Recommendation for Session #2

A hybrid e-town hall.

We have all seen e-town hall meetings at the Shaw auditorium with a moderator and a set topic. We have seen them on the budget and on the core review. They were a miss in my opinion. Usually the questions were submitted by phone, email, facebook, twitter or in person. Some were a point of view with a question. Often council members would rattle on about in response to each member of the public. I witnessed one member of the public who got up a couple times, had emailed in statements and had done at least one other via facebook. That was not fair to the rest when there was only a two-hour window for the meeting.

We had one session where about 35 minutes went into the public's brief information and a question about the core services review. Councillors took a long time responding back on the topic. That session we had, less than 11 people had participated before it ended in the two-hour limit. (Might have been an hour and a half).

The concept is as follows.

A hybrid electronic town hall / open topic with exceptions.

At the onset, a series of display boards with a task force member at each to assist in event of questions. This could be done outside the meeting room in the foyer. Each board would cover:

• Procedure – the session process

• Topic Headings – residents could pick one or start a new one with their name printed below that they wished to engage council on.

• Timing method – Public would have one minute each, for each person who signed up under that topic as per board. If 4 residents wanted to talk about improvements to Pipers Lagoon, each one would have a maximum of one minute for a total of 4 minutes max.
Then a response from members of council or staff would be limited to up to 3 of them responding with a maximum of 2 minutes each. Maximum time would be 6 minutes.
NEXT TOPIC would work the same.

• At the end of all topics that the public (residents) wanted to discuss or question was finished it would move into the close

• Follow up by council. Each member of council would have a maximum of 5 minutes each to respond overall regarding all topics. Their order of speaking would be predetermined by draw of the names of those in attendance at the beginning of the event. Those arriving late would speak based on the time they got there. If more than two showed up at the same time late, they would go alphabetically.

Total period would be 3 hours or maybe 4 hours for the whole session.

A task force member would read questions or statements done by electronic means. They might have to be shortened to fit in the one-minute period. We would not have a LIVE voice element from members of the public at this session because we would need to add those questions or statements under each topic as the session progressed.

KEY DIFFERENCES FROM WHAT COUNCIL HAD DONE AT PREVIOUS ETOWN HALL METTINGS.

• Open topic – not just one. We would have to have exceptions. Example would be, not discussing homelessness - That topic needs a different type of session and would be too hot and could result in council members not wanting to listen to 86 people talk about a wet house in Cilaire.

• Timing limits – by limiting this for the public and council, it reduces the long-winded speeches we often endure during council meetings and at social events where one councillor will talk nonstop for 19 minutes (been there).

• Task Force members doing electronic statements or questions would allow emphasis on the submitted form. Something a moderator never does.

• A timer and moderator to keep the flow. My recommendation is Reed Botright (city staffer) for moderator. He has done e-town hall meetings before and allowed for some slight leniency but kept the public moving along *he had no control over councillors*. Timer would be open – a task force member or a staffer?