

COMMITTEE ON CITIZEN  
ENGAGEMENT MINUTES  
December 4, 2018

After determining that a quorum was present, the Committee on Citizen Engagement convened in a meeting on December 4, 2018 at 10:31 a.m. in the City Council Work Session Room at City Hall, 215 E. McKinney Street, Denton, Texas.

PRESENT: Council Member Deb Armintor, Council Member Gerard Hudspeth, and Council Member Keely Briggs.

STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Kuechler, Sarah Fullwood, Justin Harmon, Kevin McGinnis, Stuart Birdseye, Trey Lansford, Bryan Langley, Karisa Richards

OTHERS PRESENT: Erin Caldwell with National Research Center

**A. Consider approval of the minutes of October 9, 2018.**

Council Member Hudspeth motioned, and Council Member Briggs seconded to approve the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding the 2018 Citizen Survey results.**

Erin Caldwell with National Research Center (NRC) gave a presentation regarding the results of the 2018 Citizen survey. This represents the third time the City of Denton has completed the survey and the second time participating through NRC. The questions are designed to measure eight facets of community livability: Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment, and Community Engagement.

The survey was mailed out to 1,600 randomly selected households in mid-August 2018 and the City made a web-based survey available during late September and early October 2018.

Each household that was mailed a surveyed was contacted 3 times and those multiple contacts helped to increase the response rate.

In total, 1,177 survey responses were gathered. 216 people completed the mailed survey, giving a 7% margin of error, and another 961 surveys were received online. This compares to 1,329 (mailed and online) total survey responses in 2017, and 268 (mailing only) responses in 2015.

After the data from both the mailed and opt-in online survey were collected, NRC compared the data to determine whether it was appropriate to combine, or blend, both datasets together.

Because the characteristics of respondents to the opt-in online survey were notably dissimilar in both respondent trait and opinion, the datasets were not blended for NRC analysis and reporting

to maintain the representative sample.

However, both datasets are useful and insightful. The random, scientific sample through the mailed survey is developed to reflect the perceptions of the overall community. The reports analyzed and compiled by NRC use this dataset as the primary data point. The opt-in online survey had a significant number of responses from our community and provides valuable data as well. The opt-in online survey conveys the perception for individuals that have high levels of community engagement based upon their responses. The best comparison of the two datasets can be viewed in the Trend Over Times report.

The NRC drew four primary conclusions from the survey results which are outlined in the Community Livability report and shown below:

**Denton residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life.** About 8 in 10 residents gave positive ratings to the overall quality of life in Denton and the city as a place to live. At least three-quarters of residents also were pleased with the overall image and overall appearance of the city, their neighborhood as a place to live and the city as a place to raise children, and 6 in 10 felt Denton as a place to retire was excellent or good. While most of these evaluations were stable from 2017 to 2018, the rating for overall appearance increased. Residents remain loyal to the community, with more than 7 in 10 residents planning to remain in Denton for the next five years and 9 in 10 recommending living in Denton to someone who asked. These ratings all were similar to those given in other communities across the nation.

**Safety ratings are strong and safety is a priority for the community.** Denton residents indicated that Safety was an important focus area for the City and ratings within this facet tended to be positive. Nine in 10 residents reported feeling safe in their neighborhood and in Denton's residents gave favorable marks to police services, fire prevention, animal control and emergency preparedness; these ratings were all similar to the national average. However, only 22% of respondents had stocked supplies for an emergency, a level which decreased from 2015 to 2018 and was lower than levels reported in other communities.

**Economy is an important area of focus for the City.** Residents indicated that Economy would be an important area for the City to focus on in the next two years and ratings within this facet tended to be positive. Nearly 8 in 10 residents were pleased with Denton's vibrant downtown/commercial area and the overall quality of business and service establishments (both of which were higher than the benchmark), and other Economy-related items such as the overall economic health of the city, shopping and employment opportunities and Denton as a place to visit and to work received ratings similar to those given in other communities across the nation. Denton residents were more likely to work within the city than those who lived elsewhere.

