Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE

April 12, 2016: 6:30 p.m.
Committee Room #2 City Hall (511 Royal Avenue)

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Jonathan X. Coté	- Chair
Councillor Patrick Johnstone	- Member
Councillor Mary Trentadue	- Member
Jennifer Arbo	- Community Member
Rnold Smith	- Chamber of Commerce Representative (non-voting member)
Gabriella Scali	- Community Member
Nancy Shaw	- Community Member
Chinu Das	- Community Member
Daniel Fontaine	- Community Member

VOTING MEMBERS REGRETS:

Nadine Nakagawa	- Community Member

GUESTS:

Robin Prest	- SFU Centre for Dialogue
Sebastian Merz	- SFU Centre for Dialogue

STAFF:

Blair Fryer	- Manager of Communications & Economic Development
John Stark	- Senior Social Planner
Lynn Roxburgh	- Planner
Ashleigh Young	- Communications Coordinator
Renee Chadwick	- Manager, Queensborough Community Centre
Debbie Johnstone	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no items.

2.0 ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the February 9, 2016 Minutes

MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the minutes of the February 9, 2016 Public Engagement Task Force meeting be adopted.

CARRIED.

All members of the Task Force present voted in favour of the motion.

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

There were no items.

4.0 NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Brief update: plans for focus groups and public workshop

Sebastian Merz, SFU Centre for Dialogue, provided the PowerPoint presentation regarding the objectives and principles that the Public Engagement Task Force is working to achieve through activating focus groups and public workshops.

Following questions from the Task Force, Mr. Merz provided the following information:

- The Public Engagement workshop would be advertised through the City's Communications department;
- The list of draft principles would be a working document that could be amended as required; and,
- An opportunity for further feedback regarding the objectives and principles could be worked into the process at a later date.

Discussion ensued, and the Task Force agreed that the wording surrounding the principles based approach initiative could benefit from further clarification.

4.2 Shortlisting public engagement methods and tools

Robin Prest, SFU Centre for Dialogue, provided a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the list of public engagement methods and tools that the Task Force had provided over their term. Mr. Prest advised that the goal would be to narrow down the list of tools to six to eight of the most relevant.

Following the presentation, the Task Force provided the following comments:

- The City and community could focus on providing public engagement at an earlier age. Working to incorporate engagement with the school district was suggested;
- Utilizing a customer service ambassador in all major civic facilities rather than just at City Hall could be valuable;
- The umbrella that the customer service ambassador would work under could provide the position with a greater sense of importance (i.e. if the role reported to the CAO's office it could be more beneficial);
- Monthly or periodic indicators on the City website could provide a snapshot to the community on relevant issues such as water usage, waste, etc.;
- The "Doors Open at City Hall" idea could be broadened to include all City facilities;
- Enquiries were made regarding the cost of the 311 service in a small community like New Westminster. It was suggested that there may be a possibility to group the service together with other smaller cities, which could be more economical;
- Issues with digital inclusion were raised and it was suggested that a variety of methods of inclusion be considered;
- Crowd sourcing was suggested in place of the 'red tape challenge'; and,
- A randomized speakers list in public meetings could be an important tool to inform dialogue.

Task Force members were asked to rate the necessity of each public engagement method or tool and the results were collected by Sebastian Merz, SFU Centre for Dialogue.

Mr. Prest and Mr. Merz reported that the next step would be to research these methods and tools to see how their implementation could assist the Task Force in achieving their overall goals.

Discussion ensued, and the Task Force expressed an interest in evaluating the methods and tools with the following additional considerations:

- Timeline for implementation;
- Cost;
- Research regarding the success other municipalities have had implementing similar tools and methods; and,
- Inclusion and diversity should be a key component when assessing all methods and tools.

Mr. Prest enquired if the Task Force had any additional comments or suggestions regarding the list of tools. Discussion ensued, and the Task Force provided the following comments:

- Additional community outreach could be implemented into the strategy;
- Innovation utilizing current technology could be a priority for the City strategy;
- Providing the ability to have the public rate customer service as they are leaving a City facility could be considered;
- It was suggested that the City consider building a strategy based not only around residents, but those who work and attend activities in the area (following a live, work, and play approach);
- Thoroughly defining 'stakeholders' and 'residents' in the engagement document could provide a more encompassing result. Renters, and workers in the community should feel that their opinions matter to the City;
- A volunteer outreach program or a paid auxiliary employee could access the community to acquire information that could be more representative of the community as a whole; and,
- Direct outreach to groups who may not be targeted through other avenues of engagement, or providing issues specific outreach could be considered.

The Task Force requested that a mobile engagement app, an immediate customer service assessment at civic facilities and a direct outreach program for unrepresented people be added as additions on the list of tools.

4.3 Expectations for public engagement framework

Robin Prest, SFU Centre for Dialogue, provided a PowerPoint presentation recapping the framework for public engagement.

The following comments and feedback were provided by staff:

- Interdepartmental consistency would be required when ensuring a standard level of engagement;
- Indicating to staff the need and value for engagement would be crucial;
- A glossary or definition list added into the framework and strategy was suggested; and,
- The public engagement process could be implemented into the organizational review and then folded into the City's process overtime.

Following the Public Engagement workshops in May, it was reported that Mr. Prest would aim to have a draft document ready for review at the June Public Engagement Task Force meeting.

5.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no items.

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

There were no items.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

May 10, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in Meeting Rooms #1 & #2

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Certified correct,

Mayor Jonathan X. Coté
Chair

Debbie Johnstone
Committee Clerk