

Citizen Engagement & Participation Day 1 Plan (Draft) by Bill Johns



Disclaimer: Bill Johns has never been a Town of Farragut (TOF) Board of Mayor and Alderman (BOMA) member nor has ever served on its Municipal Planning Commission (MPC). These two entities since 1980 have determined the growth, future, and culture of our community. Bill Johns is not responsible in how the TOF was or is currently being managed to date. Bill Johns does not represent the TOF in anyway with this draft plan.

Likewise, Bill Johns developed this document at no cost to any taxpayer nor received any monies or similar compensation. The following is an in-kind document to stimulate multiple discussions and serve as a framework for “Day 1” if he is elected as Farragut Mayor; and as the kickoff to the 30-60-90 day initial plan. Copyright © is held by Bill Johns, all rights reserved.

Likewise, this draft plan is derived from the *FarragutPress* letter to the editor from 6.8.22: <https://farragutpress.com/articles/2022/06/11906>. Due to the paper’s policy, there was a 600 word limit and only 1 submission allowed per month and as such this detailed information could not be included at that time. This document along with other resources can be found (as of 6.29.22) by selecting the resources page of www.BillJohns.com.

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1). Executive Summary:

This document serves as a framework to kick-off “Day 1” of Bill Johns being elected as Farragut Mayor. It is a framework (the start) of a never-ending journey to make Farragut a best-in-class community and providing exceptional services such as Citizen Engagement & Participation solutions. It is in draft form as a living document and will expand exponentially as time progresses. Citizen engagement and participation is paramount just as leadership and collaboration from TOF BOMA and staff, various partner entities, and professional expertise from the private sector.

2). Current Situation:

The Town of Farragut 2022 Strategic Planning Framework document is found here: <https://www.townoffarragut.org/DocumentCenter/View/3981/Strategic-Plan?bidId=>. Its vision, mission and values, or any of its “critical success factors” do not focus on citizen engagement & participation. Citizens need to be first in everything with the Town of Farragut.

I attended the BOMA Strategic Planning Session 2022 on 3.4.22 and was welcomed by all in attendance; but only participated as a witness of the event. I was the only citizen that attended. There were some brief discussions during the session about trying to get more citizens in the TOF’s “Introduction Farragut” class and wanting to network more with homeowners associations, but it was merely a mention and not a priority by any means.

In the 22 years I have been in our community, citizen morale is at an all time low and there is a very toxic environment among our community. Some of these root causes are found in how some members of BOMA have been treating its citizens. Elected officials must be above this.

I am not on social media but have seen some of the interactions in screen shots forwarded to me. This reflects horrible on our community and impacts the citizenry and their willingness to participate. The “us versus them”, “must have the last word”, or the “personally attacking others” directly (or through spouses/designees) has been devastating.

I really don’t care what the reasons are or even who started it, but it is hurting our community, businesses, and brand; and especially those looking to invest their lives or dollars here. I know it goes both ways, but again, elected officials need to be above this.

3). What needs to happen on Day 1:

It is simple, we are going to **MAKE FARRAGUT FRIENDLY AGAIN!**

Citizens First!

On Day 1, I am going to make our first “critical success factor” as putting **citizens first** in everything Farragut does. This will be cultural shift for our community. However, it **WILL** become our culture and embedded in a new vision, and missions and values, and **EVERY** key performance indicator (KPI) of the Town including staff evaluations and talent acquisition.

The following are the main areas of the integrated approach the TOF will take towards putting citizens first. Each of these areas will be examined and vetted within the first 30 days and then pursued for the next 60 days as part of our Town’s transition to becoming a best-in-class entity.

Customer Service

Another shift is we will become a **customer service organization** similar in spirit to Chic-fil-a or our local Ace Hardware. The TOF will have “greeters” in the main foyer immediately engaging the public with a service-oriented / “problem solver” mentality. The TOF will always engage first and not wait for someone to engage us.

Code of Behavior / Ramifications

Under my leadership, I will not tolerate anything less than the best behavior. This will include creating working documents (code of behavior, how we do business, etc.) that will govern how BOMA, TOF staff, contractors/partners interact with each other. Likewise, we will not tolerate unacceptable behavior from the public. We will explore legal remedies and other options to have a full “toolbox” in dealing with these outliers. This toolbox will include more physical security options as well including security professionals.

Building Confidence and Trust

By being fully transparent and ethical, having citizen guidance and review, and providing consistent standards will go a long way in healing our community and building confidence and trust. We as a community must go back to the basics. The Code of Ethics / Committee I proposed in 2005 will be a priority; in establishing such a committee.

