

STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Lawrence P. DiRe, Town Manager
DATE: September 5, 2023
SUBJECT: 7a. January 2023 Community Questionnaire Final Report Follow Up - Collaboration (20 to 67) and Town Concerns Sections (627 to 675)

Background

“QUESTIONNAIRE TO CHESTERTOWN GROUPS – FINAL REPORT, January 20, 2023 Following are answers to the questionnaire sent via Survey Monkey to 89 organizations (in Chestertown or serving Chestertown) plus the Mayor & Council and Town staff in August and September of 2022 to support information-gathering for the Mayor & Council to produce their three-year strategic agenda. The questionnaire is included in this document at the end. Respondents included 41 organizations (see list below). The final analysis yielded more than 750 answers coded by issues raised in each respondent’s answer – where the answer was used more than once, the number of repeats is noted at the beginning (e.g., Repeat-2 means the reader will encounter the same response twice in two different categories). The Mayor & Council are grateful to all for the effort involved in providing ideas and perspectives that guided their deliberations.”

The process described above yielded a wealth of information on numerous issues, practices, concerns, and policies currently facing the town government and community in general. Questions and respective answers always exist within a context of personal experiences and against a backdrop of available resources and time to address matters at hand. This process began in earnest one year ago. Staff believe it is now an appropriate time, given intervening changes, to bring certain sections forward to begin (not conclude) discussion and ultimately action steps.

While a variety of town functions and processes across all departments are cited in the sections provided, the ultimate responsibility for addressing and implementing operational and organizational changes and improvements rests with the town manager. To that end, the town manager will ensure that future discussions and follow-up are posted agenda items at both regular and special meetings, both at town hall and other community locations. Currently the proposed timeline to wrap up these two initial sections is June 2024. In March 2023 the town manager plans to bring forward two more sections – civic engagement and awareness, and social justice\diversity\inclusivity – for initial review and discussion in a similar manner.

Issue

How should the town administration and organization move forward in addressing comments and questions from the questionnaire final report?

Recommendation

Staff are proposing the mayor and town council review the comments and questions related to collaboration and a variety of town concerns. No doubt specifics will arise from the broader discussion of the questionnaire's final report. Provided for discussion only at this time. Pending further discussion provide direction to staff.