

The Citizens for Northville (CFN) PowerPoint highlights one of the biggest challenges in government...how to successfully engage the public. The City of Northville is all of us and it is important that we all participate in opportunities to provide input in the decision-making process.

Concerns regarding the City's communications processes were noted. After I was elected in 2015, one of City Council's main goals became strengthening communication with residents. To do so, we have systematically revamped communication practices and platforms. In addition to our re-designed website, we now have a Facebook page and a Twitter account. We send a weekly 'City News' email that anyone can subscribe to, and record and post all City Council meetings to the city website for those who can't, or don't want to come to meetings but want to stay informed.

Information about the Northville Downs project was included in the City News, on our Facebook page and The 'Ville magazine. We also moved Planning Commission meetings, which included presentation of traffic impact reports conducted by the City and the developer, to a larger venue so that more people could attend and so everyone who wished to comment would be able to speak. In short, there were multiple entry points for citizens who prefer various platforms. There is always room for improvement, but we have taken great strides to improve communication with community members and help them clearly understand issues that are under consideration by Boards, Commissions and City Council.

A time-limited comment period during City Council meetings may be frustrating for some, but please understand that this is standard practice in meetings of governmental bodies. Most nearby communities offer less public comment than City Council's five-minute limit (Northville Twp., two minutes, City of Plymouth and Northville Public Schools, three minutes). We want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to comment. Time limiting comments provides equity so we can hear as many voices as possible. If residents wish to present in-depth material, they may provide written documents to City Council and other Boards and Commissions. Many individuals take advantage of that practice.

The CFN presentation also referenced a concern about changes to the flood plain map. The developer for The Downs property, who, as you know, withdrew the PUD plan, petitioned FEMA for a change in the 2012 flood plan in order to allow for increased development. As a result, when the proposed project PUD was withdrawn, City Council and the Planning Commission took immediate steps to re-open the parts of the plan that pertain to the development of The Downs, the Cady street overlay, and the Foundry Flask/Creative District area because we share your concerns about over development. Please note that this project, and other projects that qualify, already include escrow accounts. For the Downs project, the first account was established during the application process and another would have been established if a site plan had been approved.

We concur that any modification of the Master Plan will be better with input from as many people as possible. Work on revising the Master Plan will include on-line visual preference surveys, open houses with discussions concerning design layout, entry corridor architecture, walkable streets and streetscape elements and storm water collection techniques. I am very hopeful that residents will choose to participate in these opportunities so that we can take all opinions and ideas into consideration.

I share the love of Northville and commitment to our City that resulted in the formation of Citizens for Northville. I have worked hard to make our city the best it can be, and it appears that CFN wants to do the same. While a written summary can never convey what a personal conversation can, but I hope you find these responses helpful. I invite you to contact me at any time with questions.

Marilyn Price