



Council Worksession  
September 6, 2022  
5:00 pm

Present: Mayor Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas  
Councilmember Abdullahi Abdulle (attending remotely)  
Councilmember Graeme Allen (attending remotely)  
Councilmember Pam Axberg (attending remotely)

Absent: Councilmember Emily Dunsworth

Staff in Attendance: Devin Massopust, Tony Paetznick

Guests in Attendance: Kim Daane and Erin Caldwell with Polco

Review of 2022 Resident Survey Results with National Research Center (NRC) at Polco

Massopust explained Kim Daane from Polco would be reviewing the resident survey results with the City Council. He commented on how the results would assist staff and the Council set priorities and goals for the future.

Kim Daane, Polco representative, introduced herself to the Council. She provided the Council with a presentation on the results from the City of New Brighton's recent resident survey. She described how the data gathered from the survey can be used to monitor trends, measure government performance, assist with informing future budget decisions as well as providing benchmarking to other communities. The survey methodology and hybrid mailing approach were described. It was noted the City received a 22% overall response rate for the survey. Compared to national benchmarks, the City received 40 more positive rates, 16 similar rates and four more negative rates from the recent survey. The four key findings within the results were reviewed in detail. She finished her presentation with a summary of conclusions that could be gathered from the survey results.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas requested further information regarding Group A and Group B. Ms. Daane described how the surveys were distributed to Group A and Group B. She commented on the response rates for Group A and Group B. The hallmarks of this being a scientific survey were further discussed.

Further discussion ensued regarding the survey results for the quality versus the importance of City services.

Councilmember Abdulle asked if only one person per household responded on the survey. Ms. Daane reported this was the case.

Councilmember Abdulle stated he was pleased with how the survey results appeared to be representative New Brighton and its residents. He questioned what a good response rates is for a community. Erin Caldwell, Polco representative, explained most communities have a response rate of 15% to 25% response rate. She noted response rates to surveys were declining, which was leading Polco to seek open survey responses.

Councilmember Abdulle inquired why the survey was sent to 2,700 residents and not more. Ms. Caldwell discussed how the hybrid mailing and survey size was selected. She explained if the number of surveys mailed were doubled, the amount of resources needed for the survey would also double. She discussed how positive the margin of error was on the City's survey results and noted this could go down if more surveys were mailed out. She discussed the number of people that completed the survey online versus on paper.

Councilmember Abdulle asked what percentage of respondents were from single family homes. Ms. Daane reported 76% of respondents were from single family homes and 24% were from multi-family homes.

Councilmember Allen believed the results were pretty true. He indicated the movement reflected the trends in the community. He stated most residents want to see more retail and restaurants in the community. He discussed how the cost of homes has increased since 2017 which led to only 20% of people believing there was adequate affordable housing in the community. He was of the opinion the results closely reflected the conversations he has had with residents in New Brighton.

Councilmember Axberg commented she agreed with much of what Councilmember Allen stated. She believed the results tell the Council what they knew and validates what they need to work on. She appreciated how the survey results would help guide and assist the Council going forward.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked if there were details from the last survey for comparison purposes. Massopust reported staff has the results from the 2017 survey. Ms. Caldwell stated this information is not typically included because the demographics have changed in the community over time.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas explained she appreciated how Polco worked to encourage participation from the community. She indicated she would like to understand what a regular cadence would be for the survey going forward and inquired if phone surveys were an option. Ms. Caldwell stated phone surveys were challenging and were more expensive to complete. She recommended the City completed a community survey every two or three years. Massopust reported staff was planning to administer surveys on non-election years with the next survey being conducted in 2024 or 2025.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas questioned what staff thought about the survey results. Massopust found the crime results interesting. He was pleased to see 90% of the residents believe the services they receive from the City were good or excellent. He believed the survey was a good grounding mechanism for staff. Paetznick commented on the crime perception results and discussed how property crime had increased in the community.

Councilmember Abdulle requested further information on how the rental versus homeowner results were weighted. Ms. Caldwell described how the survey results were weighted through different algorithms. She reported this was necessary to make the survey results to be representative of the community. She explained this was a survey best practice to make the results as reflective of the community as possible.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas discussed Slides 28, 29 and 30, which addressed desired changes to City services, in further detail. She believed the City's Commission had an opportunity to look at this data and recommended the Council also consider this information when setting priorities for the coming year. She stated the stricter code enforcement concerns were interesting to her.

Councilmember Allen asked if data could be transferred based on respondents location. Ms. Caldwell reported this information was not tracked but could be tracked in the future if desired by the Council.

Councilmember Allen commented on how the community was turning over and there were many young families. She suggested a question be added to better understand how long the respondents have lived in New Brighton. Ms. Caldwell stated this question was included in the survey.

Councilmember Abdulle requested further information on how the affordable housing questions were phrased. Ms. Caldwell reviewed the affordable housing questions with the Council.

Councilmember Abdulle recommended a questions be phrased in future surveys to ask if residents feel cost burdened by their housing.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas asked if the survey data would be shared with the Equity Commission. Massopust reported this data would be shared with the each of the commissions and the community at large.

Mayor Niedfeldt-Thomas thanked Ms. Daane and Ms. Caldwell for reviewing the survey results in detail with the Council.

Worksession adjourned at 6:42 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Terri Spangrud  
City Clerk