

To: Members of Administrative Committee
From: Dana McDaniel, City Manager
Date: Aug. 18, 2021
Initiated By: Lindsay Weisenauer, Communications Director
Re: Council Public Engagement and Boards and Commission Recruitment Update

Summary

The Administrative Committee met on Dec. 4, 2020, to discuss the topics of communication and public engagement and board and commission recruitment. Staff provided updates to the Committee at its May 4 and June 1, 2021, meetings. The following is another update regarding the continued progress made on the action items outlined after the Dec. 4 meeting.

1. Public Engagement

Action Items

CPI will make Zencity available to Council Members and provide some training on the use of the information available on the dashboard.

UPDATE: Communications & Public Information staff members delivered a Zencity presentation to City Council at the May 17 Work Session. The presentation detailed how Zencity monitors and consolidates electronic communication across various platforms and uses artificial intelligence to develop insights on sentiment and trends. Executive training sessions were scheduled and made available to individual Council members. Three members participated in one of the executive training sessions and now have access to review sentiment and engagement trends. Some have set up their own projects to monitor within the platform. Additional executive training sessions can be set up through CPI at the request of any Council member who wishes to receive training or access.

Zencity insights help understand residents' interests and concerns, gauge public sentiment and monitor opinions on topics of interest in the community. Zencity also offers a survey tool that the City is using for the Dublin 2035 Big Idea questionnaire in Summer 2021.

Communication and Public Information (CPI) will interview each Council Member to gather suggestions and ideas about how to increase online engagement with residents.

UPDATE: After the May 4 Administrative Committee meeting, CPI staff worked with the Clerk of Council to set up one-on-one interviews with Council Members to gather suggestions and ideas about how to increase engagement with residents. Three Council members participated in a one-on-one interview with a CPI staff member via Zoom. Each member had the opportunity to respond to a set of questions developed in collaboration with the Administrative Committee. All three of the members who participated in the interviews expressed an interest in expanding the use of the GoDublin app for

communication purposes. All three also indicated an interest in increased and expanded surveying of residents and an interest in training sessions for Council, including public records and best practices for communicating with residents. Two of the three members indicated that they were satisfied with the level of public engagement opportunities available to Council members. Two of three indicated that a digital kiosk or billboard would be a good way to enhance communications and engagement.

Applying Council feedback and expert advice, construct a draft “next-generation” 2021 public engagement plan and content strategy for Council-with-resident communication to bring back to Council for review and discussion.

UPDATE: CPI staff have engaged in benchmarking local, regional and national communities in regards to public engagement and Council-with-resident communication. CPI used that research as well as the one-on-one interviews to develop the following recommendations:

- Staff recommends expanding the GoDublin app beyond service requests to provide engagement opportunities among Council and residents. A “Contact Council” button could be added to the app with options to contact all of City Council and individual members. Ward/At Large information could be included for users’ reference. Staff would ask each Council member to indicate his or her individual preferred communication method (i.e. phone call, text, email) and provide direct access to individualized options through the app. The app could also be used to obtain survey responses and other feedback through a “Tell Dublin” option.
- The City Manager, Clerk of Council and Director of CPI will partner to support City Council in its needs to effectively communicate and engage with the public. Additionally, the City Manager will designate a CPI staff person to support communications and engagement activities on behalf of City Council to include:
 - Providing communication on behalf of City Council, including, but not limited to:
 - Regular social media posts and eNews items (for example promoting agenda items and council actions, economic development agreements and incentives, proclamations or Council legislative actions of note, ribbon cuttings, speaking engagements, legislative initiatives/issues at the State and Federal level, etc.)
 - Traditional media releases for Council actions and initiatives as appropriate, such as economic development incentive approvals and the adoption of new policies
 - Leveraging the City’s partnership with Dublin Life to share Council stories as appropriate
 - Continue to publish the Communications Update monthly report for Council’s awareness and use. The report would be expanded to include suggestions and guidance for content Council members could share with constituents through their individual social media accounts, email lists, in-person conversations, etc. These items would include items such as upcoming Council Agenda items, surveys and other initiatives of City Council.
 - Coordinate Council’s ceremonial activities and engagements requiring the assistance and participation of other staff members. This will be in

