agenda

Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) presentation

- Group attendees have probably dealt with CPED because the department touches about every person in the city.
- There are around 240 people working in the department.
- CPED functions include:
 - Long-range planning to set the vision for growth and development.
 - Planning, heritage and zoning board that make decisions about the growth and change in the city.
 - Business licensing and inspections.
 - Economic development programs, business outreach and employment training.
- Community engagement is central and important to what CPED does.
- CPED reports to the City Council. The group tees up information for city officials so they know how the decisions will affect people's lives.
- CPED members each described their individual functions.

Long-Range Planning

- Small division of about 14 people.
- Conducts planning, administers city art program and designates buildings for preservation.
- Spent majority of time during the course of 10 years on Small Area Plans where it does a lot of engagement.
- The group follows up with changes to the zoning map.
- The group is known for the comprehensive plan update, which has been going on for the past 2.5 years. The engagement effort that goes along with that process is probably the most the city has engaged the general public in decades.
 - They city won't take on future engagement efforts like this for a long time.

Regulatory Reviews

- This group lets residents know about proposed change; typically this kind of change needs a land-use permission or special review by the planning commissions.
- Engagement includes placing notices on properties, sending mailers, delivering online messages, distributing posters, etc.
- The notices give residents an opportunity to contact a city planner and show up at a public hearing to provide input.
- Some engagement strategies are part of state statutes, city ordinances and others.
- The group struggles the most with people who aren't "regulars" in the process and who don't know how they can affect a decision. Legal criteria are involved, and they need to communicate to people about those criteria.
- The group has limitations about informing renters. They can post notices on the four corners of a building, but they are limited.

Minneapolis Homes Program

- The group's name is an umbrella term for all of the homeownership-focused programs. It provides a variety of products including homeowner and developer education.
- The program also provides financing that:
 - Helps make a project that isn't financially feasible, feasible.
 - Addresses the affordability gap (difference between home value and what person can afford).
 - Communicates about developing quite a few city-owned properties.
- The group also oversees the community garden program.
- They spend a lot of time and focus making programs as accessible as possible with streamlined forms, PowerPoint training, and other ways to help folks get traction with the different product lines.
- A challenge they face is being limited by the amount of time they can spend. They are also challenged by engaging early and often to make sure they are reflecting all the perspectives that might have an opinion about their "products."
- Out of all the large metropolitan areas in the country, Minneapolis had one of the biggest gaps in racial disparity.
- The program increases home ownership by:
 1. Incentivizing developers.
 2. Try to make it easier for folks to buy a home.
 3. Working with homebuyers to find ways to create down payments and closing assistance.
 4. Helping home rehabbers by offering up to \$10,000 in assistance.
- It is working on a plan to address the "missing middle." These are the 10- to 15-unit projects that are needed along with higher-density projects along transit corridors.
- They are constantly assessing what they aren't doing right and who they are missing.
- One glaring simultaneous success and failure is they increased the amount of black homeownership and developers. They realized they also needed to do the same for indigenous and other communities.
- Until they get everyone equitably interested, they cannot rest on the successes they've had during the last few years.

Communications

- This person/group audits different channels to get the story out.
- He/they uses plain language for residents to find what they need.

CPED On IAP2

- It's a spectrum. What they do in land-use planning falls right in the middle (involve) by working directly with the public.
- Question: IAP2 isn't about size, but it's more about quality and other criteria. Why would you put land-use planning into the middle one?
 - Answer: The right side is "empower," which is giving the public decision-making authority. Their job is to give decision makers enough information about how the general populace thinks about those goals (2020 efforts, etc.). It isn't empowering; it's up to the City Council to make those decisions.

Small Group Discussion

The large group formed smaller groups of three and had discussions with one of the CPED members with a goal of asking them "What have you done well?" and taking the opportunity to glean information and bring it back to share helpful nuggets.

General questions and thoughts from the groups

- The challenge is communications. The city posts information on a website and uses Listserv, but not everyone receives that information. For example, the Asian American community communicates via word of mouth. Unless CPED is plugged in, they don't reach everyone.
- Basic communication is an issue with many programs.
- The invitation thing is big. Some cultures want to be invited to do things like vote.
- One group talked about the idea of the engagement process. If neighborhoods or people in the communities don't have the ability to be involved in city decisions (the spectrum gets them there), it's difficult to be involved. Neighborhoods used to have advise and consent. Now just a notice is sent. Used to have a community that has a say in change. What's the incentive? The community says it doesn't have a say, and the city is just going to do it anyway.
- Another group talked about communication, or the lack of it, and not applying other resources within the city to help communicate.
- Public hearings are difficult. CPED sends out a notice with responses according to specific criteria, but people don't know what the criteria is. Or are.

