

COMMITTEE ON CITIZEN
ENGAGEMENT MINUTES
August 6, 2019

After determining that a quorum was present, the Committee on Citizen Engagement convened in a meeting on August 6, 2019 at 10:30 a.m. in the City Hall Conference Room at City Hall, 215 E. McKinney Street, Denton, Texas.

PRESENT: Council Member Keely Briggs, Council Member Paul Meltzer, and Council Member Deb Armintor (arrived at 10:34 a.m.)

STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Kuechler, Ryan Adams, Stephanie Yates, Amy Cunningham, Justin Harmon, Sarah Fullwood, Erin Winn, Marissa Barrett, Sara Hensley (arrived at 10:50 a.m.)

OTHERS PRESENT:

A. Consider approval of the minutes of June 4, 2019.

Council Member Meltzer 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 research on citizen university boards or commissions and college student engagement.

Erin Winn gave an overview of research on citizen university boards and commissions for college student engagement and reported that most municipalities with large college populations do not have a board like this.

Ryan Adams suggested engaging student government organizations as an alternative and asking to speak at their meetings, which are already organized. Ryan said some council members in other cities hold office hours/town halls on campus to engage students.

Council Member Briggs said that the suggestion originally came from a student council member who said the student population feels left out of the community. She suggested meeting annually with student councils from all three colleges in town to hear recommendations and concerns that the students may have.

Council Member Armintor shared information about a group called “Ignite”, which she said encourages women who are interested in politics or government. She suggested reaching out to them to start building a connection with students.

Council Member Meltzer said he likes the idea of a joining meetings that already exist and he thinks the gesture would raise awareness of what’s going on in the City.

Council Member Briggs asked if the schools are involved in the Census Complete Count

Committee.

Ryan Adams confirmed that students are involved and that the vice chair of the committee is a UNT student. He said there is also a TWU representative on the committee, but there is not yet a representative from NCTC.

Sarah Kuechler said her team could reach out to existing student government organizations at all three schools and possibly suggest the student government associations have a student government liaison which the City and other local governments can work with.

Council Member Meltzer asked if it would be appropriate for Council to speak at these meetings.

Sarah Kuechler said that would be fine, as long as there is not a quorum.

Council Member Meltzer asked if the City has a formal or informal relationship with the MPA program at the university, since many students seek internships in that program.

Ryan Adams confirmed that there is an informal relationship between the City and the local MPA programs. He stated that he believes Deputy City Manager Mario Canizares sits on the alumni committee for the MPA program and there are many alums on staff.

Council Member Briggs said she supports working with the student government organizations to get started.

Council Member Armintor said she supports making a connection and asking students for their ideas, rather than making them think the local government is trying to monitor their committees. She said students will respond best to an invitation to share ideas.

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

Sarah Kuechler shared a report on recent communications efforts, including recent awards won at the TAMIO conference.

Ryan Adams shared updates on the Improving Denton App, and the new Construction Guide Update.

Council Member Armintor stated that she really likes the graphic design of the guide.

Council Member Meltzer said he thinks the design helps people to see that there is a plan in place.

Council Member Briggs said from what she has heard in general from the community is that the younger residents are worried about the cost of the printed piece, and are overwhelmed by too much information, but that the older population loves it.

Ryan Adams thanked Council for the feedback.

Council Member Armintor suggested that it would be nice to have text message alerts about specific construction projects.

Council Member Meltzer asked if there is a location online where people can see more specific information.

Justin Harmon shared information about an online map that is a great tool for getting more information about construction projects.

Ryan Adams gave an overview of the web pages related to Improving Denton and the tools available to help residents stay informed.

Council Member Briggs asked if people can opt out from the print version of the Construction Guide.

Justin Harmon said the method used to mail the Construction Guide is door-to-door direct, and that it would cost more to mail the publication if people were allowed to opt out.

Ryan Adams shared information on the Construction Guide for Businesses.

Council Member Meltzer said he thinks the guide is a noble effort.

Council Member Armintor said this guide should save time by helping businesses understand what to do during construction. She also noted that seeing people face-to-face builds trust and saves time.

Ryan Adams confirmed that the Guide also gives businesses the project manager contact information.

