

Ally Mellon
LFI Week 2
Organizing a Democratic Information Session

I propose designating a facilitator who can move the conversation along and keep things on track. This should not be someone who is a polarizing figure in the community. There should also be someone to record community comments. Keeping a record of the comments will be valuable so that there is an account of concerns or thoughts and so that these comments can be referred to when the decision is being made.

We will prepare for the session by having a few objectives in mind. I hope the discussion will go deeper than just “I want it.” “I do not.” and that there can be an actual discussion on the benefits and drawbacks of instituting community surveillance. A list of prompts and questions will be created to have on hand for the facilitator to use to help move the conversation along. Some examples might be discussing what the community is hoping to accomplish with increased surveillance, would increased surveillance impact certain groups in a negative way, how can we avoid that, are there alternatives to CCTV that we haven’t explored, what safeguards and checks and balances would be in place if the community does decide to go ahead with implementing surveillance technologies, who has access to the feed, etc.

Community leaders and decision makers will be invited to be attend and be available for comment during the discussion. This is so that they can hear the views of their community first-hand. Depending on public interest, I will explore hosting multiple information sessions around the community in an effort to hear different voices and give more people an opportunity to be heard. These could be conducted in a variety of venues in an attempt to make community members more comfortable in participating. Schools, restaurants, music venues, sports complexes, etc. will all be considered.

Having alternate forums for receiving concerns and comments will be explored. This is so people who can not be at public information sessions for whatever reason can still be heard. This could be a hotline, an email address they could write to, or a discussion board on social media. Not all people are comfortable communicating in the same ways, but they do all deserve to have the opportunity to be heard.

The meetings and forums will be advertised in areas where surveillance is already being used and in places that may be under consideration for future surveillance. Flyers will also be posted in places where people gather like restaurants, libraries, bars, grocery stores, etc. There will also be promotion across social media platforms. We’d also invite the news media to advertise the meetings and attend and cover them.