

City Council requests proactive communication**Slug:** LANNWS-09-09-23 CITY COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENT**Print depth:** 13.94 (2077 characters)**Start date/time:** Sep 1, 2023 03:04 PM**Section tags:** nc-lan
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hjones@thelancasternews.com**Content**

Lancaster Mayor Alston DeVenny asked the department heads at the Aug. 22 City Council meeting to be proactive in involving council and the community in upcoming projects.

DeVenny and Councilwoman Jackie Harris have been adamant about needing more notice from departments before council meetings, as well as urging departments to involve their communities when developing projects.

“I applaud this council for allowing the department heads and the employees of this city to do their jobs with pretty limited, I wouldn’t say oversight, but interference,” DeVenny said. “But we feel sometimes that we get to see things too late in the game, even though we know things are getting worked on (by) organizations.”

DeVenny urged department heads to loop council in well before City Council meetings, so members can make informed votes with adequate time and preparation.

“We know these things are out there, but we’re not sure where they’re at in the process until they’re being presented before us,” DeVenny said.

“We’re making sure that we’re getting the citizens’ input across, because that’s partly what we’re doing (as a council). We just want to make sure we are in the mix before the final presentation,” he said.

“It’s just that we don’t know about it, and I hate to say that,” Harris said.

DeVenny said council and city committees might also need to be more proactive in reaching out to city departments to check in on progress and offer insight.

“We’re not just here to show up twice a month and vote. We want to be a part of what’s going on,” Harris said. “I just don’t think that that’s fair to us as elected officials that deal directly with the community (to put us on the spot in council meetings).”

“So going forward, I think it just tells us we needed a little more proactive integration with staff as they’re working...so that we can make sure (we have all the information),” DeVenny said.

Harris and DeVenny thanked the department heads for submitting monthly reports and for working hard in the city, but said the levels of communication could use improvement going forward.