**Mobility is also a resident priority.** Residents also indicated that they would like to see the City address aspects of Mobility in the coming years. When evaluating ratings within this facet, there were some bright spots: at least half of residents gave positive marks to the overall ease of travel,

paths and walking trails, ease of walking and ease of travel by public transportation (which was higher than the national benchmark and an improvement since the previous survey iteration). Further, the ratings for bus or transit services was higher than average, and resident sentiment toward traffic flow, ease of travel by bicycle and by walking, and paths and walking trails improved from 2017 to 2018. However, ratings for the ease of travel by car, public parking, traffic flow, street repair, snow removal and traffic signal timing were lower than the national benchmark comparisons.

Moving forward, City staff will use the results from this survey to understand the perception of Denton residents, and to find areas that need improvement whether through increased outreach and education, or through operational enhancements. Staff plans to review the survey results with all departments and develop next steps and an action plan to improve community ratings, as well as integrate into the City's annual strategic plan.

The survey results will be posted on the City of Denton's website with previous survey results.

Armintor stated that she would like more information on future surveys on people living in Denton and working outside City limits vs inside City limits.

**C. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding citizen engagement, communication, and transparency initiatives.**

Kuechler gave a general update on the following items:

Gas Well Notifications – Since the last presentation to the COCE, staff has worked with Tech Services to continue to explore solutions for residents to sign-up for email notifications for gas well activities. Staff believes there may be a solution to add that functionality for residents to subscribe and be sent an email notification whenever a new update occurs in the Gas Well Activity database. Staff will continue to work together and provide an update if this will be possible to implement.

Improving Denton – Staff is hoping to get all of the data in from the Waze app by December and hope to launch it as soon as possible.

City Council Agenda Template – Council Member Armintor recently inquired if the agenda template for City Council meetings could be changed to more clearly differentiate the afternoon work session from the evening meeting session starting at 6:30 p.m. The agendas are automated and generated from the Legistar system so there is limited flexibility, but staff created a revised draft template to try to meet the objective and is seeking feedback from the COCE.

Briggs stated that she thinks the changes are a great start.

Armintor stated that she is excited for the change.

Briggs stated that maybe putting a frequently asked questions item on the website to help citizens

know when to come to Council meetings and when they are allowed to speak. Do they need to fill out a blue card, etc.

Briggs also mentioned putting a laminated frequently asked questions about Council meetings on the table outside the meeting room.

**D. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding a resource board or other tools to share information with individuals experiencing homelessness or in need of assistance.**

Chairperson Briggs requested this item to be added to the Committee on Citizen Engagement agenda to discuss having a resource board available at Emily Fowler Library for information to be posted and available for individuals experiencing homelessness. Staff reached out to Library staff to discuss some options specific to the library facility.

Internal Board – There currently is a rotating three-sided bulletin board inside the Library where community and civic information can be posted. This board could be modified or expanded to set aside a space specifically for resources or events for individuals experiencing homelessness.

In addition, the Library offers a brochure stand with resources for those needing help near the reference desk in Emily Fowler.

External Board – Because Emily Fowler Central Library is a historic building, staff may need to prepare an application and request to the Historic Landmark Commission for permission and a certificate of appropriateness to have an external enclosed bulletin board attached to the outside of the building. This may depend upon the size, permanency, and location on the building.

Another idea could be to hang a 11x17 poster with some information inside the entry doorway facing out. Individuals could still view some basic information even if the library is closed.

In addition, staff has continued and taken additional steps to communicate and reach out to individuals in need of assistance, such as creating an inclement weather plan and flyers, revising the City's website page regarding ending homelessness, performing outreach through the Street Outreach team and Police/Fire, working with social service providers, and encouraging individuals to visit one of the 8 front-door agencies in the community that can help connect individuals to the unique resources and assistance they may need.

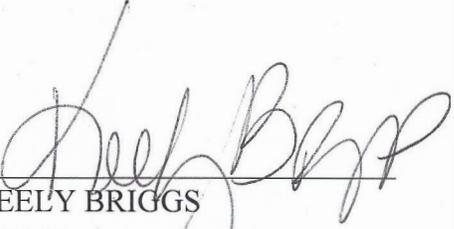
Briggs thinks having the information available in the window would be a great idea.

Hudspeth thinks that having it on the side of the door would be best so that it is not blocking the visibility of the main door creating a safety concern.

**Set Future Meeting Dates and Topics.**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

The next committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 5, 2019 at 10:30 am.

  
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KEELY BRIGGS  
CHAIR  
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS

  
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KARISA RICHARDS  
RECORDING SECRETARY  
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS

Signed on: 4/09/19\_\_\_\_\_