



# Civic Engagement Commission Meeting Notes

5/4/2022

**Attendees:** Mattye Sisk, Ama (Amanda) Hapke, Kelli Kelly, Sean Moore, Angela Lawson, Scott Campbell, Maria Saldana, David Corbari

**Meeting Purpose and Objectives:** Provide recommendations to Council and City management regarding the development and implementation of civic engagement programs, which may include recommendations regarding best practices for outreach and education. Recommend to Council new initiatives to support and partner with community-based organizations, institutions and civic leaders in the public and private sectors in their civic engagement efforts. Coordinate with Council Members, community boards, and other City agencies in the development and implementation of civic engagement programs. Work with City staff and Council to plan and implement a Civic Engagement Academy.

## Discussion Topics:

### 1. Civic Engagement Academy

- CM Lawson states that in 2017 the Civic Engagement Academy started. Would like to start a class for this year and have input from CEC about how to go about the academy. It is a 8 week sign up where sessions are at different locations every other week for 2.5 hours each session.
- Sean asks if this is organized through 51C3. CM Lawson says it is not. Sean asks if we can go about funding. CM Lawson that there is \$2000 in funding. Individuals helping is limited and city staff is tapped with resources, not so much the funding.
- Ama asks when was the curriculum was developed? Has there been any evolution or adjustment since 2000? CM Lawson responds that the curriculum has been the same on looking at what City Council does as most people don't know what City Council does.
- CM Lawson states she is very open to changing the curriculum. The idea was to let people learn about the municipal government and how they can be involved with the city. The basic principals should stay but it can evolve like the community does. Hopefully get youth involved in the curriculum as well.
- Kelli asks if successful participation occurred and what methods were used to recruit and promote the academy? CM Lawson responds that participation was good even when it went to virtual classes.
- CM Lawsons explains that the program will continue to be funded if Council approves and budgets the item.
- Discussion around different times for other schedules and if different

levels of engagement and commitment for the sessions can occur. Sean suggests focusing on addressing levels of government such as which issues need to be fixed from the local, city and state levels.

- Ama asks about the presentation from Parks and Rec and if that could be included in the outline again. CM Lawson says that the CEC may not have the most recent outline for the academy, but she will get that to the group.
- CM Lawson hopes to have an Academy before the end of the year and before the holidays with the CEC's help.

## 2. Texting Pilot:

- Text message to community members about the city. Do not have budget in the city for this program yet. To create a two-way communication system. Main goal is to create awareness and knowledge. Create involvement. Look for a platform that is interactive so can send links or videos. See if Academy curriculum can be adapted in this format. Pilot this summer with 15-20 residences for feedback.
- Kelli asks what the intentions of the content. What are the messages and besides the pilot, how will individuals be identified or what is being pushed out. How will people be involved. Maria states the content will need to be developed. Every message must be substantial, or people will not engage. The platform would use branching logic. This would be very new for government use.
- Ama states she likes the idea if the messages are short and in different languages.
- David suggests that when people attend events, they can sign up for the text messages.
- Maria responds that each person will get same message no matter when they sign up. Then the person will never miss a message. Some platforms have capacity to send big blasts of messages. Promote local messages but not take away information from core messages.
- Kelli responds that she needs an example of what would be sent. Calls to action or event notification makes sense to announce opportunities for participation or target resource services. Would it be city manager's functions? Kelli is struggling with delivering the content that is information instead of direct action or invitational.
- Maria responds that she will write a few examples. Content development such as click on this link to learn more. As well as videos on education. Personal stories can be linked to this such as how you joined the CEC. Higher civic engagement increases of city services and resources. Such as did you know the city offers grants. Next step drafting examples so the CEC can give more feedback.
- David has experience with conference text message feedback. This could be utilized at a sign on a bus stop to direct people to solutions oriented to reduce the amount of content needing to produce then expand to civic engagement. David asks if idea is it like a 411 service to link someone to a resource they need or a way to education on city function. Maria responds that the city is looking into a text message response system. The idea with this is interventional. Doing what the

academy is doing but in a way for the people who can't come physically or commit to the time frames, but that vision can change.

- Kelli asks what the thoughts are on a app with push notifications. As an app becomes a portal of information. App is more flexible than text messaging. Scott responds that the only city app is Access Aurora. Creating an app is more time and employee extensive and maybe cost more. App can be a barrier as you must search and download while text messages can be less barrier. Apps might be more expensive, but apps have a better flexibility. Maria states that ideally having both. A barrier to recruiting could be the lack of trust of the government. Maria discusses how previous text message experience was first names only, zip codes and schools.
- David states that texting would be easier to reach to different language groups as an app must pivot to a given language. App working on android and iPhone while text messaging doesn't have that barrier. Maria explains how when COVID happened it allowed different organization to promote COVID resources and information quickly and efficiently.
- David states that the text message service would send you a question as a text and that was a good way of asking, not sending a data dump. This could group people on their preferences.

## 2. Group Discussion

- Kelli discusses areas of interest for this group is exploring policing and activity with policing system. Understanding process, building good will, what is the state of policing in the community. Explore resource connectivity within the city. How the city allocates funding and how it is addressed structurally.
- Ama states that Aurora policy department has an academy. Possibly having CEC involved in the academy.
- Kelli discusses how civic engagement is tied with community engagement. To align civic engagement with community engagement is important.
- Ama agrees with that. Being involved in programs and resources is important for the community. Keeping residence by letting them know about the great programs and resources has a benefit.
- Kelli states that the alignments around resources. Denver has awareness about great resources, but Aurora has resources on par, but it is not communicated to the residences. It builds pride and trust with community members when they are aware of the resources.
- Scott lets the CEC know that the 2021 org chart will be in the TEAMS folder.
- Sean asks that the CEC be placed in the same information pipeline as the AKCRT – They wish to receive information about major incidents in the city at the same speed the AKCRT does. Scott states he will look into the possibility.
- Sean states how the CEC purpose is to give recommendations and connect the community with the city.

- David states how the CEC will be a way for the citizens to connect with the government.
- Sean discusses of how civic engagement is top crop and grass roots pieced together.
- Ama states that getting the info out that people need is important, not just what the city is highlighting. If there is a way to access data on what people don't understand or need to resource most for.
- Kelli asks if there is data around the website as well. Explore the individual drivers and the collective mission. Seeking connectivity back is important. Duality in function and be defined.
- Maria states: you want data on what residence are calling about or reaching out to the website about, presentations on affordable housing, public safety. List of topics on what the CEC is interested in & then the city can present for the first 30 minute. Next meeting on what the structure of the cities are and have that in the teams account so it can be determined. List of meetings and how they relate to community, so CEC is aware of them.
- Ama asks if the academy recordings are available to add that to the Teams folder? Scott states he will investigate it.
- Maria discusses how to share community engagement framework and those plans. As well as events occurring. Project on affordable housing update as well.
- Ama asks about the by-law's creation. Scott replies that they will add other commission by laws to the Microsoft Teams folder so that the group can utilize it in creating the CEC by laws.
- Scott will talk with the city clerk's office to see if the CEC can meet without an official format

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, April 1, 2022