Community Engagement

in local government deliberation,

with a specific emphasis on the Stoughton Sustainability Committee

Extension
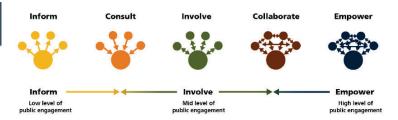UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
DANE COUNTY

Dane County Extension Committee
Community Development Presentation
3/21/2023

What is public/community engagement?

- Any process that directly engages the public in decision-making and gives full consideration to public input in making that decision.
- Community engagement assures that 'impacted' parties are taken into account
- inclusive engagement prioritizes voices of residents who might not otherwise be heard

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Why do community engagement?

- Good governance practice
- Propose solutions, policies, or initiatives that are in line with public needs and concerns
- Anticipate 'red flags' and public opposition
- *Build awareness about an issue*
- *Build support for efforts undertaken by local government*

Inform | Consult | Involve | Collaborate | Empower

Inform — Low level of public engagement
Involve — Mid level of public engagement
Empower — High level of public engagement

IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Extension Dane County involvement in community decision-making processes

- Engage Dane
- Waunakee Housing Task Force
- Mount Horeb Housing Task Force
- Dane County Broadband Task Force
- Stoughton Sustainability Committee

Stoughton Sustainability Committee: Methods of Engagement

- Community Dialogue
- Community wide survey
- Focus groups
- City staff questionnaire

Community Dialogue

ENERGY

VISION:

The City of Stoughton reduces its operational impact on energy resources that contribute to climate change, and supports business and community efforts in doing the same. The City achieves this by embracing energy efficiency and conservation, while decreasing the use of fossil fuels

GOALS:

1. Reduce total greenhouse gas emissions.

2. Achieve 100% renewable electricity supply.

3. Reduce total energy consumption.

4. Decrease energy intensity (Quantity of energy/ unit of activity). This will allow for decreases in energy while allowing for growth

Community Dialogue Summary Report

Educational Opportunities: Educational opportunities were identified in each of the issue areas. While it was not specified who should conduct the education, the City or Sustainability Committee could coordinate educational opportunities with other organizations.

Advancing Solutions: Participants suggested solutions in each issue area, often recognizing that current efforts were underway, while suggesting ideas that the Sustainability Committee could put forth to increase the adoption of sustainability practices.

Reducing Barriers: A number of solutions could pose significant challenges for community members and businesses. This category of responses focused on ideas for the Stoughton Community to help overcome those obstacles.

Fostering Community Leadership: There were many ideas given which would empower the community to make informed decisions about, and to be involved with the future of sustainability in Stoughton

Collaboration and Partnerships: Community members provided a number of suggestions about the need to work with different organizations in and outside of Stoughton to ensure that the goals of the Sustainability Committee are met

Community Survey

- Committee co-designed the survey
- Goal: To understand community attitudes about sustainability
  - Priorities
  - Willingness to pay
  - support for specific initiatives
  - differences by demographics
- ~568 survey responses
- Analysis in progress
- Strong support for sustainability is evident

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When thinking of the Stoughton area, how important are the following to you, personally?

Preserving farmland

○ Not important at all
○ Somewhat important
○ Moderately important
○ Very important
○ Extremely important

Focus Groups

- Audiences:
  - Manufacturers and Utilities
  - Real Estate Developers
  - School District
  - Environmental Groups
  - Community Anchor Institutions
- Goal: To understand current initiatives, future plans, and barriers for specific audiences
- Results will inform the recommendations made to the city

Survey of City Departments

- Audiences:
  - Parks & Rec
  - Planning & Development
  - Public Works
  - Stoughton Utilities
- Goal: To understand current initiatives, future plans, and constraints
- Results will inform the recommendations made to the city

Challenges

- Saturation: Determining extent of community engagement necessary
- Commitment: Committee members have been on-board for two years (long process)
- Replication & streamlining: designing a process that could work across communities

Moving the Work Forward: Extension's Role?

- Process design & educational programming
- Facilitation
- Community engagement
- Monitoring the plan