Public Engagement Working Group Meeting #1: Minutes

Wednesday, October 10th, 2018

Follow along with PowerPoint, on website

1. **Introductions → Andrew Dash (slides 1-6)**

Around the room introductions, include **one word for what folks hope to get out of / bring to this current engagement**

- Transparent
- Inquisitive
- Listening
- Inclusive
- Education
- Building capacity
- Participation

- Community
- Equitable engagement
- Diversity
- Learning
- Voting
- Connector

- Residents
- Thorough
- Fun
- Creative
- Authentic
- Engagement

2. **Presentation includes what results of process will/should be, what city's role will be, how panel was selected, expectations of panel → Drew McCray (slides 7-11)**

3. **Examples from other cities → Sophie Robison (slides 12-19)**

- Question re: James Rojas is not included in the PowerPoint, his 10 points were relevant about community engagement in communities of color – would like to have those included in the hand-out for the panel. SR: That's a really good point, we will definitely include those going forward.

4. **Review of Exit Surveys & attendees' demographics → Drew McCray (slides 20-24)**

5. **Question to group: What were your thoughts on the panel and how is the panel relevant to Pittsburgh's context? → Drew McCray (slide 25)**

- There wasn't a person of color on the panel, this was a big elephant in the room.

- The panelist she enjoyed the most was James, and wished he would have spoken more. He did art and storytelling projects with the community to give them the tools to start thinking about planning and form, worked a lot with communities whose primary language wasn't English. Broadened outreach to a different audience, was fun and creative.

- What she really enjoyed was the importance of storytelling. Storytelling is preparing people to be part of a process. She didn't get that from the others because they were so structured. What you miss is that communities aren't necessarily structured in that way, it's about ppl and storytelling. Importance of listening to people, she would guess his process would be much more costly b/c the investment is up front b/c you get to know and gain the trust of the community. He could have added so much more to the process. Her community went through a community planning process, government takes the lead, the reverse needs to happen – community takes the lead and gov becomes the resource that helps the community. When the process is over, planners go back to their jobs. That's where anger comes in. A few years ago a gentleman came in from Columbia, he used art to help ppl express what they were feeling.

- Ppl were disappointed that panelists were brought from cities that were already gentrified and started the process once they were past the point of no return. James was not. Ppl were talking about wanting to hear more from cities that were still in it, and not patting itself on the back for doing the right thing when it was too late. Audience skewed younger b/c two student classes were in attendance.

- Local representation – we always seem to look outside for an answer when we know our problems and solutions best. Listen to the people who do the work here every day. Have someone here champion the work.

- Gentleman was not there – spoke to reporting and data. Wants to make sure we address participation and power. If we are not talking about power than we're not going to have a process that has impact.

6. **Question to group: Describe your experience with community engagement in Pittsburgh in the past – what worked well and what didn't? (What are priority issues that the plan needs to tackle?) → Ivette Mongalo (slide 26)**

- Build on "power" comment – the most effective engagement process she's been involved in, really engaging in the process as a partner with the community and developing stewardship from the very beginning – build the capacity of the ppl who are going to be implementing the plan, co-facilitating, co-convening. Build from the ground up, use the tools together, both government and consultants back up so by the end of the process the community is in the front and we're in the background.

- Interactions with a few city staff is "it's on our website!" but no one looks at the website. Things that are working include: the office of community affairs' FB page – would like to see more social media pages. Either all city depts. should send stuff there or each dept. should have its own. Do more self-promotion. Find a way to better use different platforms to communicate with the public about meetings. There's lots of info about a website, but a lot of ppl get information by scrolling through a newsfeed. Make it more visible by putting it on social media. Also, the city website is more confusing now because the search bar doesn't help figure out what content is on the website.

- Agrees – the website is a good way to present info but social media is the better way to find out what events are coming up. If those could be more active and intertwined it would be helpful.

- Build a relationship. Once you build a relationship you move forward and you build trust. In communities, so many things are thrown at people, including consultants and partners, and lay people don't have any idea, they just want a better community. Teach the community some of the ins and outs of how you do the process. She sat down with architects and engineers and didn't have a clue. The process to understand the structure of how you go about it is very intense and the normal person doesn't have the wherewithal. What does a community plan mean? A lot of time the city will come in and tell the community what they want instead of listening to what the community's desires are. It's about dreams, and process is how you get there.

