

Regular meetings of the public with city management

Presentation by the Internal Audit Dept.
Municipality of Chomutov

Citizens' Charters Pilot Project
June 2006



City of Chomutov



SIGMA

Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
— coordinated — by the OECD and the European Union — principally financed by the EU



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Meetings with the Public



Introducing a new form of communication

- The idea originated 3 years ago
- **First meeting with the public took place on 29 January 2004**
- Meetings held regularly so far – every last Thursday of the month

Prime mover for this form communication

- City mayor

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Meetings with the Public



Reasons for introducing the service

- Direct communication of the city's top management with the citizens
- New avenue of communication between the citizens and the mayor
- Strengthening citizens' trust in the city management, now for the first time headed by a woman
- Immediate response, numerous questions answered
- Boosting public participation in dealing with the city' issues
- Relevant feedback



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Meetings with the Public



Resources required

- **Meeting room**

Owned by the city and not 100% utilised, therefore can be used for meetings with the citizens – **zero cost**

- **Requirement for specialist staff**

No new staff required. Citizens' issues dealt with by municipal officers on a daily basis. Officers do not participate in the meetings (tasks are assigned to them through minutes of meeting) – **zero cost**

- **Funding**

Software for recording citizens' issues was developed in-house by the municipality's own IT department – **zero cost**

Willingness to introduce new forms of communication is essential

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Meetings with the Public



Benefits

- Direct contact between elected politicians and the public
- Time savings
(previously one day in a week was reserved for personal meetings with the mayor, minutes were taken of each meeting separately – now cumulated)
- Communication between citizens
- Dealing not only with issues of the city, but also other agencies working in the city
- This form of communication makes it possible to deal effectively with the needs and problems of the public

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Meetings with the Public



Process of dealing with issues

- Regular meetings – every last Thursday of the month
- Present:
 - representatives of the city's top management (mayor, vice-mayors, city secretary)
 - management of organisations established and controlled by the city
 - minute-taker
 - citizens
- Meeting run by a facilitator – usually a vice-mayor or city secretary
- Citizens raise issues, which are then recorded in minutes

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Meetings with the Public



Process of dealing with issues

- Some issues raised by the public are resolved during the meeting
- Other issues are assigned to officers on an ongoing basis
- A list of these issues is sent out to the heads of municipal departments within a week from the date of meeting and the heads are called upon to deal with relevant issues, with a set deadline by which a solution to the problem must be communicated back to the officer managing citizens' issues
- All issues are recorded in a summary published on the municipality's intranet

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Meetings with the Public



Procedure:

For each issue raised a separate table is filled out with all details: number and date of meeting, number of issue, subject matter, presenter of the issue, a brief summary of the issue and reply, and a full wording of the issue and reply.

Each table shows the current phase of the issue:

- **resolved** – issue closed
- **open** – the issue requires a resolution in time
- **not dealt with** – presenter only provided information or made acknowledgement

Zápis z 24. briefingu, který se konal dne 30.3.2006 v RADNICE.

Městská rada Chomutov			
podnět č.	1	téma	Úř. Chodníky - ulice (komunikace)
bod		předkladatel	Vondruška
datum	30.3.2006		V ul. Na Práhně - obrubník pod úrovní ulice, voda neodtéká do kanálu a hrozí udělané dlaždice. VYJÁŠENÍ:
stav	stejně	stoučný obsah	<p>□ ODÚŠČ - Za poslední tři roky byl prováděn překop pouze u čp. 2997 a komunikace byla uvedena do přechodného stavu. Zároční termín sleduje obsah komunikace - 1 Směch. Vozovka a chodník v ulici Na Práhně vyžadují rekonstrukci a podle nám dostupných informací má odbor RaM akci naplánovanu.</p> <p>- O RaM - Po vydání stavebního povolení a výběru zhotovitele (květen, červen), bude vybudován chodník v ul. Na Práhně v úseku mezi ulicemi Trauttmansdorffova a Klippenova.</p>
		celý text	<p>ONČ 20061 p Vondruška, Trauttmansdorffova</p> <p>V ul. Na Práhně, tam kde je vlt 8 budov, u kterých se to tam překopávalo, je tam obrubník pod úrovní ulice a když přejí, je tam velká louže, neteče to do kanálu, udělají tam potáček, jsou tam i hrozí udělané dlaždice. VYJÁŠENÍ</p> <p>□ ODÚŠČ, p. Klíma - Za poslední tři roky byl prováděn překop pouze u čp. 2997 a komunikace byla uvedena do přechodného stavu. Zároční termín sleduje obsah komunikace - 1 Směch. Vozovka a chodník v ulici Na Práhně vyžadují rekonstrukci a podle nám dostupných informací má odbor RaM akci naplánovanu</p> <p>- O RaM, J. Kuna 26.4.2006 - Po vydání stavebního povolení a výběru zhotovitele (květen, červen), bude vybudován chodník v ulici Na Práhně a to v úseku mezi ulicemi Trauttmansdorffova a Klippenova</p>

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Meetings with the Public



Issues are grouped by topics (currently 40 topics)

