

COMMITTEE ON CITIZEN  
ENGAGEMENT MINUTES  
April 2, 2019

After determining that a quorum was present, the Committee on Citizen Engagement convened in a meeting on April 2, 2019 at 10:34 a.m. in the City Hall Conference Room at City Hall, 215 E. McKinney Street, Denton, Texas.

PRESENT: Council Member Deb Armintor and Council Member Keely Briggs.

STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Kuechler, Jessica Rogers, Melissa Kraft, Billy Matthews, Amy Cunningham, Sarah Fullwood, Justin Harmon, Stuart Birdseye

**A. Consider approval of the minutes of December 4, 2018.**

Council Member Armintor motioned, and Council Member Briggs seconded to approve the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding development of a smart city definition and implementation plan for Denton.**

During the Oct. 9, 2018 City Council meeting, Denton resident Dorothy Kuhn requested the City develop a smart city vision and strategy based on community needs. Following her remarks, the City Council directed staff to provide information and recommendations on Denton's smart city plan. An informal staff report was provided to the Council through the Jan. 18, 2019 Friday Staff Report.

Staff research has included review of over 30 smart city organizations that could potentially assist in generating a smart city plan, attendance of two smart city conferences, and a benchmarking survey of 15 local cities. Like Denton, many neighbor cities are just beginning to realize the need for a formal smart city plan while already having several individual smart projects underway. In the last few years alone, Denton has launched:

- Open Data Portal: <http://data.cityofdenton.com/>
- Free Public Wi-Fi Downtown
- Engage Denton application: <https://dentontx.citysourced.com/>
- Interactive Capital Improvement Plan Project Map:  
<https://portal.cityofdenton.com/projects/>
- Automated Traffic Management System

After researching the multitude of smart city programs and organizations, staff recommends hiring a consulting firm to assist with this project. The main benefit of hiring a consulting firm is that it would provide staff with impartial guidance during the development of a smart city strategy free from bias. Further, this option would enable staff to require the gathering of citizen input be the foundation of the project.

The following outputs are expected to be written into the scope of work:

1. Identification of community values & needs
2. Smart city definition for Denton

3. Smart city strategy
  - a. Roadmap
    - i. Prioritized list of projects
    - ii. Synced with existing Strategic Plan
    - iii. Measures for effectiveness
  - b. Framework for future staff decisions

Director of Technology Services Melissa Kraft commented that smart cities are not just about technology, they are about the people and the community.

Council Member Armintor commented that she would like to keep a broad definition of a smart city and would like to hear more about specific smart city tools that could be useful to the community. Armintor also inquired why a consultant might be helpful rather than relying on an internal staff and expertise. Kraft replied that a consultant would be more neutral rather than local groups/organizations that may have vendor affiliations. In addition, a consultant would also look at smart cities from a community standpoint, whereas IT staff might be more inclined to focus on the technology itself.

Council Member Briggs stated she is in favor of seeking bids from consultants and is ok with the scope of work for the project.

**C. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding streaming, recording, and making public meetings available for on-demand viewing.**

In Aug. 2018, City staff presented information about recording and televising public meetings to the Committee on Citizen Engagement. During the previous discussion, the Committee was interested in options to take an incremental step to record additional public meetings. Staff developed options and presented a recommendation for a budget supplemental of \$10,000 to record 50 public meetings per year using the City's current vendor, Swagit Productions. Staff reviewed the recommended option with the COCE and requested feedback prior to presenting the upcoming budget supplemental for full Council consideration.

Sarah Kuechler said that DTV is currently at capacity. Billy Matthews said over three years, the number of meetings has increased by 78%, the produced hours has increased by 96%, and the length of City Council meetings has increased by 83%. As a result of this, Matthews said, DTV has had to turn down some department requests for videos and PSAs due to the lack of available staff time.

As a solution, Matthews recommends outsourcing 50 meetings per year, which would cost \$10,000 annually, with a one-time \$35,000 fee to purchase and set up equipment. This would be cheaper than it would be to hire a full time or part time staff member. Matthews added that there would be an option to add additional meetings after the first year, if needed.



Council Member Armintor stated that she liked the idea of outsourcing the filming of some meetings. Council Member Briggs asked if outsourced videos would be live-streamed and posted by Swaggit. Matthews confirmed that they would; no staff time would be needed to post the videos and they would be streamed live. Briggs asked if it would be possible to just record audio for some meetings, rather than doing videos. Matthews said there's not a fail-safe way to do that without staff present to run the audio. Though it could technically be done, it would make more sense to go ahead and do video considering the amount of time and work it would take to do audio recordings. There is also an issue with the posting of audio-only files on the website- the current platform used to post videos doesn't have an option for audio files, so the audio files would have to be housed separately from the videos on the website, which would likely be confusing to residents.

