

COLLECTIVE STATEMENT¹

City of Dunes City Committee for Citizen Involvement Meeting² Dunes City Hall May 15, 2013

WHOLE COMMITTEE (BEGINNING OF MEETING)

WHAT WORRIES YOU WHEN THE CITY IS CONSIDERING CHANGES TO ITS CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM?

- I ran into the authority problem of city vs. state vs. litigation potential when rewriting codes. City must follow state rules.
- Will it be done correctly? Will they make rules protecting water quality/environmental too lax.
- Citizen involvement program changes would limit interaction with citizens and it would be selective like the one-mind council—input regarding preservation vs. land use profiting would be quashed. The change would be a start to manipulating a perfect document.
- The comprehensive plan and its many protections will be next and it will be weakened.
- PAC agenda is represented favoring development instead of placing the wishes and welfare of current residents first.
- Each group in power attempts to disassemble or derail what the previous group put in place. Some city councilors and commissioners have their own agendas regarding land use and people need to have this information. I would assume those agendas will apply to how a CCI would function. Local residents and officials cannot function within the guidelines of a formal meeting, nor behave in an informal meeting. A CCI may be the only way the public would be allowed to speak and go on record.

¹ This document is referred to as a “Collective Statement.” This Collective Statement is the result of transcribing the 5/15/13 Citizen Involvement Committee Members’ individual statements, to create a statement of the total group. This is not a consensus statement or a majority statement.

² Comments from City Attorneys and Planner are omitted.

- What worries me is the sense that I and other like-minded citizens are being shut-out of communications and knowledge in order that legislative maneuvers can be accomplished illegally.
- “TRANSPARENCY” – Reason – The present Council has conducted secret meetings in the past and I fear they are at it still.
- This is the camel getting his nose under the tent. Council is studying the comp. plan at present – the intent is unclear. Suggestions from Council members are being recorded – minutes of the meeting are not available on the City’s website.
- Not allowing citizens to be heard. Having a program that only provides one side to be presented. Having a process dominated by one group because they lobby and bring all their friends, neighbors etc., making false claims as to what the City’s intentions are. (Fear - not facts)

GROUP 1:

WHAT IS NOT WORKING IN DUNES CITY'S CURRENT CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM? OR, WHAT WOULD NOT WORK IN A CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM?

- What did not work in my opinion was having a meeting where everyone got to vote and having another meeting where a different group came and counteracted that vote. Drew process out longer than needed to be. In my experience no decision was reached as a result.
- What we don't have now is enough public energy to come out in large numbers to support the city to do what the city really needs right now. The council can't do it by itself. Why is that not happening? Is it the citizens or the council not facilitating? Assume it is a combination of both.
- The way we run our meetings whether formal or informal, city councilors are learning procedures and codes afterwards, having to constantly do do-overs because we don't know our own codes. They don't know meeting process and codes; it's understandable.
- A citizen comes into speak at citizen input time and they are not treated respectfully. If the mayor likes a person they get to talk more than 3 minutes, otherwise they are beeped out of there. For example, recently a councilor said to a citizen, "you are wasting our time." The public's thoughts are not welcome. They have already decided.
- The efforts to communicate with the citizens are often inadequate because only selected individuals learn of critical matters. One of the problems is that what may be critical to one group is of little consequence to a second group.

WHAT IS WORKING IN DUNES CITY'S CURRENT CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM? OR, WHAT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE IN A GOOD CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM?

- It is important that citizens who participate in the citizen involvement program be encouraged to participate fully, i.e., be able to vote when voting is required – when decisions are being made.
- In place of our citizen involvement committee the city has used ad hoc committees that are too small and too narrow-minded. The current CCI program works because it is open and inclusive. It encourages participation, discussion, and new ideas.

- Currently the city has a structure for proper input and proper voting process; we have city council, planning commission, and road commission. The other thing we have that is working is a really passionate population and passionate individuals in the population. If we could make those things work together, we would be more successful. The trick would be to get us all to work together so those functions can work.
- What is a part of a really good system is what the CCI process has done in the past. The process of having individuals having a say and a vote in a meeting because they show up encourages the citizens to have a say and a view. The CCI process mobilizes a lot of people around an issue, which really had an impact on what city council decided. I don't think that would have happened without people being able to come out and see who is for and against – that is true democracy in my opinion. The process of having people put themselves forward heightens the responsibility that the council and other deciders have. They have to take it more seriously. And allows for more dramatic change. Not necessarily efficient, but did bring out a lot of people and made changes.
- It is important to follow the rules, maybe it is just semantics, but a CCI under state rules does not have authority to make recommendations on specific land use issues, so to me it is important to follow state law. A CCI has authority to make recommendations on citizen involvement and not on subject matter of land use decisions.

FINAL CLOSING THOUGHTS ABOUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN A CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

- Access to decision-makers
 - More council participation
 - More council presence at functions
- Citizens work hard and it doesn't turn into anything after it reaches council. Not always because not heard – lots of council turnover.

