



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Office of the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department

Date: December 6, 2012
To: Council Member Robert Lilligren, Chair, Committee of the Whole
Subject: **Report on 2012 Minneapolis City Academy**
Recommendation: Receive and File

Department Information

Prepared by: Howard Blin, Community Engagement Manager

Approved by:

David Rubedor, Neighborhood and Community Relations Director _____

Steven Bosacker, City Coordinator _____

Presenters in Committee: Howard Blin

The Minneapolis City Academy program was established to educate residents about the activities of the City and to highlight the opportunities available for participation in local civic affairs. The Academy is coordinated by the Neighborhood and Community Relations department and involves the work of many departments in presenting the wide scope of services provided by the City. The program was initiated in 2012 and is intended to continue on an annual basis with expanded participation.

Supporting Information

The first Minneapolis City Academy concluded on November 27th. The Academy involved a five week series of sessions organized by various City departments intended to introduce residents to Minneapolis City government. This first Academy served as a trial run of the program with a relatively small group of participants and will result in refinements to future programs.

Fourteen residents completed the program which had the following objectives:

- 1) Educating residents on City government and services.
- 2) Providing an opportunity for City staff to hear questions from residents on City operations.
- 3) Building leadership among members of neighborhood and community organizations, particularly from diverse groups.
- 4) Encourage participants to continue civic engagement through work on City boards and commissions.

The Academy included most City departments and involved City staff presenting information on department operations and leading tours of City facilities. The schedule and program for the Academy was as follows:

Session 1: General Government – October 30th at City Hall

- Introduction to City Government – Howard Blin, NCR
- Assessing and Taxation – Patrick Todd, Assessing
- Finance and Budgeting – Sandra Christenson, Finance
- Regulatory Services – Greg Simbeck, Regulatory Services
- Tour of 911 Center – Christine McPherson, 911

Session 2: Planning and Development – November 7th at Crown Roller Mill

- CPED Overview – Jason Wittenberg, CPED
- Planning and Zoning – Beth Elliot, CPED
- Mill District Development – Ann Calvert, CPED

Session 3: Police Department – November 13 at Police Training Center

- Police Training, Use of Force, Investigations – Mary Lou Fiala, Police Training

Session 4: Public Works – November 20th at Fridley Water Treatment Plant

- Public Works Overview – Steve Kotke, Brette Hjelle, Ben Hecker, Public Works
- Tour of Water Treatment Plant – George Kraynick, Public Works

Session 5: Fire Services – November 27th at the Emergency Operations and Training Facility

- Overview of Fire Operations – Chief John Fruetel
- Tour of Emergency Training and Operations Facility – Ray Cruz, Fire
- Tour of Strategic Information Center – Sgt. Nancy Murphy, Police

Lessons Learned

Based on the experience of the first Academy, it is planned to make it an annual program with the following changes and enhancements:

More Participants. The size of the group in the first Academy was intentionally kept small to allow fine tuning of the program. It was determined that a class size of 25 can be accommodated in future Academies.

Greater Outreach. We hope to expand the outreach to include even more participants from the city's cultural communities.

Broader Scope. It was impossible to cover the entire range of City activities in five weekly sessions. Some departments which were not included in the first year have expressed interest in participating in future Academies. This may require lengthening the program. We are currently surveying participants to gauge the support for a longer program.

Schedule Earlier in the Year. Because some sessions involve outdoor tours, starting the Academy in September would allow more hours of daylight.

Participants

The following residents completed the City Academy program:

Sam Aspley

Henry Jimenez

Stephan Bossert

Jennifer Johnson

Anja Curiskis

Kevin Larson

Elise Ewing

Maura Lynch

Josh Griep

Ricardo McCurley

Margaret Haney

Carl Rice

Rashid Abdullahi Issack

Sheila Rice