

To: Members of City Council
From: Dana McDaniel, City Manager
Date: Aug. 30, 2021
Initiated By: Lindsay Weisenauer, Director of Communications & Public Information
Re: Council Public Engagement Efforts

Background

This memo was provided to City Council as part of the packet for the 2021 Council Retreat held on Sept. 9 – 10 and is being provided to the Administrative Committee for reference at the Committee's Oct. 5, 2021, meeting.

It is meant to provide recommendations regarding enhanced public engagement efforts among City Council and residents, with the support of the City Manager, Clerk of Council and Communications & Public Information staff. The following recommendations have been developed in response to feedback received from the Administrative Committee and information gathered during individual interviews offered to the members of Council.

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, June 1, and Aug. 24, 2021, meetings. The action items outlined by the Committee included the desire for staff to conduct one-on-one interviews with members of Council, to construct a next generation public engagement plan and content strategy, and explore a dedicated resource to assist with Council/resident engagement.

Summary

After the May 4, 2021, Administrative Committee meeting, CPI staff worked with the Clerk of Council to schedule 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.

Staff have engaged in benchmarking local, regional and national communities in regards to public engagement and Council-with-resident communication. That information, along with the one-on-one interviews and ongoing dialogue with the Administrative Committee, was used to develop the following recommendations:

- Expand the GoDublin app beyond service requests to provide digital engagement opportunities among Council and residents. A “Contact Council” button could be added to the app as another touchpoint, providing a convenient option for citizens that utilizes a popular and successful platform. GoDublin 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
 - In partnership with the City Manager and Clerk of Council, staff could organize in-person engagement opportunities, including Coffee with Council or similar events.

- Continuously update the City Council page on the City's website to provide timely, engaging content
- Staff will evaluate new and emerging technologies, including interactive digital kiosks and QR codes, as a means for facilitating information dissemination, two-way engagement and enhanced wayfinding.

Recommendation

For Information Only. Staff is prepared to discuss this update with City Council as a whole at your convenience.