- She's had lots of engagements with the city, has experienced dis-powering engagements, where it's like structures have been set up to purposely disempower people. There are actual models that are set up to do that (like deliberative democracy) – separate people from each other, don't let people find their groups

- Lots of community mistrust, city tries to play nice and go with the RCOs or the City Council person but there's also mistrust there, because an organization isn't an elected official, just because they're in the community doesn't mean the community likes them. Everyone can look at pretty pictures and say I like that, or this sounds good I like this, most people agree on the big ideas, but it's the implementation where people get caught up. Example: everyone wants cleaner air, but how do we get to that goal? It's too high level and ppl don't realize how it's actually going to get on the ground.

- Define the purpose and expected outcome of the meeting. If it wasn't clearly communicated what the expected outcomes are then people don't know what they're getting involved in. Re: using organizations and looping back to social media – if you're trying to reach people who are disenfranchised, the idea is to go to them. Putting something on the website isn't going to get the people who aren't already going to your website. Find out where people are getting their information currently, convene people around the hot spots, and work with grassroots people to help get information out.

- It's the time you are allowed to meet with the community; example, there's been public hearings around things but most people work during the daytime, so people don't always get an opportunity to come and speak if it's between 9 and 5. Another thing too, Hill District has a master plan and a CBA that the community and residents have worked on, but they don't have the funding. City can come and not dictate, but ask how they can get things done. A lot of times it's reinventing the wheel all over again, study after study after study, consultants being paid a lot of money when part of the plan could have been developed by now. Government oversight on how to serve people. If the government and city want to be a better service they have to walk the walk that they are in service to serve.

- Follow up – yes you have the big meeting but then DCP goes back to its office, how do you get back out to the community re: what you heard and what is going to be done about it. Has been in a lot of mtgs w/ people angry – let people talk and air their grievances vs. staying on agenda and not let the community be angry – step back and come back later. Also, communities have been owed an apology that hasn't come, and it's hard to heal and move forward. If the community is still focusing on things way in the past it's hard to move forward without an apology from the city, even if the people at the city now are not the people who were making harmful decisions in the past.

- What happens a lot is the needs of the community differ from the wants of the city. That goes to wanting to push through the agenda, people who've lived somewhere for 35 years have the same problems and same concerns. Won't have full attention or trust from the community if they know you're trying to get the bike lane built but not fix a broken street light outside the school. Once you address that it would be easier to work together.

- Consultant, has just completed writing a public engagement framework for another country, wants to talk as the only outsider who's not from Pittsburgh although he's been here awhile, wanted to bring back to what he thought their role was going to be. Effective engagement tailored to meet certain identified objectives, and to establish standards. We've been discussing how to, but what are the cities? A standard once identified as important, it will be clearer how to engage in various ways in different communities that work for each different neighborhood. Develop guidelines, try not to be so specific. Start by asking ourselves what does effective public engagement want to have, what are the standards you have to have, what are the guidelines? A strategy is toward the end of it. How do we even get to those communities? Should have been

that it's a law that now requires us to engage people, strategy comes in now – what are standards, broad framework? – allow communities to customize for their situations.

- Definitions of terms, challenge some of those definitions of terms. Consultant started in community planning because of really bad community engagement process around an initiative – a political initiative that did not resonate with ppl and the mayor who proposed it left office because of it. It's because people participated actively in stopping plan. A lot of people see it as a racket because in a lot of cases it is. Some standards that did (Pres Obama's for Neighborhood Engagement (?)) had measurable outcomes, challenged the premise of community development in that the plan you had to deliver had to have something in there deliberately and specifically for people. Challenge definitions of comprehensive plan, master plan – start with planning for the people and not for development. Development is about money.

- Sometimes when she interacts with different city staff in different departments they react like "oh that's not my department, that's not my responsibility". For city staff to be aware they're a representative of the city, not just a representative of the particular department. Instead try "I don't know but I'll get back to you", have suggestions for where to go and what to do next. If you work for the city you have a little in and you can help people with it.

- If you do community plans you need to look at the region too. Pittsburgh's neighborhoods have always been silo'd. Needs to be a way that communities work together that helps strengthen them so they get more power, and also when a development happens in one community the neighboring communities are directly affected, works like a capillary effect.

- Question: Have they done this among city departments to ask them what has / hasn't worked in the past, and could we share the results of that? It would be helpful to give them something to respond to. IM: If that's a request we can get to that. Start with standards (principles) that will develop the strategy.

