



Called City Commission Meeting Highlights for Next Steps Workshop Wednesday, June 12, 2013 at City Hall

Today, the Mayor and Commissioners along with City directors participated in a six hour workshop led by the National Research Center (NRC). The workshop called the Next Steps Workshop: Using Resident Perspectives to Guide Government Action was facilitated by NRC Vice President Michelle Miller Kobayashi. The workshop reviewed and analyzed the results of Paducah's National Citizen Survey.

Kobayashi says, "I want to applaud you for contracting to use the National Citizen Survey. There are a lot of governments that are afraid to step out and measure." City Manager Jeff Pederson says, "I applaud the City Commission for asking Paducah's residents what they think about city services and about the city as a whole. Many cities don't take the time to solicit feedback from their citizens."

The City of Paducah contracted to utilize the National Citizen Survey to gather feedback from citizens about city services, civic participation, and various community topics. In February and March of this year, the NRC mailed the National Citizen Survey to 1200 randomly selected households in Paducah. The City of Paducah had a statistically valid sample size with the return of 344 surveys.

The multiple-choice survey included 124 standard questions and general demographics questions. Most of the questions had five choices such as Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Don't Know. As a benchmark, results also are compared to Southern cities that recently completed surveys.

According to the NRC regarding Paducah's survey, "Most residents experienced a good quality of life in the City of Paducah and believed the City was a good place to live. The overall quality of life in the City of Paducah was rated as 'excellent' or 'good' by 63% of respondents. A majority reported they plan on staying in the City of Paducah for the next five years."

City residents gave highly positive responses regarding several city services with 87% of the respondents giving the Paducah Fire Department a good or excellent rating; 85% of the respondents rating garbage collection as excellent or good, and 76% of the respondents rating Paducah's parks system as excellent or good.

The NRC also states that Paducah's residents are very civically engaged by attending public meetings, helping neighbors, and/or volunteering their time.

The survey also showed that citizens considered the following factors, ranked in order, as the most essential to their quality of life: sense of safety, fire services, healthcare, strong neighborhoods, a friendly community, and jobs.

The factors that received less favorable ratings are street repair, economic development, and code enforcement. Miller says, "Paducah is not unique with those topics receiving lower ratings. Those patterns are what we see across the country."



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After reviewing Paducah's results, Miller asked the group to list the top items that the City should address this year. After making a list and through a quick round of voting, the group selected two items: the City's role in economic development and growth coupled with improving the community through neighborhood revitalization; and community engagement.

Regarding community engagement, Miller says, "Communities where residents are more involved typically rate their communities higher." Pederson says, "What I'm hearing is that we have to advocate for ourselves, the city government. It's ok to take the time to do it. That's how we engage the public."

Pederson adds, "This survey will give Paducah a starting point, a benchmark. Over the next few months, each department will dig into the results and take a look at what can be done to improve our interactions with and services to the public."

The National Citizen Survey is a standardized survey tool used by hundreds of cities. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the NRC developed the survey. For more information about the citizen survey including survey methodology and the survey instrument, please visit www.paducahky.gov.

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