Respecting our Founding

When visitors walk into our Town Hall, they will see some of the founding documents of our great Republic fully visible and our patriotism will be found throughout our government building in symbols, flags, and mascots. We will respect our high school Admirals, the United States Navy (Admiral Farragut), and our founders of our community for their sacrifices they have made.

Pivoting Public Relations

We are going to change the way we conduct marketing communications and especially how we pursue public relations efforts. The focus will shift from the current focus TOF accomplishments to citizen fulfillment, needs, and stories. The TOF and BOMA will take a back seat to those who are most important. They are our citizens that will be on the forefront of everything.

Becoming Extraverts

The TOF will not sit and wait for interactions to come to us at Town Hall for through communications. The TOF will become aggressive and extraverted and pursue engagement outside of Town Hall and events. As Mayor, I will go into every business, neighborhood, place of worship, and school to actively recruit citizens to participate in our community. It is time to try a totally different approach.

Making Easy Buttons for Participation

We want our citizens to have the ability to easily say “yes” for involvement. The TOF will transition from traditional flyers on a bulletin board or electronic posts to having self-service kiosks at every park and building that the TOF owns with standardized information and “QR” codes. We will create a new ambassador program strictly with the mission of enchainning citizen participation. These chief recruiters will be fully integrated in our marketing / branding.

Making our Fleet Promote Us

We have several assets in our fleet. We will use the back of the vehicles and others to spread our positive messages and brand. Most importantly, the back of our vehicles will become our superstars in recruiting citizens to volunteer. To not use that space is a great missed opportunity. If other communities and businesses are using their fleets in this capacity, so shall the TOF.

Leadership Farragut™ Returns

The very first leadership development / citizen supported program in our community was Leadership Farragut™ which I was a co-founder. I still have the web domains and will transfer the rights to an organization upon my election. In addition, I will leverage my experiences in supporting various Leadership (city name) programs including myself being of the inaugural Leadership Germantown, one of the best programs in the State of Tennessee. Introduction Farragut will become a 4-hour introduction to our community whereas Leadership Farragut™ will serve as the backbone for developing our future leaders.

Emphasizing Young Adult Involvement

Young adults are the lifeblood of our community. We need more high school and college aged students involved in our Town and our local government. I have mentored a 1000+ young adults since 2001 in our community. We will offer opportunities and have the young adults promote our brand and community through various activities and our brand.

Making Farragut Cool

Farragut is not cool. As part of the many aspects of our rebranding, Farragut “being cool and fun” is necessary not only for our survival, but for us to differentiate ourselves among our competition. Farragut must start becoming more youthful to our citizens and to all our prospects. Most importantly, this will drive citizen participation our way versus repelling it. Farragut must remain a vibrant community.

Quality Management

Whether through benchmarking, training, research, or whatever, the TOF will have a new motto that embraces “Commitment to Excellence”. Having a quality management perspective will naturally drive continuous improvement and develop an upscale and best in class brand. The TOF will participate in quality award programs and benchmarking. Outside evaluations are needed frequently so we can align ourselves with our objectives. As a former TN Quality Award examiner, I will lead these efforts with our staff and community.

Tip of the Spear

I will make sure that I will have direct connectivity with our citizens and the public. I will accomplish this by having weekly office hours in the Town Hall foyer, participate in speaking/recruiting engagements locally, and having once a month “open mic nights” that will be fun and interactive. Lastly, we will do things non-traditionally to yield the best results.

Contests and Games

We will give opportunities for our citizens to engage us through their “desires” to participate. The TOF must make interaction easy, fun, and stimulating. The contagious effect is needed in many of our activities and for public relations. Examples of this type of interaction would involve such classics as “Official Farragut Dog”, “Official Farragut Cat”, or the alike. Contests and games go a long way, and it is time to use them for citizen participation and public relations

Communicating Change Management

As Mayor, I will be the leader in communicating our “citizens first policy” to everyone including the media. We will go beyond the standard press releases and begin mending and making relationships while truly understanding our citizens’ needs. As Mayor, I will own that.

4): Summary and Next Steps

It is simple. The TOF needs to do much better with its citizen participation and engagement programs. With the current state of being, we need to quickly change course and become more of a positive community. We must MAKE FARRAGUT FRIENDLY AGAIN and implement aspects of these various initiatives mentioned above in order to become a great and vibrant community.

About Bill Johns: Bill Johns has spent a good portion of his life in marketing, branding, and public relations. He has held many executive level roles in industry and consulting specializing in consultative selling and the like. Bill has spent many years working with customer service, quality management, citizen participation and engagement, mentoring, and leading organizations through change. Bill has also worked in developing and supporting many leadership programs.