GROUP 2:

WHAT IS NOT WORKING IN DUNES CITY'S CURRENT CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM? OR, WHAT WOULD NOT WORK IN A CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM?

- To my knowledge there have been no CCI meetings for approximately 2 ½ years how can I say what's working or not working? I have difficulty with the premise of the question.

To have been appointed to committees and been directly involved – attend a meeting and you will see how there is no interaction.

Council people are mostly PAC members. Planning commission majority is PAC members. Budget committee are mostly PAC members. Not a broad spectrum. I am not paranoid; I am a critical thinker and a good observer.

- 1) In my opinion – lack of structure in CCI process – voting members change meeting to meeting – constant change in direction of the CCI – because of this change.
- 2) There is much confusion about CCI vs. CAC. Dunes City is only familiar with CCI. When you appoint planning commission as CCI (which may or may not be good) people freak out because a governing body is CCI. CAC is supposed to be doing what CCI is traditionally doing. If you have a bonafide CAC it replaces the CCI. It's a definition problem.
- The fact that the CCI is defined as determined by Dunes City – and not consistent with the state. Does not provide interface with Planning Commission as called out for by the state. Things that go along with that: CCI should be an oversight group for decision making, right now it is doing technical work to give to decision makers. CCI is not used just for citizen involvement purposes. Current committee, labeled "CCI," is assigned for specific tasks whereas CAC should be ongoing.
- Need to have a conversation about terms. A CAC (state term) is called a CCI (in Dunes City) I don't think that voting at the meetings is productive. Purpose of meeting is to communicate: Citizen's to decision makers. Voting creates winners and loser and losers are not heard.
- Since Dunes City (last 2 ½ years) have not concerned themselves with citizen's thoughts why should we start. Comp plan is fine the way it is. We should first start with discussion with citizens and understanding the divisions that occurred in 2006.

WHAT IS WORKING IN DUNES CITY'S CURRENT CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM? OR, WHAT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE IN A GOOD CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM?

- Resolving the “schvamunda” (garbage). It’s what keeps us separate. It’s a right vs. left issue.
- As imperfect as it is, it works to a point. It does give citizens a chance to be involved.

Follow the state’s structure. Having a permanent CCI or plan with ad-hoc CAC Committee.

Making Comp Plan better than the state – holding it to a higher standard.

- State structure – You’ve got to structure everything in line.

Having been involved in earlier CCI processes, the CCI, in whatever it’s doing, as given the authority by legislative body, has got to work under same time schedule. It’s got to have a definite goal and a true commitment to meeting that goal.

Get rid of voting.

Builds divisions – the city is floundering on divisions – consequences of voting. No voting would go a long ways to bring us together.

Bunch of new people – everything decided beforehand. Nothing to do about it except open it back up.

Combination of turning state structure to Dunes City needs – state very general – respect needs to be given to Dunes City needs.

Stop eliminating the work of others.

More responsive officials (people don’t feel like they are being listened to).

- At least a limited opportunity for citizen input – good thing. Some places there is none.

We really need to work on education: What things mean, what they don’t mean. Ok with higher level of standard – want everyone to understand.

Would be better if we do not have a vote. Sometimes you have to get down to a vote (CAC even).

(Voting body isn’t always changing.)

- We're focusing on stumbling block, approx. 70% of comp plan actually works.
- Have "dissenting opinions" – important to hear the other side.

Hear it – openly debate it.

I don't see why everyone doesn't feel good about that.

Whoever gets this stuff has to reflect that they have heard it and considered it and understand it in front of the public – currently it's a parliamentary basketball game.

- Reiterate that after all this time is put in – there has to be positive feedback that the info that has been gathered from many sources – has been meaningfully considered.

If not you don't need process – just a big waste of time.

FINAL CLOSING THOUGHTS ABOUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN A CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Unconventional Ideas

- Reader Board – on the website
- Blog for issues

WHOLE COMMITTEE (END OF MEETING)

WHAT IS THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF THE WORK THAT WE, AS A COMMITTEE, DID TONIGHT?

- Preservation of Dunes City's old CCI process which appears doomed already, nonetheless.
- Understanding others' opinions better and getting some great new ideas.
- The best outcome would be if procedures are adopted so that every citizen who wants to be heard will be and are able to visibly see decision makers take advantage of the collective wisdom and reasoning offered before making determinations that affect us all.
- I don't know.
- Outcome is surface tension easing – and potential change, yet highly unlikely since it's already decided.
- A CCI program that works better/easier and involves more of the DC community in DC public affairs
- 1. Understanding the task of this CCI.
 2. Remembering that the PC will be looking for DC compliance with state definitions and format.
- That people will realize they can work as a group in this town. That people will work hard to listen to each other. That council and other officials take the citizens' concerns seriously, whether past or current.
- Creation of a Citizen Involvement Program that complies with state law, involves as many citizens as possible, and guarantees decision-makers hear the citizens' concerns.
- We ventilated this evening – forward your perception of the committee's concerns to the City Council – along with a copy of the document produced. Make recommendation to the Council re: improvement of its relationship with the community.