7. Introduction to next exercise, break into 5 groups → Sophie Robison (slide 27)

Group 1:

- Listen with empathy and mindfulness.
- Value human relationships with the community to foster respect.
- Reconcile legacies of injustice and build a new foundation based on trust
- Create a fun, collaborative process by highlighting the uniqueness of communities and the residents.
- Build credibility with the community through transparency to ensure legitimate process.
- Center equity and fairness, always. (By practicing inclusiveness, democratic representation and investing in capacity building.)

Group 2:

- Prioritize healing to promote trust among people and with the process, in the future by acknowledging and documenting. That aims to build off of the past failures and successes.
- Embrace people and their uniqueness as the foundation to support and nurture their capacity.
- Demand accountability in the entire process, including the institutions and the individual.
- Nurture collaboration through creativity.

- Abandon restraint and embrace a bold fearless responsible yet attainable vision.

Group 3:

- Capacity- building stewardship
- Follow-up, follow through

Group 4:

- Presence
- Partnerships
- Community-led initiatives
- Compensation
- Capacity

Group 5:

- Ensure consistent and collaborative participation to achieve community well-being.
- Inclusiveness is the basis for legitimate governance and trustworthiness.
- Create accountability by being ethical, transparent, honest, fair and engaging diverse populations.
- Building civic education based on diversity to create community leadership and resilience.

Extras:

- Reconcile legacies of injustice and build a new foundation based on trust.
- Foundation
- Be human
- Be accountable
- Be intentioned
- Acknowledgement

8. Next Steps → (Slide 28-30)

- Next week – notes posted online

- Next month – draft of guiding principles, create standards

- Third meeting – ideas of tools to fulfill standards

- Question: What is documentation process of these meetings – are there any updates while it's happening? Social media?
    - SR: We are taking meeting minutes and will be publishing them. Also we're developing a meeting in a box to take to different communities, people could take the box to their own communities or groups.
    - IM: Value statements will be one package of stuff. Could prepare an e-blast to share with others to get people to website.

- Question: Is there a means of contributing to or responding to that?
    - IM: Going to work out a way for people who couldn't make it to participate.

- Question: contributions from broader than working group? If public gets notice but doesn't have an opportunity to contribute to, damages process's transparency?
    - IM: message is we're working to improve engagement standards, it's in the context of the publication of work.
    - Original question was thinking more of an update. Social media might be a way of saying hey here's what we did today and if you have thoughts here's how you engage
    - Panel: We might invite response by sharing on social media and bringing responses back to the working group.

- Questions: How does DCP want panel members to represent what they're working on in the community – how do we want them to engage people around it? Sit on it awhile? Go white flag?
    - IM: go white flag. She would encourage people to think of this as a new day and opportunity to change the way things are done. The way they communicate with their constituencies and communities is to say yes things have been screwed up for a while, here's how we're trying to address it
    - Incorporate public's responses into the feedback collected with / through / by the group – one of the goals is to bring this work in development to a larger community, and work with this group to figure out how to explain what's been going on. If there's feedback others have, we can put it in the system so it can also be made public.

- Question: @ End of children's museum event, someone stood up and asked how ppl were chosen to be on working group. One way to do that would be to detail how that happened and who it was. List people's names – may have to ask if they want their name disclosed.
    - SR: It's been submitted to go on website a little while and it might have gone online today. Everybody's names on there. Will have an explanation of how people were selected. People's neighborhoods are on there. Not everyone is coming at this from a job perspective so it felt like that was the most inclusive category. If people want more info shared we can. We can send link out to the group at large so they can share it.
    - IM: people willing to help with social media please contact Drew and we'll make sure they get engaged in helping on the communication side
    - SR: Meeting in a box would be a way to help us get more feedback. It will be a formalized tool to help PEWG members engage people

- Question: If person was going to summarize what happened today, put similar statements together, put it on a colored background, make it an image gallery, say we worked on this, what do you think? Transparent, accessible, easy to share way to engage.
    - Awesome idea. We'll work on this.

- Next steps – Nov 7th, consolidated info plus communications, will start looking at a content outline for the strategy, will start looking at some tools, feel like we need to add a fourth meeting in January if ppl are willing – Jan 16th – seems to be okay with everyone

Break – we'll see you in November!