

PEPPERDINE | SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

Public Engagement: A 21st Century Leadership Skill

Pete Peterson

Dean, Pepperdine School of Public Policy

April 14, 2018

Agenda:

- Is public engagement a fad?
- Why it's tough...to do well.
- The roles you must play to host an effective public process.

Is Public Engagement a Fad?

Stanford **SOCIAL INNOVATION** REVIEW
Informing and inspiring leaders of social change

SOCIAL ISSUES | SECTORS | SOLUTIONS | MAGAZINE | MORE

Community Engagement Matters (Now More Than Ever)

Data-driven and evidence-based practices present new opportunities for public leaders to increase impact while reducing inefficiency. But in adopting such approaches, they must avoid the temptation to act in a top-down manner. Instead, they should design and implement programs in ways that engage community members directly in the process of change.

GOVERNING

THE STATES AND LOCALITIES

FINANCE | HEALTH | INFRASTRUCTURE | MANAGEMENT | ELECTIONS | POLITICS | PUBLIC SAFETY | URBAN | EDUCATION

VOICES OF THE GOVERNING INSTITUTE

How Citizens Can Have a Genuine Voice in Policymaking

There's a lot that our governments could do beyond giving people three minutes at a public-hearing podium.

BY LARRY SCHLOTER FEBRUARY 11, 2016

...a. We want to make it easier for people to participate." So said Obama in his final State of the Union address. Beyond the partisan divides of the president's policy proposals lies a compelling thought: Regardless of the outcome, give ordinary people genuine, effective access to the process. A noble goal -- as demonstrated by the many local governments that have taken positive steps to make it so.

PLANETIZEN

HOME | NEWS | JOBS | ANNOUNCEMENTS | BLOGS | SCHOOLS | COURSES

LOGIN | JOIN

DAVE BIGGS's blog

What I Learned When an Angry Group Destroyed My Public Meeting

Monday, March 14, 2016 - 6:00am PDT by DAVE BIGGS



These civic experiments are getting citizens more involved in governing themselves

By John Gastil and Hollie Russon Gilman February 19

Save for Later | Reading List



CITY ACCELERATOR

Rewriting the Rules of Public Engagement

RON LITTLEFIELD | JANUARY 20, 2016

City Accelerator: Cohort 2 Cities in Plain Language

Civic engagement. There is a lot to draw to in that phrase. It encapsulates, as one writer put it, "the many ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future." The quality of that participation and the measure of improvement are both the subject of much hard work

PEPPERDINE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP

EARN AN LL.M. in the USA

#1 in Dispute Resolution

APPLY NOW

Select a State

Republican Trump 58 DEL | Democrat Sanders

Leader Winner

Civic Engagement

Community Engagement Matters (Now More Than Ever)

Data-driven and evidence-based practices present new opportunities for public and social sector leaders to increase impact while reducing inefficiency. But in adopting such approaches, leaders must avoid the temptation to act in a top-down manner. Instead, they should design and implement programs in ways that engage community members directly in the work of social change.

SHARE COMMENT DOWNLOAD PRINT ORDER REPRINTS RELATED ARTICLES

By [Melody Barnes & Paul Schmitz](#) | Spring 2016



“Data-driven practices and programs hold great promise as a means for making progress against seemingly intractable social problems. But ultimately they will work only when community members are able to engage in them as leaders and partners...As policymakers, elected officials, philanthropists, and nonprofit leaders shift resources to data-driven programs, they must ensure that community engagement becomes a critical element of that shift.”

— *Melody Barnes & Paul Schmitz, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Spring 2016*

Good, Bad, Ugly of Public Engagement in CA: aka, Culture Clash



- 85% of respondents say “their views on public engagement have changed since their careers began.”
- 77% of respondents “are interested in hearing more about public engagement practices that have worked in other places.”

“Testing the Waters” – 2013 Survey Report of California Public Officials (DI, Inst for Local Gov’t, Public Agenda, Irvine Fdtn)

Good, Bad, Ugly of Public Engagement in CA



- 76% say their public meetings are “typically dominated with narrow agendas”
- 64% say their public hearings “typically attract complainers and ‘professional citizens’”
- 69% say a “lack of resources and staff could stand in the way of a deliberative public engagement approach.”
- 80-85% negative responses to “How would you describe ‘the public’?” (training participants)

So what happens...



“We [Planning Dept] always put people up in front of the public who are the least prepared to be there.”

- Gail Goldberg, Fmr. Dir, City of LA Planning

Broken public processes lead to broken relationships with the public.

Traditionally, public engagement is not a skill taught in policy/planning programs, but this is changing.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IS A SPECTRUM OF PROCESSES



Note: Each stage comprises the next

Definition of Stages...

Inform: Providing info only to the public

Consult: Asking the public for input on pre-set options

Incorporate: Involving the public in developing
alternatives or “forced choices”

Empower: Asking public to make the decision/solve the
problem within council guidelines

What Makes It a Leadership Skill?

- Knowing when to engage, and at what level of the “Spectrum”.
- Knowing how to design a process that allows for some level of input.
- Knowing who to involve and at what level.
- Knowing what/how much info can help discussion.
- Knowing your (your department’s) strengths/weaknesses.
- Trusting the process, and leading others to as well...

“Customer” Characteristics

- Name, blame, complain and find fault
- Consumers not creators or problem solvers
- Think in terms of “I”/”me”
- Entitlement mentality

“Citizen” Characteristics

- Accountable, responsible welfare of whole
- Understand they have some responsibility for the safety of their neighborhood
- Acknowledges sustainable change only happens through citizen participation

Important Point

Our process can invite either “citizens” or “customers”. It’s our choice.

Can you read this?



A Better Way...



Working through an issue...

Budgets...

1. Thinking like a facilitator...
2. Thinking like a marketer...
3. Thinking like a participant...

Exercise...

Good/Bad experiences with
public engagement...
and what made it so?