Discussion ensued after CPED attendees left

- Observation: A notice was sent as part of the 45-day period. Most of the feedback received couldn't be used. The assumption was that the public knows about specifics for feedback. They need to think about that when crafting a policy, it is complicated.
- The disconnect from the City Council to the actual feedback. The City Council is telling them to do one thing. The city is short staffed and can't do the work that is important. It relies on neighborhoods to engage.
- Neighborhood groups are not the only way to communicate. It's still our responsibility to include everyone. The Hmong don't come to meetings, but they have a regular meal they

have together, so we can offer information. That takes time and money. One group member gets nervous when the weight is on neighborhood groups.

- There is not any true connection between the city departments.
- One question is how invested are city departments in doing this and being held accountable. In one group, a CPED member was asked how the group holds itself accountable. The CPED member didn't have an answer.
- There is a lot of intuitionism going on. It's kind of like CPED sees engagement as having intuition about how we are engaging rather than using a system to get to a place on the spectrum. You have a lot of people with a lot of goodwill, and beyond that you have these intuitions about what it is to be engaged. We have to get departments to move beyond their intuitions. "I think we are involving," but they don't have a process or system.
- There is a lack of communication. The two departments that affect us is Public Works and CPED. Public Works said they just hired a communications person. CPED just hired a communications person. Those two people are important, and they are new. In one group, they mentioned they are developing a communication plan. It seems like we should have a conversation with those two communications people.
 - NOTE: The communications roles are not completely new, just newly filled.
- There are so many different departments, there are different grant programs, but they don't know what is all that is going on. They don't communicate with other departments. The city departments overlap. What about a central area to share information? It may be more bureaucracy.
- One group member mentioned two things:
 1. Accountability: reminder that you are in charge of creating an engagement policy. Results Minneapolis, we could incorporate engagement.
 2. Larger departments have communications people; other smaller groups won't be able to have a communications person due to lack of resources or funding.
- News Bites is the way City Council members push information out. NCR communication staff. Geared mostly for council members to know about stuff. Is beneficial for all departments.
- How do we make a collaboration among departments?
- Another key element is leadership You can talk about low-level communication staff, but the real focus is the Mayor, council people, etc.
- One group member went to a council meeting that day to talk about NRP funding for Hiawatha. When it was brought up, the policy board didn't know about it, and most council members didn't know what NRP is. They don't know what is going on and don't know about programs that are beneficial to us. There was a blank look on council members' faces: taking money away from neighborhoods. Struck me about DCPE is you are writing a policy about ...? Who is communicating with who when the council doesn't know what is going on and they are just rubber stamping. Someone needs to stand up.
- It's important to recognize that neighborhoods are volunteers. To really engage new folks, they are trying very hard to get new folks invested. It's a big learning curve about being on or working with a board. Folks just want their neighborhood to be safe and livable and great. It's a steep curve.
- City engagement needs to be compatible. Many folks mistrust the city. They are asked for input, but then they put it aside and that erodes trust. Voices aren't being heard.

- Residents don't always trust the boards, boards don't trust the city. Need to write a policy.
- Communication is always something to pay attention to. It can become a red herring. It's part of the problem but not at the heart of the problem. Most of these people don't want a policy; they want to work on their good will and intuitions. Can't hold people accountable to their intuitions. Problem: people don't want to follow something. How can you create a policy when people don't want one or don't think they need one?
- You need to have an engagement plan (neighborhoods and city departments). Planet X is the accountability factor.
- City departments are always telling you they don't have enough money to do extra. They need to prioritize city and resident engagement just as high as paving a road. Change in internal structure.
- There is a resistance from a top-down policy from a council that is not super engaged with neighborhoods.
- Who introduces the policy to the council? The council authorized this work group. The council authorized three work groups to come up with this policy.
- One concern: get policy ideas from public before writing policy. If I don't know that even though I'm plugged in, how are people on the street getting information? People need to be invited to participate or vote.
 - The City Council is supposed to be at this table owning this with us, and they are not. I want them to own this too.
 - Why haven't they come? In other groups, one or two council members show up or they send staff.
 - How can we get city council involved? Need to know who they are. Need to be invited. City council members are invited. Steve will let us know. ?
- Future meeting idea: invite City Council members from the 1989 era and ask them what was going on and what was the idea to do this? Steve will look into that.

Check Out:

- Next meeting is October 30. No more meetings are scheduled.
 - Extra meeting proposed: Monday, November 5, 6 to 8 p.m. @ Crown Roller. Probably have one more during December.
- **Homework**
 - *Do you have questions?*
 - Look at the Citywide Community Engagement/Policy Work Group Recommendations
 - Note – this is a draft. Steve took all comments from this group and all emails from individual members and compiled it into one document. Not comprehensive or finished.
 - **Send edits to the draft by October 25 so Steve can compile.**