



Sounding Board Charter

3/17/2021

Overview

Over the past several years Monroe has experienced increasing growth with new local businesses opening and more people moving into the area. Additionally, the COVID pandemic has presented Monroe with new challenges that are not yet fully understood. To better understand current community priorities and needs the City is completing a citywide visioning process that will culminate in the development of a mission statement, vision statement and core values. These documents will form the foundation for policymaking, budgeting, land and infrastructure planning, and programing for the next thirty years. To ensure this process equitably reflects all voices in Monroe, the City has convened a Sounding Board of representatives with a variety of lived experiences to work together to identify community priorities and needs, and recommend a revised mission statement, vision statement and core values to the Monroe Mayor and City Council.

Sounding Board

The main purpose of the Sounding Board is to:

- Provide input into the outreach and communications plan for the City's visioning project.
- Reflect the interests and needs of Monroe's diverse community networks to ensure broad participation in the process to update the City's vision statement and core values.
- Review findings from the visioning process and recommend a draft mission statement, vision statement and core values before these documents are finalized by the Mayor and City Council.

Mayor and City Council's role

The Mayor and City Council will:

- Maintain commitment to adopting a mission statement, vision statement and core values that reflects Monroe community priorities and needs.
- Stay informed of Sounding Board discussions through regular updates from City staff who attend Sounding Board meetings.
- Provide feedback on potential limitations or concerns for the Sounding Board to consider, as needed.

The Mayor and City Council will consider the recommendations of the Sounding Board for the updated mission statement, vision statement and core values. The final decision on the language for these documents will be made by the Mayor and City Council.

The role of Monroe Planning Boards and Commissions

The Planning Boards and Commissions will:

- Stay informed of Sounding Board discussions through regular updates from City staff who attend Sounding Board meetings.
- Provide feedback on potential limitations or concerns for the Sounding Board to consider as needed.

Sounding Board's role

Sounding Board participants will:

- Review materials, complete pre-meeting activities, and come prepared to discuss, listen and learn at meetings.
- Develop an understanding of the City of Monroe's current mission statement, vision statement and core values.
- Communicate with and represent the needs and priorities of their networks in the City of Monroe.
- Partner with City staff to develop and recommend a revised mission and vision statement and core values that reflect current community priorities and needs.

City staff role

City staff will:

- Provide information on current City mission statement, vision statement and core values and past work to develop these documents.
- Send draft materials to Sounding Board at least four calendar days before meetings.
- Respond to Sounding Board requests for data, analysis and research to the extent possible.
- Work with Sounding Board members through active inquiry and feedback to create inclusive meeting spaces where all Sounding Board members feel comfortable participating.
- Work collaboratively with the Sounding Board to develop a recommended mission and vision statement and core values.
- Provide tools for Sounding Board members to use to communicate with their networks (e.g. fact sheets, frequently asked questions, etc.)
- Take notes and develop summaries of each meeting.

Norms for the Sounding Board

Working together

- We acknowledge our group's diversity, and we value different points of view. We will respect each other's opinions and maintain constructive participation.
- We will make every effort to prepare for and attend meetings, actively participate and be available for work between meetings as needed.
- We will respect each other's time by beginning and ending on time, unless otherwise agreed to by the Sounding Board. When commenting, we will consider the time needed for others to share their perspectives.
- We will keep an open mind and come to meetings with interests, not entrenched opinions. We will share our interests and objectives with all Sounding Board members. We will openly discuss the reasons behind our statements, questions and actions. We will represent information accurately and appropriately.
- We will be responsible for conveying the priorities and concerns of the Monroe networks we represent.
- We will listen carefully to the views expressed by others, avoid interruptions and seek ways to reconcile others' views with our own.
- We will adhere to the ground rules and respect the procedural guidance of the facilitator.
- We will respect and use preferred pronouns (e.g. She/her, He/him, They/them) for all Sounding Board members.

Recommending a mission and vision statement and core values

- We will strive to make reasonable, collective requests and suggestions through a collaborative discussion process with City staff, the Mayor and City Council, and Monroe boards and commissions.
- In discussions, suggestions may not represent unanimity. The facilitator is responsible for seeking and probing for group preferences. Each Sounding Board member is responsible for voicing dissent if they cannot support a recommendation.

Expectations for the facilitator

- We give the facilitator permission to keep the group on track and to “table” discussions to keep the group moving.
- We expect the facilitator to help the Sounding Board accomplish our purpose in an equitable manner.
- We want the facilitator to:
 - Draft meeting agendas
 - Manage Sounding Board meetings and discussions
 - Work with City staff to identify and prepare information to inform Sounding Board discussions
 - Consult with Sounding Board members between meetings about how to manage the process and address concerns

External communications

- Sounding Board meetings will be open to the public. Public participants will be able to attend virtual meetings to observe and listen only.
- Sounding Board meetings will be announced on the City of Monroe’s events calendar and a project specific webpage on the City’s website.
- Meeting summaries, agendas, presentations, and other meeting products will be posted for reference on the City of Monroe’s project specific webpage. Note, Sounding Board member names will be included in materials.
- Sounding Board members will avoid characterizing the views or opinions of, or attempt to speak for, other Sounding Board members outside of any Sounding Board meeting or activity.
- Sounding Board members, City Staff, and the facilitator will accurately describe Sounding Board preferences that are conveyed to the Mayor and City Council as well as Monroe boards and commissions.

Decision-making process

All members will be encouraged to take a proactive approach to decision-making and to look for creative solutions rather than problems. While it is important to identify problems, it is even more important to seek thoughtful solutions that advance our work.

When a decision needs to be made, Sounding Board members will seek to achieve consensus to the extent possible. For the purpose of this effort, consensus is achieved when all members can say “I approve this decision or choice” or “while I may not be fully supportive of this decision or choice, I can live with it and I will not oppose it.”

To gauge Sounding Board member opinions, individual members will be asked to vote. If needed, the Facilitator will ask members who respond with a no vote for more information about their opinion and

explore what might need to change for them to approve the decision. A record of Sounding Board member votes and opinions will be included in meeting summaries.

If Sounding Board members cannot reach consensus, opinions will be documented and shared with City Council members along with the recommended vision, mission, and core values statements for further discussion.

Proposed meeting ground rules

- Start and end on time.
- Silence electronics.
- Ask questions of each other to gain clarity and understanding.
- Express yourself in terms of your preferences, interests, and outcomes you wish to achieve.
- Listen respectfully, and sincerely try to understand the needs and interests of others.
- Come with curiosity and willingness to learn.