Council Member Meltzer asked if residents can sign up for construction updates for targeted areas.

Ryan Adams said that at the moment the construction updates are all or nothing, but that we would like to have the option for residents to sign up for targeted areas in the future.

Sarah Kuechler gave a report on social media statistics/engagement. She stated that the City is currently seeking public input on several projects and thanked Council for sharing information on those opportunities.

Council Member Armintor said she doesn't think Council has seen resident feedback on the bond

yet, but that it would be nice if Council could see more public feedback information in general. She said it would help them when making decisions.

Sara Hensley suggested that departments should share updates on public meetings in the Friday Report.

Council Member Armintor said she would also like to see written comments in the words of residents.

Council Member Briggs said in some cases, when comments come in online, that Council has been able to see the comments, and that it was really helpful.

Ryan Adams said we would share the current bond comments through email.

Council Member Briggs said she was asked how someone who couldn't attend the urban forestry public meeting could share feedback.

Ryan Adams said a survey not included in the scope of the Urban Forestry Master Plan project, but that we can put information online on how to share feedback.

Council Member Armintor asked about the online Contact a Council Member form and if it would be possible to change the format of the emails.

Sarah Fullwood said that is not currently possible because of the way the form feature is built on the website.

Council Member Meltzer pointed out some logic flaws in the Mobility Plan survey and recommended revisions.

Sarah Kuechler shared information about the Back to School Fair and noted the location change to the Embassy Suites.

Council Member Briggs asked about turnout at the event last year and why there might have been a gap between supplies available and local need.

Sarah Kuechler said she would gather statistics from the event and stated that she has shared information with United Way on how to apply for City sponsorship for the event.

Sarah Kuechler shared information about the 2019 National Night Out event, which will include neighborhood block parties, and a launch party at the Civic Center.

Council Member Briggs asked how the City is reaching neighborhoods who don't have neighborhood associations.

Ryan Adams said social media and the Resident Update are being leveraged to reach those neighborhoods. He noted that the City could also target apartments, civic groups, and HOAs.

Amy Cunningham stated that there are also fliers and posters present in many City facilities.

Council Member Armintor said the fliers should be in English and in Spanish. She suggested getting the fliers placed in the Friday packets at Denton ISD.

Sarah Fullwood noted that PeachJar is a great option for reaching parents, but that it can be difficult to get printed handouts to students at Denton ISD.

Council Member Briggs said DISD should allow it if the event is for everyone.

Council Member Meltzer suggested advertising about the event on City vehicles using magnets but noted that the method would be expensive.

Amy Cunningham noted that pre-National Night Out event is also serving as the Public Safety Day event this year.

Council Member Briggs said she thought the pre-National Night Out event was a great idea.

Ryan Adams shared information about the upcoming Clear the Shelters event.

Council Member Armintor asked that a photo on the home page of the website featuring cats be changed.

Ryan Adams shared information about City Hall Selfie Day on Aug. 15. He invited Council to stop by to take a photo with a shelter animal to help promote the Clear the Shelters event.

Council Member Meltzer noted that the "About" page on the City of Denton website needs to be looked at. He asked about the strategy for the website.

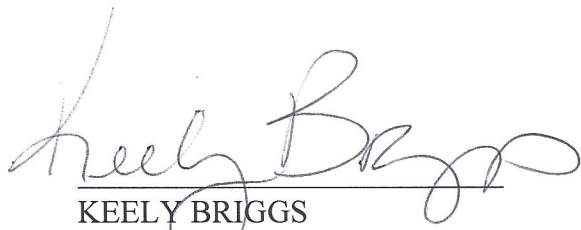
Ryan Adams and Sarah Fullwood gave an overview of the current strategy and plans to update and improve the website.

Sarah Kuechler asked if future meetings should be quarterly or bimonthly.

Council Member Briggs suggested keeping the meeting frequency the same and kicking back the dates if there isn't enough on the agenda.

Set Future Meeting Dates and Topics.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Keely Briggs", written over a horizontal line.

KEELY BRIGGS
CHAIR
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Sarah Fullwood", written over a horizontal line.

SARAH FULLWOOD
RECORDING SECRETARY
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS