

Public Involvement Task Force Focus on Culture & Accountability recommendations April 22, 2004 Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Jim Gladson, Environmental Services; Sy Kornbrodt, Multnomah County CIC; Scott Seibert, Metro CIC; Carlotta Collette, Ardenwald/Johnson Creek NA & consultant; Steve Hoyt, SE Uplift; Bryan Aptekar, Parks and Recreation; Jerry Powell, GREAT and Goosehollow NA; Julie Odell, PSU Center for Public Participation.; Arlene Kimura, East Portland, Hazelwood NA; Tim Hall, Water Works; Brian Hoop, ONI; Corrine Weber, SW Neighborhoods, Inc.

Review of first 5 recommendations, or the Governance issues

- We need to be clear and specific about what we are asking of Council and City bureaus so they know what they will be held accountable to.
- Identify steps to evaluate/measure effectiveness and implementation of recommendations.
- Headings should be more functional. Words like “Governance” and “Culture” are too esoteric. Group agrees “Governance as Partnership” category should be the “Culture” section. Group agrees to create a new “Communications” category and move some proposals to “Accountability.”

Discussion on Culture recommendations

- Concern that some of the culture ideas are internal (specific to staff) and some are external (specific to public). Don't want them to be in same section together.
- Group tending to agree some of these culture issues are more about accountability or communication and don't address culture.
- Need to differentiate between what is housekeeping and what is fundamental legal change. Send out staff survey to ask for ideas on what are easily implemented tasks and which are long-term.

Recommendation #6: Access to public records, summaries of Council agenda items, web links to documents, emergency ordinances

- The group agrees the recommendation title should be: Develop policies and system for improving the quality and availability of public information. The goal of the public records proposal is to get the city more organized, standardized and better-prepared to respond to requests for public records requests. We want to ask Council to review public records request process and standardize accordingly so that each bureaus' processes are consistent and accessible to the public. Individuals need transparency that all bureaus operate in similar ways.

- Suggestion that this is 4-5 recommendations which should be broken up as specific action steps under the above broad proposal.
- Suggestion these should be in the accountability section.
- Use action verbs such as Provide, Continue, Post, etc.
- Ask Auditor if there are existing city-wide public records request process.
- Need a better explanation of what emergency ordinances are. Intent is to avoid precluding public process by using emergency ordinances. System is abused when ordinances are unnecessarily acted upon as emergencies.
- Clarify why provide a paragraph summarizing Council agenda items.

Recommendation #7: Improvements to web-based calendar of public involvement events.

- Change language to: Improve enhance communication to public through city's use of electronic communication and Portland Community Media.

Recommendation #8: Improvements for Portlandonline to be more accessible.

- Concern that posting Council agenda items cannot be posted 10 days in advance. Many council agenda items are routine transfers of money and mandated actions on a deadline that can't wait.
- Need to define criteria of what is a significant item that needs more advance notice. Recommend we need more review to develop criteria for what is appropriate advance notice (such as 10 days) for significant items to go on the Council agenda.

Discussion on Accountability recommendations

Recommendation #27: Develop a PI evaluation "checklist".

- Group agrees to move to "Process Design" section
- Concern this should not be an ordinance. This is a best practices idea.

Recommendation #28: Bureau directors reporting to Council.

- Group agrees to rough outline for bureau directors to report their progress back to commissioner in charge and write progress report on their bureaus implementing public involvement recommendations. There are expectations in the budget process that public involvement needs to be improved. Issue is how do we encourage public dialogue of these reports. Suggestion that these reports would be part of community forums that take part before the budget session to discuss with the public a bureaus priorities, are in the budget submission reports, and available on the web. Similar to writing an affirmative action report listing goals and objectives, and a progress report on meeting those goals and objectives.
- Group agrees to fold Recommendation #29: "Responsibilities of staff to do public involvement" back into recommendation #28.

Discussion on Recommendations left out of report

Culture recommendations

- ❑ Two recommendations relating to customer service need to be incorporated into the community section as training and education issues. Need to move staff perceptions beyond customers to as citizens and taking a proactive step to helping the individual find someone who can answer their inquiry.
- ❑ Recommendation on providing early notification of major policy, planning and capital improvement projects place in the Process Design section. Making sure there is specific reference in the top five.
- ❑ Discussion about portlandmaps.com and the ability to type in address and learn everything in the city related to your neighborhood. The home page needs more explanation of how to use that page.
- ❑ The executive statement needs to emphasize the City and PI staff are trying to do their best. The basis for the ongoing relationship has to be about trust and cooperation between the city and public. No matter what the city does some people are not going to be happy. Council needs to understand that just because someone complains loudly it doesn't mean the PI process was flawed. There have been flawed PI efforts that have strained that trust.

Accountability recommendations

- ❑ First four recommendations dealing with feedback loop need to go into the accountability and evaluation section. Merge them. There is a federal need to respond to all comments. City should do the same. Clarify there are two different themes: 1 responding to comments and 2 end of project summary of comments.
- ❑ Recommendation to establish peer review should be taken out. That can be incorporated into proposal for network of City staff.
- ❑ Recommendation on role of Ombuds Office. Merge all recommendations into one. Bring up at the last meeting.