

Citywide Public Involvement Standards Taskforce

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

5 PM – 7:00 PM

City Hall, 1221 SW 4th Ave., Lovejoy Room

MINUTES

Attendance: Bryan Aptekar, Linda Bauer, JoAnn Bowman, Laurel Butman, Nancy Chapin, Carlotta Collette, Emile Combe, Krystyn Czarnecka, Frank Dixon, Jim Gladson, Tim Hall, Bill Hoffman, Brian Hoop, Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong, Arlene Kimura, Sy Kornbrodt, David Lane, Jeanne Lawson, Paul Leistner, Patti McCoy, Julie Odell, Jake Oken-Berg, Marsha Palmer, Jerry Powell, Betsy Radigan, Scott Seibert, Mary Volm, Corinne Weber, Doug Zenn

Others present: Kristen Kibler, Katy Brooks, Crysttal Atkins, Christina Gardnola, Barbara Simon, Charles Heying

Absent: Sande Allman, Raquel Bournhonesque, Willie Brown, Brent Canode, Phill Colombo, Lynn Knox, Mallin Mohamed, Nathan Thuan Nguyen

Brainstorm of issues group wants to address

I've organized comments into themes similar to public comments from the Feb. 25th event and questionnaire.

Create minimum citywide public involvement standards

- It was clear the issue most repeated is group wants to spend more time clarifying what public involvement is.
- Define what good public involvement is, what does success look like.
- Provide consistency across all bureaus.
- Come up with consistent values. The summary we got were values.

Engage public at earliest point in planning processes

- Providing earlier notification was mentioned several times.
- Clarify at what stages are the public invited to participate, when do bureaus respond to the public, at what stages in a planning process is public involvement used.

Accountability of participants in public involvement processes

- There needs to be two-way accountability, both city staff/bureaus and individuals/community organizations.
- Clarify expectations and accountability of staff and public who participate.
- Look at how 3rd party contractors, public involvement consultants are held accountable.
- Have lasting accountability, how do we hold all partners to these rules, including Council, 1996 principles.

Improve outreach efforts for minority, low-income constituencies

- ❑ Need more outreach to low-income communities.
- ❑ Identify best practices that are culturally appropriate for diverse constituencies. (County program has ideas.)
- ❑ Recognize that diverse communities may have involvement processes separate from the City that can help inform our effort.
- ❑ Utilize and incorporate proven methods and techniques to engage communities of color, immigrants and refugee groups in all phases of planning, budgeting, and development processes.
- ❑ Use proven techniques for culturally competent PI that already exist.

Expand skills training on public involvement for staff and public

- ❑ Public needs help with skills building to be knowledgeable of how decisions are made and how to navigate complex issues.
- ❑ Provide ongoing public involvement training to staff on how to implement these ideas. Set up accountability procedures to ensure it happens.
- ❑ Provide skills building training for staff and neighborhood leaders.

Ensure flexibility of standards to fit unique circumstances of projects

- ❑ Concern raised that code may not be best way to implement change. Changing bureau culture and improving staff skills and practices more effective.
- ❑ Acknowledge cookie cutter approach doesn't work. Need flexibility.
- ❑ Bureaus need flexibility in outreach strategies.
- ❑ Differentiate between types of projects and bureau needs.

Improve communication strategies for public involvement notifications

- ❑ City needs a citywide public information distribution system.
- ❑ Provide a minimum place for notifications to get info out to public.

Clarify role of project managers and how decisions get made in PI process

- ❑ Focus attention on middle management - where key decisions get made on allocation of resources for public involvement.
- ❑ Look at how decisions get made. How costs and resources are allocated.

Create Citizen Advisory Committees for bureau, capital & planning projects

- ❑ Utilize Citizen Advisory Committees for all major projects.

Utilize electronic technologies to improve citizen participation

- ❑ Broaden toolbox of ways to engage people beyond meetings, using computers, voicemail.
- ❑ Provide a master calendar online of all City meetings and project timelines.

Improve transparency, access to information, how decisions made

- ❑ Expand access to public documents.
- ❑ Explain to public why bureaus are doing a project.
- ❑ Provide organizational chart of City bureaus, programs, and projects.

Provide adequate funding and resources for public involvement

- ❑ Acknowledgement that quality outreach requires adequate resources.
- ❑ Equity in distribution of resources for neighborhood associations. Richer neighborhoods have access to money, some don't.

- Focus on our responsibility to be stewards of public resources.

ONI coordinate City public involvement efforts

- ONI should take lead on developing cross-bureau projects.

Expand outreach efforts beyond Citizen Advisory Groups, Neigh Assocs

- Broaden the boundaries of which bureaus reach out to beyond neighborhood associations to include whole community.

Ensure consistency in level of services from neighborhood coalitions

- Some coalitions do great outreach, some don't, some have web sites and newsletters, some don't, etc. Bureaus need consistency to rely on them.

Clear expectation and description of role of citizens, staff, consultants

- Clarify what do we do with people once we get them to the table.

Create a best practices manual

- Produce a best practice toolkit and inventory manual.

Create standard evaluation and feedback process

- Focus on developing a consistent evaluation process.

Utilize neighborhood association system

- Do not weaken neighborhood associations out of this process.

Use SW Community Plan citizen generated public involvement ideas

- Implement strategies outlined in SW Community Plan.

Involve public in problem-solving efforts

- Provide ways to mitigate differences in a complex and challenging project.
- Look at public involvement as a collaborative relationship.

Organizing constituency meetings

Volunteers for organizing constituency meetings: JoAnn Bowman, Paul Leistner, Laurel Butman, Betsy Radigan, Patti McCoy, Emile Combe, Ellie Fiore, Sy Kornbrodt, Carlotta Collette, Katy Brooks, Jeanne Lawson

Other comments:

- Recognize some bureaus are already doing a good job at PI.
- Quality PI requires systemic change over time, change in culture.
- Group wants commitment commissioner's and bureau directors support this.
- Need to look to institutional memory, why didn't things work in past.
- Stay realistic with the expectations of what we can accomplish.
- Understand process does not equal power.
- May not be enough time to accomplish all these ideas.
- Add research goals into the timeline.
- For case studies be cognizant of the income, racial, age diversity of people who are gathering info from. Research is weak w/o diverse interview pool.