- partnership and with the support of the City Manager and Clerk of Council as needed.
- Assist the City Manager regarding external presentations and engagement when representing the City or otherwise specifically representing City Council
 - Organize and/or provide training for City Council including best practices and helpful tips regarding social media, public records and resident communication
 - Draft talking points for the Mayor, Vice Mayor or other members of Council for community events and speaking engagements upon request
 - Ensure that Council is included in plans for engagement opportunities in the City, such as association meetings, pop-up concierge events, City presentations, business openings, etc.
 - Highlight "Contact Council" success stories as appropriate
- Staff recommends advancing to City Council a proposal to install an interactive digital kiosk on the East Plaza, which could be used to facilitate information dissemination, two-way engagement and enhanced wayfinding. Multiple members of Council expressed an interest in an interactive kiosk for communication purposes during the one-on-one interview sessions, and extensive staff research has been conducted into the available technology. Staff is prepared to make a recommendation regarding the vendor, content programming and placement of an interactive digital kiosk. One kiosk could be installed with funds available in the CPI 2021 budget, with the potential for additional kiosks, for example near the Columbus Metropolitan Library – Dublin Branch or on the West Plaza, at a later date dependent upon Council's interest.

CPI to explore a dedicated resource to assist with Council/resident engagement. The resource will assist with development of content plans, pilot/launch a set of engagement tactics and measurements to achieve greater online City Council and citizen interaction.

UPDATE: As outlined above, staff recommends identifying a CPI staff member in support of Council, Clerk of Council and the City Manager.

2. Board and Commission Recruitment

Action Items

Website

- ***Clerk's office will work with CPI to promote boards and commissions on the website in a more engaging and dynamic way through ideas such as current Board and Commission member interviews on experiences and expectations, FAQs, videos, etc.***
- ***List and promote all board and commission positions in one centralized area via a common gateway that allows interested residents to easily find and explore the multiple options available for serving their community***

- ***Enable year-around applications. Clerk's office and CPI will provide ways for interested parties to communicate their interest (via application or other form) on the web any time of the year, not just during recruitment time.***

UPDATE: CPI has created a new website, fuelthefuture.dublinohiousa.gov, for Boards and Commissions, revamped the application and made it available year-round. This site serves as a common gateway that allows residents to easily find and explore multiple options available for serving the community. The site and service opportunities are being promoted regularly through the City's communication outlets. CPI is also working with Outreach and Engagement Division to send opportunities to the City Volunteer list and has discussed opportunities with the Community Task Force Communication & Education sub-committee. CPI is currently in the process of developing assets for a year-round recruitment campaign that will include member interviews, a testimonial video series and other engaging content.

Outreach:

- ***Social Media will be leveraged to advertise service to the community at least quarterly, with links to year-around-application and board and commission gateway***
- ***Explore opportunities to talk directly with the public about serving on a board or commission such as: in Citizen U classes, in Leadership classes at the Chamber, Community task forces, etc.***
- ***Work with the Outreach and Engagement Division to explore ways of advising their volunteer base of opportunities and working together on recruitment***
- ***Community Task Force members will advise on any suggestions they may have to reach out and provide the opportunity to serve our more diverse population.***

UPDATE: CPI is leveraging social media to promote Boards and Commissions openings. Social media will be used throughout the year, at least quarterly, to advertise service to the community. Exploration continues regarding opportunities to talk directly with the public about serving on a board or commissions. An in-person Citizen U is not being held in 2021. CPI has reached out to the Outreach and Engagement Division, which welcomes the opportunity to help build relationships to help recruitment efforts. By tapping into the Outreach and Engagement Division and Community Task Force networks, the City can significantly expand reach for recruitment and broaden the pool of candidates exponentially.

Interview/Appointment Process:

- ***Provide candidates with the "Five Things We Recommend before the Interview" to facilitate easier exploration and improved preparation for interviews, including such things as watching/attending a Board or Commission meeting, reviewing Dublin's Community Plan, reading the City Charter, outreach out to a current member, review FAQs on roles and responsibilities, etc.***
- ***Have an online repository of past and current applications. Explore if there are recruiting/repository tools that the City currently uses for volunteers, etc. that might be helpful.***
- ***Establish an administrative process for regular review and engagement with residents who have expressed interest, as there will be time between interest and open positions. Review metrics and measures regularly.***

UPDATE: CPI has included a list of "Five Things We Recommend before the Interview" on the new website. It is available on the "Apply Now" page - <https://fuelthefuture.dublinohiousa.gov/apply-now/>. New videos, features and openings will be added throughout the year, and social media will continue to be leveraged to amplify engagement with the page and generate interest. The Clerk's office is working to identify processes for developing a repository for past and current applications and for regularly engaging with residents who have expressed interest in serving. The Clerk's office is looking into software solutions to meet this need.

Recommendation

For Information Only. Staff is prepared to discuss this update with the Administrative Committee and/or Council as a whole at your convenience.