

What's Next Alexandria

Community Dialogue, January 29, 2013

Meeting Evaluations - Summarized

There were many positive comments about the meeting and process.

1. What are your concerns?

- Lack of diversity in the room – not everyone is represented.
- These meetings are academic, nothing will come of them.
- Informing public about project in time to be heard and have influence on planning process. Plans are 'done deals' by the time public hears about them.
- Discussion is too abstract – exercises should be more concrete without rehashing past issues.
- Not enough time to work on the exercises.
- Concern about the ability to consolidate everyone's ideas – prioritizing/weighing input
- Communication between city and residents – how can we reach everyone including those who do not have access to computers?

2. Do you have suggestions for improvements?

- Provide information in all languages spoken in Alexandria.
- Continue reaching out to all citizens (including those with disabilities). Have meetings in communities we're trying to reach. Ask dialogue participants to reach out to community.
- Explain better up front how results will be used in each succeeding steps.
- Better time allocation. Too little time for part 1; too much time for part 2.
- Too abstract – make more realistic.
- Take concerns seriously and acknowledge there are problems.
- Less time speaking from the podium – more time for engaging with table.
- Have any document relevant to a project issued and made available well before a public hearing.
- Encourage residents to become educated re: current city processes including financial process.
- Use many different forms of communication.

3. How would you explain in 2 sentences what we have accomplished at this meeting?
 - Good participation and discussion of process – great collaborative effort among fellow citizens
 - Tried to help create a way for residents to be more engaged and for city to move forward; and to refine the flow of information gathering for city planning.
 - Clearer idea of how complex the problem is – better understanding of what is needed to do to improve community involvement.

4. Please list one idea that occurred to you as a result of the exercises and presentation.
 - Diversity of input is important.
 - It's important for residents to be educated about city processes – in order to improve them.
 - City processes should be as clear and simple as possible.
 - It's important for city to communicate with residents using a wide variety of mechanisms
 - This process is important.