

Meeting on a Reykjavík Democracy Policy - Live Subtitles

The meeting starts on Wednesday 25 November at 19.30:

<https://reykjavik.webex.com/reykjavik/j.php?MTID=mf5bf4ec9d9041ae57c93c1e9d494aaf4>

Good evening and welcome to this meeting on a Reykjavík Democracy Policy. We will wait a few minutes to allow more participants to join the meeting.

Good evening good guests. I welcome you to this meeting, on behalf of Reykjavík City. People are still joining the meeting, which is perfectly fine, and people can join while I go over the introduction. Today we will talk about democracy in Reykjavík City. The City intends to form a democracy policy, and today we will submit ideas for a better and more democratic city. Excuse us for a minute, we are having some tech problems... Thank you. I want to go over a few practical matters. The meeting is subtitled for those who need it, and you should have received instructions about how to use both Icelandic and English subtitles. The subtitles are live. Extensive instructions were sent out to participants and I would also like to note that the meeting is recorded. I will speak about a democracy policy for around 10 minutes. Then we will have discussions, and we have formed some framework for the discussions, we want to wonder about how the future could look for a more democratic city. We will then hear the groups results. We intend to end the meeting around 21. To put our meeting in context: in the last electoral term a draft policy was submitted, in April 2018. This draft has been considered in this work, and in September 2019 it was decided to form a steering group on a new policy. And that's why we are here, as part of that project. The policy should describe how citizens are involved in the decision-making in the City. We have had to postpone our meeting a few times, for

obvious reasons, but considering the weather outside, we are probably all happy to be participating from home.

The purpose of this policy is to be guidelines for the administration. Focus group with ordinary civilians was formed to submit ideas. Also, the consultation forum Better Reykjavík (Betri Reykjavík). We have been shaping processes on how to involve people in the city administration. Where are we now? For the last few months, we have been mapping our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, etc. We have seen that there is room for improvement in many places, but there are also things being done well. We have active consultation in various places around the city, but they need to be better connected and supported, and information sharing could be better. Not everyone knows about Íbúaráð (Residents council) or the multicultural council, etc. We have received plenty of ideas in the process. Tonight, it is your role to discuss and submit ideas, and our role is to listen. We have formed some framework for the discussions, but you are welcome to present new ideas. We also want to encourage you to use the consultation forum online, after this meeting.

The meeting arrangement: the meeting will be split up into groups, 3-4 groups. The groups will have to decide on a spokesperson, and a secretary who takes notes. And we would appreciate getting the notes after this meeting from the secretaries. We would like to hear a summary from each spokesperson after the first round of discussions. We are a few people located here in the City Hall, we are available for assistance and we will also enter the group discussions to see how things are going. Now, for the first session/discussion. Session 1 should take around 25 minutes. The task should be fun, its about what would be the ideal situation. Lets imagine how the future could look. Lets say that on this online meeting in November 2020, citizens come together and discuss a democracy policy for Reykjavík. Lets say that the city then, after the meeting, is successful in creating a good policy. These are three statements to describe the situation in 2023,

hypothetically. 1. Democratic and organised consultation with the people has made the decision-making process better. 2 Citizens feel like their views are listened to and decisions are made in a transparent and democratic manner. 3. Reykjavík has sought new ways to increase democracy which has also lead to increased participation. I especially like the 3rd one. We will now spent the next 20 minutes discussing how the city could get to this place in 3 years from now, where these statements are true. This slide shows you the 3 questions to lead the discussions. And the secretary should do their best to note the most important points down from the discussions. Its time for the breakout rooms. Don't worry, we will be available for help. We should have around 8-10 people in each group. English speaking participants will be in a separate group. I will keep this slide up for you meanwhile. We will meet again in a short while.

Dear guests. We are back here in the main meeting, and have finished Session 1. I think we had 4 active groups. We would very much like to get short summaries from your discussions, I will kep the three topics up for you to see. Anyone from Group 1 who could tell us about the discussions? -not sure which number our group was. -I think I was in Group1.

Björn: I gathered points from our discussions. It went well, we discussed many things but made a summary at the end of the discussions. In general, people want quicker action, less future planning. There are already a number of existing processes, that could be used more. Residential presentations, etc. We selected statement no. 2 - that citizens are listened to and the processes are more democratic and transparent. So more focus on action right now, using the existing processes for democracy. People are in general happy with Rafræn Reykjavík. And when ideas are presented in 2004 and executed in 2020, its hard to know whats going on. Regarding the 1st question: more presentations and always present big changes to residents. Easy access. 2nd question: regular newsletter, FB groups managed by the City with QandA about big issues, even a consultation forum like the State runs. 3rd question: not invent the wheel, just use the existing tools: regular presentations and

that peoples income is in fact used and based on. Thats our summary.

-This is very excellent, I think you did very well in your discussions. You will continue as a group in Session 2, in a minute. But now for the next group, Group 2.

Martin: Actually Group 3. We talked about how some things are done very well, in a transparent manner, but there are missing spots. Íbúaráðið (Residents Council) works, and the vote, but there is some step missing, where its hard to realise what happens. So missing pieces in the processes. The City could explain the logic behind decisions, in a clear manner. Also security... We also talked about the City could do better with the technical processing in this regard. The proposals are not always within the framework, maybe we would need a platform for extending Betri Reykjavík in some manner, for example with the Art Festival, etc. And also a central platform for grants, etc, where people could bring their ideas and potential. More information to people in general, but especially to people of foreign origin.