DATE OF MEETING				
TOPIC	2004	2005	2006	TOTAL
1	Housing			
2	Cycling tracks			
3	Traffic signs, traffic control, crossings			
4	Subsidies and loans			
5	Pigeons			
6	Playgrounds			
7	Pavements and roads			
8	Chomutovské noviny (municipal bulletin)			
9	Sewage system			
10	Army barracks			
11	Cinemas			
12	Libraries			
13	Merkur			
14	Municipal public transport and stops			
15	Municipal police			
16	Hospital			
17	Unemployment			
18	Buildings in the city, billboards			
19	Repair and reconstruction			
20	Other			

DATE OF MEETING					
TOPIC		2004	2005	2006	TOTAL
3	Public lighting				
4	Heritage sites				
5	Parking				
6	Acknowledgements and praise				
7	Dogs and cats				
8	Disturbance of public order				
9	Social benefits				
10	Joint heat supply				
11	Schools, young people, culture				
12	Heat and hot water, heating				
13	Fountains				
14	Green areas				
15	Zoo				
16	Environment – litter, ethnic minorities				
17	Žižkovo náměstí (a site in the city)				
18	Municipal waste – containers, car wrecks				
19	Land				
20	Municipal office				
21	Gamble houses				
22	Winter stadium				
TOTAL		2391	339	24	2754

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Meetings with the Public



We keep records of how many citizens participated at each meeting, how many of them raised an issue and how many issues were raised in total

Total number	→ month: 27. 24. 31. 28. 26. 30. 29. 20. 24. 15. 2003												Total
	▼	1.	2.	3.	4.	5	6.	9.	10.	11.	12.		
Number of citizens present:		50	30	15	30	15	40	25	12	40	15	272	536
Number of citizens raising an issue:		13	17	14	19	15	19	14	9	15	12	147	275
Number of issues raised:		23	22	26	40	22	29	41	34	26	29	292	528

Of the total number of issues raised:

- **5%** were acknowledgements of the work delivered by the city management
- **10%** cannot be resolved (as they are recommendations or notifications in nature)
- and of the remaining **85%** of issues, **60%** are resolved immediately (by the next meeting at the latest), **25%** are of long-term nature (resolution requires change of master plan, financial planning etc.)

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Meetings with the Public



An overview of the issues resolved

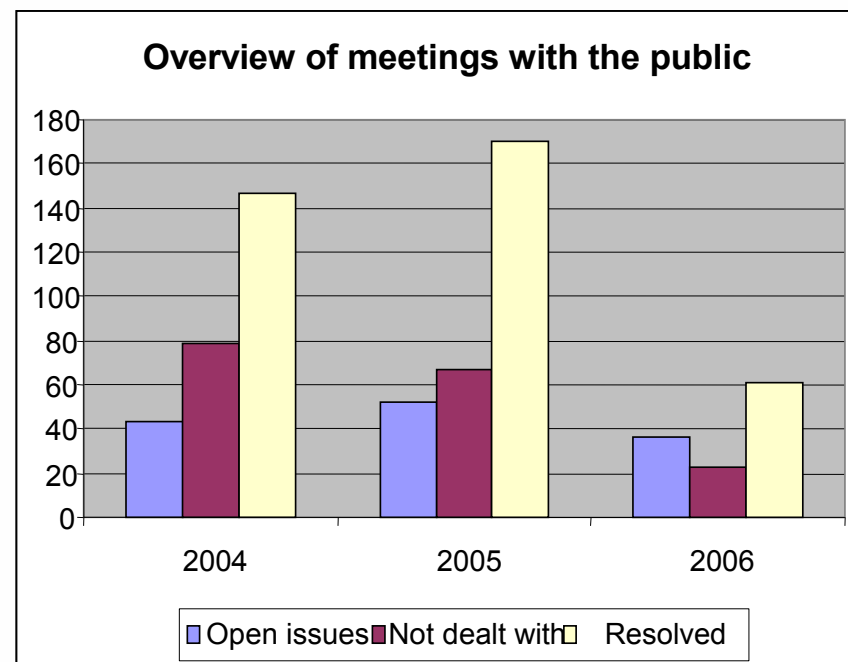
MEETINGS / YEAR ISSUES	2004	2005	2006	Total
<i>Open</i>	43	52	36	131
<i>Not dealt with</i>	79	67	23	169
<i>Resolved</i>	147	170	61	378
TOTAL	269	289	120	678

➡ An issue is 'not dealt with' if:

- it consists of acknowledgement, praise, information, opinion; or
- it the question was immediately answered and the issue was dealt with on the spot without investigation; or
- does not fall within the public remit of the municipality.

➡ An issue is 'open' if:

- it is in the phase of preparation or implementation of e.g. a capital expenditure project, change of traffic signs etc.; or
- inclusion in the capital expenditure plan depends on the volume of available free funds; or
- the outcome of the solution provided takes a longer time to monitor; or
- the solution depends on a decision by the local government or legislators.



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Meetings with the Public



Experiences from organising the meetings

- Distrust of the public at first – *afraid to express their opinion in the presence of the top city management*
- Meetings attended by a small group of citizens – *the public does not appreciate the potential of such meetings*
- People often bring up the same issues that require long-term solutions
- Municipal officers do not always pay enough attention to the issues

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Meetings with the Public



Conclusion

- New, efficient form of communication with the citizens, which strengthens communication
- Municipality and citizens better informed, effective feedback
- Dealing with current issues in the city streamlined

Thank you for your attention.

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