

Participatory Government

David Zokaites

April 19, 2022

Goals

- Government should care more about public
- Government should respond to citizens
- More interaction between politicians, citizens
- Would profoundly impact modern life

Community Outreach

- Citizen email does not represent whole city
- Mayor should weekly dine with random city residents to connect with residents
- Plus weekly lunch with random city employee
- City councilors, department heads should also regularly meet with random people
- Mayor should meet with all councilors individually
- It's all part of the job

City Council Meetings

- Mayor – facilitator, main power source
- City councilors – vote on proposals, usually approve mayor
- Citizens – provide input, usually ignored
- Let's change the dynamic
- Reduce mayor power, up council & citizen power
- Councilors should be full-time not part-time
- Utilize public input to create better laws

Ombudsman

- Would help citizens navigate city bureaucracy
- Solve issues raised during city council meetings
- A new position suggested by Councilor Janet Brekke

Public Input

- Mostly ignored – should be valued
- Limited to certain points in the meeting
- Better to allow input after raising your hand
- Each public inputer should be contacted by ombudsman, district councilor, at-large councilor, mayor's assistant, or mayor
- Move public input back to the start of council meeting to encourage more public input
- Acknowledgement is key to peace, progress

Designing Laws

- Council actions usually decided long before public presentation
- Design laws with actual citizen involvement
- Convert council meeting from theater to meaningful discussion
- Present rough ideas at council, a preliminary reading (new)
- Keep first reading of codified proposals
- Keep second reading

Controversial Votes

- If any proposal has 3 or more public comments ...
- All councilors and mayor should explain their votes
- Limit explanation to 2 minutes

Implementation Unlikely

- Oligarchy loves power, money, dominance
- Oligarchy now in control
- Participatory government would weaken oligarchy

Stormy Election Last Week

