

DATE OF MEETING SEPTEMBER 24, 2018

AUTHORED BY TRACY LOEWEN, COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING
SPECIALIST

SUBJECT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PILOT PROGRAM UPDATE

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide Council with a review of the Community Engagement Task Force, goals and accomplishments.

Recommendation

That the report "Public Engagement Pilot Program Update", dated 2018-SEP-24, be received for information.

BACKGROUND

The Community Engagement Task Force, established in July 2017, has been working to fulfill the following Council motion:

"It was moved and seconded that Council direct Staff to prepare a report pertaining to starting and hosting informal community engagement and public conversation sessions, which must meet all procedural requirements, with the intent to further community engagement and public conversation by the accommodation of a regularly scheduled, open topic, facilitated dialog in a setting distinct from Council's formal business meetings with the following parameters:

- An ad hoc committee of Staff, Council and the public be struck to assist in the development of the format, schedule and launch of the initiative;
- First session to be held in January 2017;
- Sessions will be held on a three month schedule; and,
- After four sessions a follow up review will take place with the intent to evaluate the success, participation and accomplishments of the engagements."

In 2017, the Task Force hosted the first session and two more sessions have been held to date. Each session has featured a different format from the previous.

PILOT PROGRAM SESSIONS

Session #1 (November 23, 2017) – Augmented Open Space Technology, Vancouver Island Conference Centre

Attendance – 60 members of the public

The purpose of this session was to hear from residents on the top most pressing issues they wanted to speak with members of Council about. Residents were asked ahead of time to provide topics and the top 10 were chosen to bring to the session for attendees to vote on. Of those 10 topics, the five with the most votes were chosen for moderated discussion. After 20 minutes of discussion, participants were encouraged to switch tables to open a new dialogue.

Feedback was mostly positive from participants. They particularly enjoyed the format, open dialogue and being able to choose topics. Participants also noted an improvement would be to increase the time allotted for discussions.

Cost for session: \$5,398.26– includes facility rental and refreshments (VICC), advertising (News Bulletin, Facebook), supplies, facilitator honorarium (Pam Shaw and students from VIU Masters of Community Planning Program)

Session # 2 (April 26, 2018) – A Mini Town Hall, Beban Park Social Centre

Attendance – 30 members of the public

The purpose of this session was to engage residents in a direct dialogue with members of city council about issues of concern to the community. The format was a micro-town hall and had a member of Council sitting at each table where community members could ask questions on a topic of their choosing. Each resident had 1 minute to ask a question, the member of Council had up to two minutes to answer and the whole table had five minute to discuss. Members of Council moved around to a new table every 30 minutes. One table was filmed and streamed live on Facebook.

Feedback from those attending was positive. Participants particularly liked the non-threatening atmosphere, the Q&A format and getting to know members of Council on a more personal level. A challenge that arose from the session was keeping discussions within the allotted time.

Cost for session: \$3,241.61 – includes facility rental (Beban Park), refreshments, supplies, advertising (News Bulletin, Facebook), table facilitator honorariums

Session #3 (July 28, 2018) – Collaborative Action Process, Oliver Woods Community Centre

Attendance – 60 members of the public

The purpose of this session was to find solutions to a chosen topic through collaboration. Prior to the session, the Task Force reached out to the public to gather topics of interest. The most submitted topic was homelessness. The session dived into the topic of homelessness and

featured a panel of members from the community speaking to their experience with homelessness which was then followed by attendees working through their reactions and then coming together to create action items to address this topic.

The feedback from this event was overwhelmingly positive with attendees feeling a sense of hope leaving the session. What they liked most was the format of beginning the session with panelists sharing their experiences and hearing diverse points of view in a respectful environment.

Cost for session: \$3,891.14 – includes facility rental (Oliver Woods), refreshments, advertising (News Bulletin, Facebook), supplies, table facilitator honorariums

Session #4 – TBD

Planning is underway for the fourth session in the pilot program for a date yet to be determined.

Submitted by:

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Concurrence by:

Sheila Gurrie
City Clerk