Briggs asked if the project could start sooner or be accelerated. Sarah Kuechler stated that there is currently not enough money in the budget for this project, so we would have to seek budget approval through the normal process before we could start the project.

**D. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding an inquiry for renting a display case at Golden Triangle Mall.**

Council Member Briggs inquired if the City could use display cases at Golden Triangle Mall to display information and materials on City programs and services. Staff reached out to the mall and received a quote to rent one display case at \$500 per month through a lease agreement with the mall for a minimum of 23 months. Staff does not currently have a budget for this program at a cost of \$11,500 for the 23-month period. If the Committee desired, the option could be included as a Council budget supplemental for consideration for FY19/20.

While visitors and residents could benefit from information available at the mall, staff believes marketing dollars may be better used for targeted or community-wide digital marketing or mailers (depending upon the campaign) or for printing of materials on program and services to provide to various City staff that attend community events and fairs. Additionally, to keep information relevant and attract attention, the materials and displays would have to be changed out regularly. A staff member would have to spend a few hours each month to develop materials and displays and travel to the mall to set-up.

Council Member Briggs stated that in her observation, the Golden Triangle Mall population is made up of older people, members of the Hispanic community, and children. She believes these residents may not be getting information through the marketing channels currently being utilized by the City and that advertising in the mall could reach a totally different market that we may not be reaching currently. Jessica Rogers stated that the City's total marketing budget is \$65,000. We try to leverage low cost options as much as possible to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. If

we seek funding for this project, it would be a 20% increase in the marketing budget and may not be the best use of funds compared to social media campaigns and other options.

Council Member Armintor asked if HOT funds could be used for the project. She suggested this kind of advertising might provide overnight tourism. Armintor suggested purchasing wire racks and asking the Golden Triangle Mall to let us put them up in the mall for free. Sarah Fullwood suggested encouraging departments to do outreach at the mall as a low-to-no-cost way to reach residents who visit the mall. The Golden Triangle Mall has been helpful and receptive to this kind of activity in the past.

**E. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding citizen engagement, communications, and transparency initiatives.**

Staff regularly provides the Committee with a brief update on some of the recent citizen engagement, communication, and transparency initiatives. Staff provided general updates in the Agenda Information Sheet and to the Committee on Speak at a Council Meeting, Waze app, Improving Denton, Website Pages, Website Management, Election Education Information, Recycling Education, Gas Well Notifications, 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Citizen's Academy, and Mayor's Summer Youth Jobs Program.

Council Member Briggs stated that she was at the Convention Center (Embassy Suites) and a visitor who had been in town for a week had no idea Denton had a downtown. She said we should do some marketing there to make sure people know what the downtown has to offer and to encourage them to leave the hotel. Sarah Kuechler said the City will work with the CVB on this and expressed appreciation for the suggestion.

Council Member Armintor asked if the online calendar has moved on the City's website. Justin Harmon said it hasn't been moved, but isn't featured prominently because it isn't all-inclusive; some departments, such as Parks and the Library, use third-party tools to post events. Armintor asked if the City could move the calendar to the top part of the home page and sync all the calendars. Sarah Kuechler said the City can put a link on the calendar page that will go to the other calendars with events that aren't included on the main calendar.

Briggs asked if the City could feature Open Government on social media. She also asked that departments be encouraged to put their big programs on the calendar. Jessica Rogers said we could do both of those things.

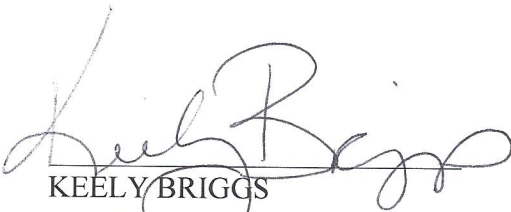
Briggs asked about the status of the option to include information about gas wells in local realtor information packets. Sarah Kuechler stated that there may be some laws restricting what we can do about that. Briggs said she would seek more information on the topic. Briggs asked if gas well fires are included with CODE RED notifications. Kuechler confirmed that they are.

Briggs asked if the City notifies high schools about the Mayor's Summer Youth program. Stuart Birdseye said all high school students were emailed about the program. Briggs asked if we could send out another reminder.

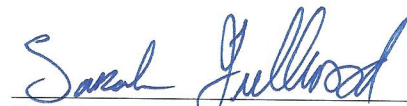
Arminton said she's received some emails about the zoning change notifications that were mailed out. She said people don't know what it's about and asked if there anything on the website explaining it. Jessica Rogers confirmed that there is information on the City website about the zoning changes. She said we are also trying to make space in the *Resident Update* to share a link to the webpage where people can find more information about the zoning notices. Justin Harmon said the information can be accessed using the URL [Dentoncode2030.com](http://Dentoncode2030.com).

**Set Future Meeting Dates and Topics.**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m.



KEELY BRIGGS  
CHAIR  
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS



SARAH FULLWOOD  
RECORDING SECRETARY  
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS