



# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

ADOPTED BY EVART CITY COUNCIL ON JULY 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2015

*At Home. By Nature.*

City of Evart 5814 100<sup>th</sup> Ave Evart, MI 49631

[www.evart.org](http://www.evart.org)

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## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

The City of Ewart believes that the best public policy is developed when there is wide participation by the public in the development of the policy. In developing plans for the City of Ewart, it is our policy to:

1. Solicit public participation early and often in the planning process.
2. Identify users and stakeholders. Seek to have representatives involved in key phases of the planning process.
3. Utilize effective and equitable avenues for distributing information and receiving comments.
4. Provide materials and design participation initiatives that encourage public participation.
5. Maintain and develop staff expertise in encouraging and facilitating public participation.
6. Seek, support, and encourage new methods of soliciting public involvement in planning processes.
7. Record the results of public engagement and report back to the public the results of the planning process.

### **SECTION 1.01 LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

As part of having an inclusive, diversified public participation in the planning process, the City of Ewart recognizes the importance of adhering to both the letter and the spirit of the Michigan Open Meetings Act. Some of the main provisions of the Open Meetings Act require:

1. All meetings of a public body shall be open to the public and shall be held in a place available to the general public.
2. All decisions of a public body shall be made at a meeting open to the public.
3. A person shall be permitted to address a meeting of a public body under rules established.
4. A person shall not be excluded from a meeting otherwise open to the public except for a breach of the peace actually committed at the meeting.

Some planning efforts are required by state law to include public participation. Examples include:

1. Master Plans are required to seek public input under Public Act 33 of 2008
2. Downtown Development Plans are required under Public Act 197 of 1975
3. Parks and Recreation Master Plans
4. Zoning ordinance changes
5. Setting tax rates
6. Approving and changing budget appropriations
7. Changes in utility rates

The City Charter and Ordinances also requires public input for:

1. Ordinance Changes
2. Special Assessments

## **SECTION 1.02 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION VENUES**

There are a number of venues for soliciting public participation. Methods that the City of Evert has used in the past include:

1. Public Notice requirements
2. Newspaper advertising
3. Website notification
4. Posting in public buildings
5. Announcements at public meetings
6. Focus groups
7. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter
8. Surveys
9. City Hall meetings
10. Newsletters/e-Newsletters
11. Stories in local newspapers
12. Other

The City will use the most appropriate venue for the project. Some of the other options that may be considered include:

1. Community workshops
2. Walkabout tours
3. One on one interviews
4. Standing committees
5. Other venues will be considered depending on the project and the issues being studied.

## **SECTION 1.03 PLANNING FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

When making a plan such as a master plan or parks and recreation plan, it is the City's policy to:

1. Meet all legally required public notifications and public hearings
2. Be as open about the process and the issues as possible
3. Assess the level of public concern or interest in the plan
4. Identify public participation goals
5. Identify stakeholders
  - a. The key stakeholders will change from project to project. Each project should consider the likely stakeholders. Examples of stakeholders that should be included in the process are:
    - i. Evert residents
    - ii. Property owners
    - iii. Business owners

- iv. Faith community
  - v. Schools and colleges
  - vi. Medical community
  - vii. Industry
  - viii. Senior citizens
  - ix. Children
  - x. Handicapped users
  - xi. Neighboring communities and the State of Michigan
- b. More specialized plans should take extra effort to include all users. For example, transportation should include pedestrians, bicyclists, bus users, and handicapped people. A park plan might include users such as Little League or joggers or skate boarders.
  - c. The City of Ewart has a Title VI plan to ensure we do not discriminate against people based on race, color, or national origin. If needed, the Title VI plan has procedures to addresses different languages and cultures.
6. Select the best venues to attract interested and affected citizens and stakeholders to the selected forums for public participation.
  7. Gather and disseminate the results of the public participation.
  8. Where possible, evaluate the effectiveness of the selected venues so that future planning processes will be better.
  9. This policy also applies to third party consultations helping the City develop plans.

#### **SECTION 1.04 EDUCATING THE PUBLIC**

In the development of plans, the City will attempt to keep the public as informed as possible. The City's website will be primary location for meeting minutes, draft plans, educational materials, and meeting presentations.

#### **SECTION 1.05 EVALUATING THE PUBLIC OUTREACH**

Public outreach and public education are important for the success of most projects and planning efforts. The City will track the number of participants we have at the different forums. Periodically, City staff will evaluate which methods are most successful in attracting public participation. As various technologies improve, this policy envisions incorporating the new methods and techniques of outreach. It is the policy of the City to attempt continuous improvement in our public participation. Evaluation of the success of each venue is essential to continuous improvement.

## **SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**

July 13, 2015

Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Schmidt, Keysor, Elliott, and Sherman  
Zackary Szakacs, City Manager. Heather Pattee, City Clerk.

Absent: Foster

Motion moved by Schmidt supported by Sherman to accept the City of Evert Public participation Plan. Motion passed.

Motion moved by Elliott supported by Keysor to accept Ordinance No. 2015-3. Motion passed.

Roll Call: Elliot, Sherman, Schmidt, and Keysor

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Absent: Foster

Motion moved by Elliot supported by Sherman to adjourn meeting at 9:05 a.m.



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