

**Draft: March 19 2018**



**Addendum to CETF Agenda, March 27 2018**

**A PROPOSAL REGARDING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS #2 AND #3**

**Purpose of Session #2: Thursday APRIL 26 2018 at Beban Park Social Centre (booked from 4-10pm)**

Engage residents in a direct dialogue with members of city council about issues of concern to the community.

**Format: “micro town hall”**

The CETF considered holding a standard town hall format where residents could ask questions on any topic that they wanted. Usually these kinds of town halls are held in an auditorium with residents in the audience and councillors on stage which can often give the appearance of a “we-they” mentality. In addition, some people feel intimidated by speaking in front of a crowd.

While wanting to keep the “open topic” aspect of a town hall, the CETF desired to reduce the potential for disruption and grandstanding and provide an environment that was safe, comfortable and conducive to dialogue between residents and members of council.

Our proposed format, therefore, is a “micro town hall” where residents sit at a table with one member of council. Residents would come prepared with up to 3 questions they would like to ask members of council. At each table, residents would have 1 minute to ask their question and the member of council would have 2 minutes to respond. If other people at the table wish to contribute to that discussion, then there would be 5 minutes allowed for this collective participation before the next person was able to ask their question. After 30 minutes, while the residents would remain at the table, the member of council would move to a different table, kind of akin to speed dating, and the questions would begin again. There would be a maximum of 9 tables to accommodate all members of council.

The benefit of this approach is that it’s an opportunity for a more contained and intimate conversation between residents and members of council and takes place in a respectful atmosphere. The purpose of this session is not to find solutions to issues but to ensure that the public has the chance to raise matters of concern which they deem important directly with community leadership.

Each table would have a facilitator whose job is to manage the timing of the questions, ensure fairness for all participants and maintain decorum. The CETF will look for suitable facilitators from the community.

One table would be devoted to online participation perhaps with onsite computer operators using Facebook?

We do not require city staff to participate in any of the round table discussions but they are welcome to come and observe the proceedings. Some staff would be needed to help set up the venue and manage the registration.

All the questions asked at the session and online as well as those that residents didn’t get an opportunity to put forward will be compiled, tabulated and analyzed to provide members of council with a quantifiable aspect to issues of concern to the community.

**What's different from Session #1:**

In Session #1, we asked the community to come up with topics relating to Building a Better Nanaimo which were a priority to them. These were then grouped into 10 major topics and prior to the session, participants voted on the 5 most important for discussion in an open spaces technology format.

In Session #2, we are asking participants to come prepared with up to 3 of their own questions that they would like to ask of the mayor and councillors.

**Items for discussion by the CETF before finalizing proposal:**

- Should the questions be related to the theme of Building a Better Nanaimo?
- Should the questions be focused only on council policy matters (as opposed to staff matters)
- Should we ask all participants to write their questions on a preset format which we provide to them so that we can tabulate them easily?

**Rationale for the Format**

This format meets many of the issues facing the CETF such as:

- A tight timeline to organize a session by end of April;
- Concern that the session be “open topic” as asked for by council;
- The desire to keep it simple; and
- The need for online component.

**Next Steps**

Before embarking on specific planning for Session #2, the CETF would like to be assured that at least 5 members of council are available to participate in the “micro town hall”. Accordingly, as part of our invitation to mayor and council, we would ask that members RSVP to the task force by April 3 2018, so that the CETF can finalize its preparation and marketing for the event.

**Marketing and Outreach**

- Preparation of a video to show councillors how the “micro town hall” would work
- Provide information for various Facebook pages
- Newspaper advertisements
- Radio interview: Sense of Justice on CHLY
- Presentation to Youth Advisory Committee to encourage their participation

**Looking ahead to Session #3: Saturday July 28 2018 9am-2pm? At Oliver Woods Community Centre**

The TF is keen to demonstrate a collaborative type of community engagement where residents partner with the city in developing a strategy or action plan to meet an issue of importance to Nanaimo.

As such, for Session #3 scheduled to be held in July 2018, the CETF is proposing that we go in depth into one of the topics identified in Session #1 by providing attendees with an overview on the subject by a panel of experts and then have residents and members of council, in small groups, define key issues, establish desired outcomes and develop an action plan for resolution. This kind of an engagement requires more time than is possible in an evening session, so we propose that it be held on a Saturday.

One professional facilitator would be useful to oversee the process. The small groups could choose their own recorders and reporters. We would also try to include some form of online polling during the

session such as “Poll Everywhere” which would enable us in providing some measurable results about the discussion.

Given the mandate of the CEFT, the topic that we propose for this drill down pilot session is: *Community Engagement*. This will provide an excellent wrap up to the work of the CEFT and allow the task force to prepare a final report for consideration of the incoming Mayor and Council.

The CEFT is proposing our suggested format now to obtain endorsement from City Council so that we can embark on a more detailed plan for this session including the identification of the panel of experts which could include city staff, local organizations or representatives from other municipalities. We also propose that Session #3 be marketed at that same time as Session #2 so that the community can understand the vision. In order to attract as many members of the public as possible, the task force will be looking at unique marketing opportunities such as sending out a notice with the 2018 tax bill. In addition, we will also be looking at expanding online participation through a community survey about community engagement.