-Thank you for these great points. Its very useful that we hear each other here, it will be helpful in session 2 to have an overview of what has been said. Now next group.

Dögg: I was not selected as spokesperson, there is some construction in my house, I hope you wont hear it. The discussion started slow, but then took off, but we did not manage to finish item 3. But regarding no. 1: we would need better access to information, transparent and visual decision-making process, and that a grassroot platform is created, both for education and connecting. No. 2: People should know when the ideas are implemented, the timing of consultation should be clear from the start. and the political plan should be accessible for people from the start. The citizen should get to know what happens to the idea, so people could follow the process, and know if their idea got through. we did not manage to discuss no. 3 very much. But someone mentioned that we need a platform to connect stakeholders to the decisions, who are not residents of the city. Visual presentation of information also came up, the importance of that. And please add to this if I forgot anything,

colleagues. -This was very interesting, and visual presentation is something we will note. We have one more group, and we have to continue. Ævar, would you present your groups summary?

Ásta: I will present it, I was in the same group. It took us a while to get the discussion going, and two of us came late... but regarding the statements, they should be descriptive for the situation in 2 years from now, because we know that consultation works. I am a member of Vesturbær residents council. We feel like the systems are much too complex. There is clear will to increase democracy, but it should be simple and accessible for everyone. All these different processes are too complex, and you need to be a specialist to know what is what. So simpler systems. We also discussed service centres in the neighbourhoods, and their role. We think they can play an important role in democracy. And I have a seat in the residents council, and I think we can do a lot through that, we can connect with the schools, etc. Gerðuberg has done great in this regard. the digital consultation forum can be improved greatly. I agree that the timeline could be clearer, so we know where our influence is and where we can make a change. We also discussed better access to people of foreign origin and seniors. -I have to say this is very good in a short time. Its great to hear. Now we have heard a lot of points that could be taken further. We will now, in Session 2, discuss the potential goals of a Democracy Policy for Reykjavík. The groups will remain the same; you have warmed up a little, so we will have a 20 minute session to discuss: what should the goals of the policy be? Could they be measured, and if so, how? These are big questions, and I look forward to hear your summaries. Let's keep the summaries after this session a little shorter than the first one. So you can see the task here on the screen or in the chat box. 1. Ideas on main goals. 2. How do we measure success?

I look forward to hearing from you in 20 minutes or so.

-Dear meeting guests. It's time for the summary from Session 2, I'm excited to hear the outcome. Its almost 21 and we will try to

end this meeting soon. I would like to ask Group 1 to start, and try to keep the summary at around 1 minute long.

-The discussion went well. I will send points in the channel for your information. But in short, the 3 goals: to see how many people participate in the processes, for example, there are not so many participants in this meeting here, considering the number of residents in Reykjavík. Goal 2: keep a record of how many items go through consultation, keep records. Goal 3: to make sure participation is easy, and keep record of the responses to people.

-Thank you for this, I am impressed at how far you came in a short time. Group 3, Martin, please.

Martin: We went through the 3 topics. Found 3 goals: 1) that as broad range of people participate as possible. Could be measured by checking the number of participants, and also analyse the representation of different groups, ages, gender, etc. Goal 2) ensuring transparency in the processes. How to measure? Its difficult to measure, perhaps, but the processes should be very clear from the start. To see if things are working, we could use surveys, quick surveys to ask people if they are content with the democratic processes, because content is hard to measure. IS there something behind complaints or not. Goal 3 is related to 2: effective response. Often people participate but the output is somehow lost, its hard to realise what happens. So it would be useful if people could watch where the case is, like a tracking number for the case, and you will be notified when its completed. At the end you will be able to answer whether you were content with the process.

-Thank you. You mentioned big, ambitious goals, that can be hard to measure. But you made some very good points in that regard.

Dögg: The discussion was very good, and hard to keep notes of everything. They have started drilling again... I will post the notes in the chat window. First, increase participation of everyone. List the benefits very clearly, and connect the benefits to the stakeholders, so that the decision-making is in the hands of the stakeholders. To measure success, we would keep records of participation. 2. To make sure that people know

why they should participate, there must be some carrot, that there are benefits to participating. Surveys could be used to measure, as well as the number of participants. 3. Education - that education on participatory democracy is included in the policy, and implemented in schools. I'm sure I forgot some of the points, others can add in the chat.

-Thank you, I especially liked the point about education. Group 4.

Ásta: I will start, the others can add. Goal 1 was creating the physical connections in the neighbourhoods, we discussed small "city councils" in each district. 2) Better information sharing, and not count completely on Facebook. That directs the attention from other forums and channels, although not intentionally. Also, if we have discussed which channels for democracy are the best, and they are worked on and improved, instead of always inventing new. I think we already have some good systems that can be boosted and improved, instead of inventing the wheel over and over.

-This is great, thank you very much all of you for your work. Sorry for exceeding the time plan, we knew that it could happen. You have done great work, and I think the people here are very involved and interested. We have talked about using the tools we have and improve existing processes. Better information sharing. Using simple processes that work, not too many. These are some of the points mentioned tonight.

Education could also be considerably increased. Finally, I want to go over the next steps. When we have drafted policy - should be in January-February - it will go through a review process where you will be able to comment and suggest changes. Some of you have posted your notes to the chat, if you have not, I ask the group spokespeople to send your notes to the e-mail shown on the slide. Finally, thank you very much for participating, this has been very valuable in this work. We have your e-mail addresses and will make sure that you can follow the next steps. I would like to thank everyone who participated. Have a good evening. Goodbye.