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UNST 109

Public Meeting

I attended the Metro Council meeting on April 19, 2016 at 2 pm. The Metro Council has a public meeting every Tuesday and Thursday. The purpose of the meeting was Park and Nature department’s response to Metro council about questions that they have from last Thursday meeting. The meeting lasted around 2 and a half hours. They sometimes follow up with an exclusive 30-minute session after the main session. “If you live in the Portland metropolitan area, you are represented by a voter-elected Metro councilor. The Metro Council is nonpartisan. It's made up of a president who is elected region wide and six councilors who are elected by district every four years” (Metro Council par1).

The meeting was held at Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber located at 600 NE Grand Avenue. It was not as difficult as I thought finding the Metro Regional Center. Some people from related departments were at this meeting, and a few people from the public. There were not many people from the public sitting in the meeting. People who work there all looked formal. All of them was over age 40, and I was the youngest person there. People looked serious and tense. I felt super nervous when I was entering the building. The meeting was formal. However, it was not too serious. Some parts were laughable. The environment around room was good and neat. I did not like an idea of attending a public meeting at first. I was afraid that I would do something weird or make a loud noise. I was scared to come sit in the room where I did not know anyone. However, everything went well in the end, and I realized I was more nervous than I needed to be.

The main topics covered were Chief Operating Officer Communication, North Tualatin Mountains Access Plan discussion, Budget discussion, Metro Communications, Councilor Liason Updates ,and Council Communication. Metro discussed about the habitat in forest park. They debated how they do not want any dogs in the national park area because they are harmful for trees. They are trying to protect the trails from people. They are thinking about doing well-design trails to keep people on the trails. People sometimes go on the edges where they’re not supposed to be standing. One of the topics they discussed was whether bikers or hikers were more harmful to the nature. They both are different types of people. Mountain bikers are more quiet than hikers. They spend less time on the trails. They just go through the park and leave. On the other hand, hikers are people who walk and enjoy the nature. They come to soak in the environment. Animals will get affected by hikers more than bikers. Mountain bikes are something that Metro recommended that people should have ,but not everybody can afford a mountain bike. They came to the conclusion that it is hard to shut bikes and hikers off since they already started using the park.

Metro hopes that they can find new access for the equestrians since they’re one of people who always access to the mountain. Horses are also one of animals going through the park. They questioned if that would disturb an environment. They affect an environment by how they can go to the bathroom everywhere. Horses also scare some of wildlife. The Metro also talked about if they keep everyone away that would turn a space into a private space. It was not a purpose of a national park. It’s a space for everyone to enjoy nature.

It’s clear how to participate in this meeting. They provide an agenda and some printed sheets that list new material that they’re going to cover in the discussion. It’s effective because they’re all asking everyone’s opinion. Therefore, they often let the public speak. This meeting is organized because everyone stayed on the topics. People sometimes bring up other materials in the meeting, which wastes time. The nature and park department also tried their best to answer the questions. Metro council also asked the questions for people who could not make it to the meeting. It was clear how everyone can speak their opinion when they have a chance. Everyone accepts and listens to every comment.

Our class discussed the Metro Council in Fall term. I have learned that Metro council is a special government and it only exists in Portland. Metro had discussion about North Tualatin mountains access plan. It’s related to physical geography from the last term since it’s a nature process. It’s also cultural geography since humans become a part of this and are trying to develop an environment to be better. Culture is a tool for living together. Everyone is different, then people should learn to live with each other. Protecting ecosystem needs everyone’s participation. If young people are educated well, this will also turn out well. Then this world will be improved for the better. This discussion is also related to the public space lecture that we had in class. They’re trying to turn a public space which is for everyone to a private space since they do not want a few kinds of living things in there in order to protect the trails. There are pros and cons turning a public space into a private space. Pros are the Metro can control an environment to be better. However, there are not many people who have an access to the park. The purpose of a national park is for everyone not an individual.

Word counts: 917

Work Cited Page

1. "Metro Council." *Metro*. N.p., 19 Mar. 2014. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.