

Incoming Crystal Councilmembers to Launch “Citizen Connection Initiative”

Initiative Will Help Fulfill Key Campaign Commitments

Crystal, MN, January 7, 2015 – Incoming Crystal City Councilmembers Olga Parsons (Section II), Elizabeth Dahl (Ward 1) and Jeff Kolb (Ward 2) are today announcing the creation of the “Citizen Connection Initiative,” a program which will guide their priorities and decision making throughout their term in office.

“During the campaign, one common theme we all heard from the citizens we spoke to was that they didn’t feel as if they had a voice in their city government,” said Parsons. “After the election the three of us sat down to discuss how we could tackle this problem once we were sworn in, and the ‘Citizen Connection Initiative’ is the result of those discussions.”

The Citizen Connection Initiative is a program that will incorporate several steps to make the Crystal City Government more transparent, open, and responsive to its citizens.

“This initiative will really serve as a guide to our work on the council over the next few years,” said Dahl. “Oftentimes politicians make promises during their campaigns and then abandon those promises as soon as they are elected. We wanted to approach this job differently.”

The steps of the program are a mix between things that elected officials can choose do as individuals, and initiatives that the new councilmembers will propose to the full council once they are sworn in.

Initial steps to the Citizen Connection Initiative include a pledge by all three incoming councilmembers to do the following:

- Maintain a personal website where they will post information about key votes made by the council
- Maintain a Facebook presence where residents can interact with their representative
- Post occasional updates to Nextdoor.com about relevant community meetings
- Strive for a 72 hour or less response time to citizen inquiries

In addition, residents can expect to see their new council representatives at community meetings and out knocking on doors having one-on-one conversations during non-election years.

Other steps of the Citizen Connection Initiative will include the proposal of key reforms to the way council meetings are structured, how city business is conducted, and how the city interacts with its residents. Discussion and implementation of these new initiatives will require the support of the full council and city staff. Residents can expect to hear more about these proposals at upcoming council meetings and work sessions.

“As newly elected council members, we have identified some short, medium, and long term goals we want to accomplish to make Crystal’s government more responsive,” said Kolb. “We look forward to having some great conversations with the rest of the council and gaining the perspective of their experience. The majority of the existing members of the council share our interest in building a more responsive city government, and I expect we’ll be able to make quite a bit of progress with their partnership and leadership.”

For more information on the Citizen Connection Initiative contact the individual councilmembers using the contact information below:

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