

Public Engagement

The process of holding SRC meetings is to fulfill the letter and spirit of the Sunshine Act which protects the public's right to transparency and involvement in the democratic processes of our public institutions. However, more often than not, what this really ends up becoming is a stage for frustrated members of the public to do little more than vent. There does not seem to be any method in this process for the public to feel truly engaged. I am going to give some examples of why I am stating this and then ask a question at the end.

1. Resolutions are voted on by this board (which covers every aspect of our public school system) yet those resolutions are rarely posted in a timely fashion to allow the public to review them. Case in point, as of 9:30 a.m. yesterday morning, no resolutions were posted on the website. (By 11:30 a.m., when I checked again, they were posted.)
2. If a resolution is questioned or challenged by members of the public, there is no method of doing anything more than having a one-sided speech by those members which is what we see happening right now with Kensington Urban.
3. SRC members vote almost entirely unanimously with rarely even a question posed by any members, begging the question, when and where are the debates of the issues taking place?
4. Only recently, have the public's questions been given the barest of acknowledgement. Even now, questions go unanswered or ignored. For example, at the last SRC meeting, I asked the questions: "Can you please tell me, who has a seat at the table in deciding that turning our schools over (under any label) to an outside entity is a solution that we want in our district's action plan? And, how can voices that differ on this solution be included at the table?"

I received no answer to this question but I did receive a verbal assault about his perceived failings of the PFT from Mr. Green.

My two questions from the last SRC meeting still stand unanswered and today I am asking how we can assure that resolutions are posted in ample time for public review. In the not too distant past, the SRC held two meetings...one to present and discuss the resolutions and the second to vote on them. Can this be reinstated? Or, can resolutions be posted a week before the scheduled SRC meeting in lieu of the two meeting format?

Diane Payne, SRC Meeting Testimony of April 16, 2015