



Minutes for the June 7th 2023 Meeting of the Participatory Budgeting (PB) Committee of Freehold Borough

In attendance: Mark Bravaco, Carrie Conger (co-chair), Joanna Connelly, Kathy Eckhardt (co-chair), Ted Eckhardt, Mike Faccone, Caridad Freyre, Annette Jordan (council liaison), Paulette, and Dan Xavier.

The meeting was scheduled for 7:00pm. In approximate chronological order:

Joanna C. indicated that she will be doing at least three more presentations about PB in the coming months, including on a Spanish-language radio program listened to by many residents of the Borough. Caridad F. expressed interest in joining Joanna, and Cary C. may participate as well.

The idea came up of reaching out to other radio stations to do similar kinds of interviews/presentations about our program next year.

Presenting to the Spanish-language congregation of St. Rose of Lima was discussed as a possibility for further outreach this year.

Dan X. reported that he had given a presentation to the American Legion about PB and left them paper forms for submitting ideas. He also reported that he'd given flyers to Dr. Ross, the principal of Freehold Borough High School, and is making sure that they are put up in the school.

The Committee began vetting project proposals that had been submitted since our last meeting in May. One proposal was for playground canopies that would provide shade for playground equipment. While it was acknowledged that putting up and taking down these canopies would involve regular maintenance, the Committee ultimately agreed that the project met all the criteria. More information might just be needed about which playgrounds in particular would get the canopies.

Another proposal was for solar-powered LED pedestrian lights at crosswalks. This project was also determined to meet the core criteria, though the Committee agreed that the number of such crosswalk lights being called for in the proposal was a bit high and posed a bit of a dilemma for car traffic. The submitter would thus be contacted about amending his proposal and decreasing the number of lights called for therein, due to feasibility concerns.

Mark B. submitted a project proposal for centerline hardening at intersections in order to improve safety for pedestrians crossing the streets, and gave a little pitch for his project to the Committee. The Committee agreed that the project met the required PB criteria, though Kathy E. wanted a little more clarification on the location and orientation of the centerline hardening plan. Mark B. promised to email her with more info.

Adding dog-waste receptacles and bags in various places was another idea proposed to the Committee. The Committee concluded that this project met all the criteria except one: purchasing dog-waste bags would be an ongoing cost and, therefore, might have to be removed from the proposal before being put on the ballot.

The fifth and final submission was to repair bricks on the downtown promenade. This was agreed to be a doable proposal in the abstract, but repairs were already in the works in certain places, and it wasn't clear where the submitter was referring to specifically. More information will be requested from him.

It was considered whether members of the PB Committee could submit project proposals of their own. Concluding that it was not technically prohibited, the Committee nevertheless held that it should be shied away from as a practice.

There was some discussion of what the new PB banner might look like. Our printing order was confirmed to be in the works.

Kathy E. unveiled a PB t-shirt design to the Committee, which was very well received. She said that the shirts would be purchased in bulk and would cost about \$15 each to make.

The Committee discussed whether and how they might advertise PB at the Borough's outdoor concerts on Thursdays. Carrie C. planned to email a schedule about attending concerts to the Committee, and further details will likely be worked out via email.

At least one teacher in the Borough was found to be bringing our PB process into the classroom—fielding ideas from students and deciding what to submit to the Committee as a class. Awesome!

It was decided that the Committee would reach out to those who submitted ballot-worthy ideas in the past and ask if we could re-submit their ideas this year. It was also decided that everyone who submitted a project proposal this year would get a little confirmation email that their idea had been received, possibly along with some feedback for improvements.

Dan X. said that he would mention PB to his fellow Masons.

Caridad F. suggested changing the wording on the button leading to the Project Proposal Forms on the PB webpage in order to be more clear as to where the proposal forms are located.

Mark B., admitting that his flyer design wasn't very clear on who could participate, suggested that the Committee upload our most recent slide-deck to the PB webpage so that participants can more easily learn about the details of the program and who's allowed to submit/vote.

The Committee talked about some general events that have happened or will happen in the Borough this year, mostly in a casual manner.

Via email after the meeting, Caridad F. clarified that she'll be presenting to the Borough's Historic Preservation Advisory Commission on June 26th.

The next PB Committee meeting is scheduled for July 5th.