

COMMITTEE ON CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT MINUTES

March 28, 2017

After determining that a quorum was present, the Committee on Citizen Engagement convened in a meeting on March 28, 2017 at 10:32 a.m. in the City Council Work Session Room at City Hall, 215 E. McKinney Street, Denton, Texas.

PRESENT: Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Roden, Council Member Dalton Gregory, and Council Member Keely Briggs.

STAFF PRESENT: Bryan Langley, Alison Ream, Sarah Kuechler, Sarah Lollar.

A. Consider approval of the minutes from February 21, 2017.

Mayor Pro Tem Roden motioned, Council Member Briggs seconded to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved.

B. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding voter engagement initiatives.

Alison Ream gave a presentation on the 6 year history of voter turnout in Denton based on the percentage of registered voters. Statistics show an approximate 3.5% increase in voter turnout for the May municipal elections from 2010 to 2016. Voter registration for this time frame also increased by 14.4%. Compared to the 15% increase in population growth, this information reveals that voter registration is growing with the population.

Ream discussed the City's current protocols for sharing election information. Ream is working on improving communications for general government issues for the public to be more aware of what their City government does.

Council Member Gregory requested the City feature citizens who partner with the City to advance a project or an initiative. Ream is working with staff to brainstorm the best way to accomplish this.

Gregory shared a story that he heard about that says citizens do not have any impact on their government. He also explained that there are lots of stories where citizens have made a huge impact and if we focus on bringing those stories out more than doing this will create more engagement.

Ream, to help with this, we are hosting our first State of the City event Thursday, March 30th and we are working on a Citizen Academy in June.

Ream continued discussing graphs she researched for government entities and voter registration issues. Most of them were at a State level. The timing of elections impacted the turnout. November has a higher turnout than a May election. The Texas election code requires that elections be held on a uniform date. Currently, the City's charter states that we will have our election date in May.

Ream discussed adding additional polling locations for early voting because early voting is a large amount of the total number of votes received. This is due to the flexible hours and locations for early voting.

Ream informed the committee that questions will be added to the upcoming citizen's survey about voting so that staff can learn the reasons for not voting so they can be addressed.

Roden discussed ideas he had for the City to help citizens understand what district they are in to help increase voting.

Bryan Langley asked the committee if they approve the idea of the questions Alison proposed in her presentation.

Kevin Roden encouraged adding the election information to the front page during the election process.

Bryan Langley requested to bring the survey back before the committee in the fall once all the results are in to have further discussion.

General consensus of the committee was that it was a good idea.

C. Set Future meeting date and topics.

The committee decided to resume future meetings after the election. The committee would like to discuss the results of the State of the City event at the next meeting.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

KEVIN RODEN
COMMITTEE CHAIR
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS

SARAH LOLLAR
RECORDING SECRETARY
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS