

Citizens Engagement Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for 8/12/2020

7pm

Zoom Meeting ID: 940 6738 7219

Attendees: Torri Mathes, Community Engagement Officer
Natalie Price, City Council Liaison
Jessica Vilani
Jessica Worrall
Zach Barclay
Nicole Menard
Colleen Graveline

Absent: Tammy Polk

Meeting Called to Order

Motion made to call meeting to order at 7:06pm by Colleen Graveline.

Motion seconded by Jessica Vilani.

Meeting begun by Torri Mathes reviewing Roberts' Rules of Order
Reviewed meeting schedule; historically meetings of the CEAC are held on the first
Wednesday of the month. Committee agreed to revert to such time for future
meetings.

Introductions

All current members, former members, Council Liaison and Comm Manager offered
brief introductions.

Motion to Approve Agenda

Motion to approve made by Colleen Graveline.

Motion seconded by Jessica Vilani.

Citizen Comments

No citizens in attendance.

Order of Business

Recap March meeting

--Discussion led by Torri Mathes regarding "why are we here?"

Individual reasons for presence reviewed as well as group reasoning for the CEAC
purpose:

1. Communication relationship as a two-way street btwn city/residents
2. Tackle "us vs. them" mentality
3. Berkley residents are engaged and passionate—both negatively and
positively
4. City going through identity & personality transition

5. Utilize full toolbox of communication options to reach all facets of community

--Discussion of CEAC mission and vision

Jessica Vilani shared that one goal is to reduce division, as there exist many strong divisions along many lines within our culture now. Zach Barclay posed the question "how does Berkley identity relate to identity of its citizens?" This is necessary to create sense of purpose for citizens. Jessica Vilani further added the need for correct info distribution particularly in an era in which social media propagates misinformation.

Jessica Worrall added that 15 years ago, Berkley not as outwardly diverse; LGBTQ more engaged than in the past. Inquired further as to the role of this committee: to shape communications or do things in the community? Colleen Graveline added that a key component is helping the city continue to earn and keep the trust of citizens.

Review mission and vision points beginning with question "how do we fit?" Primary answer is to engage the community:

1. Challenge: how and where to have the hard conversations
2. Uplift: Berkley staff and residents make many positive contributions to the community, thus an ongoing goal is to share these uplifting stories
3. Leverage energy: great interest in affecting Berkley as a whole
4. Encourage conversation: not always clear who to talk to; fear to reach out and seek discussion whether with city departments, elected officials, etc. Highlight that staff is here to help and willing to help. Many residents are willing to do the same. Jessica Worrall: some cities go to great lengths to be unreachable; Berkly has made great strides in recent year to be more approachable
5. Focus Testing: many issues we know ahead of time are going to be difficult; CEAC to make sure city is reaching residents , i.e. website testing as we roll out new website next fiscal year, who to reach out to, groups and individuals.

To be effective, CEAC will:

1. Create clarity: bridge and clarify gaps with citizens and among city departments
2. Establish mission, vision and goals
3. Organize and execute expectations, ensuring steps are clear

Zach Barclay highlighted that we are in the business of people, and people change even when services don't. Also important to keep in mind there are generational notions of how things are. Could be beneficial to rebrand what the city is and how it is here to serve. Nicole Menard offered that there is a need to help people better understand issues; break things down to be easier for people to understand where their tax dollars go. Although people may not agree with every action or decision from the city, it is necessary to help people have a better understanding. Zach

Barclay added that a lot of city business may be overwhelming for average Joe & Jane.

Staff Comments

Natalie Price requested that the committee members check out city website section "Now Trending"; Torri Mathes includes social media hot topics with the city's breakdown. She also offered the perspective that many Berkley online forums have fundamental flaws, namely they are created and monitored by private residents who censor or block city officials or those who may disagree with them.

Unclear in many cases what info is coming from city (ie city seal on a private facebook page). Encouraging more interaction on public page is more productive with the goal of more flexibility for Community Engagement Officer to engage in official role in online discussions.

Discussion among Natalie Price, Torri Mathes, and Colleen Graveline to revisit liasons to other committees as to how we best engage with the city.

Torri Mathes reviewed how Open Meetings Act impacts the ability to discuss Committee matters outside of the public meetings. Concluded with brief discussion on the need for more minority representation on committee.

Adjournment

8:33pm motion to adjourn by Jessica Worrall.

Motion seconded by Jessica Vilani.

ACTION ITEMS

Bring to next meeting 3-5 tangible tasks the CEAC can do.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 7, 2020, 7pm