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Ayla Schmidt

Maintaining civility in a local government can be a challenge. The presence of differing opinions and conflicting interests among citizens and officials can lead to heated debates and disagreements, making it harder to maintain a civil atmosphere. To prevent this, we can encourage open communication, promote transparency and accountability, and assist in education and awareness. Using these strategies would create an environment where respectful and constructive communication is upheld among town officials and citizens. Disagreement can be handled in a respectful manner, decisions can be made collectively, and the overall functioning of local government can be improved.

Open communication is vital for a local government. This can be done through town hall meetings, surveys, and public forums. It is important for officials to listen to citizens' concerns and ideas, and for citizens to engage respectfully in the decision-making process. According to diligent.com, "Building that trust will in turn help inspire citizens to become more engaged and more involved in their communities." Open communication creates a platform for sharing ideas, concerns, and perspectives. Sharing this information allows for a better understanding of different viewpoints from the citizens and government. For example, I have observed school board meetings where community members can speak during open forums and communicate their opinions on proposed board actions. Instead of resorting to heated arguments, open communication allows for a civil discussion. Town officials can hold public meetings where citizens can express their concerns and ask questions. In return, the officials can take their thoughts into consideration when making a decision.

An essential aspect of civility in local government is to promote transparency and accountability. If a local government has transparency, it means that information and decision-making processes are open and accessible to citizens. This helps build trust and ensures that everyone is aware of how and why certain decisions were made. Citizens will understand that the local governments serve the community's best interest. In today's world, local governments place many of their documents online and that aids in transparency. Transparency reduces misunderstandings and potential conflicts. Accountability goes hand in hand with transparency. Accountability means that officials are held responsible for their actions and decisions. When there is a system in place to hold officials accountable, it creates a sense of fairness and ensures that the best interests of the community are upheld.

Lastly, assisting education and awareness raises awareness and empowers individuals with knowledge and understanding. By providing resources and programs, local governments can educate citizens on topics such as civic participation, democratic processes, and respectful communication. This education helps citizens navigate the complexities of local government and encourages them to actively contribute to their community. Consequently, raising awareness about government initiatives, policies, and decision-making processes is crucial. When citizens are well-informed about ongoing projects and public meetings, it allows individuals to voice their opinions, concerns, and ideas respectfully and constructively. Again, websites and online forums assist in communicating research and potential government action. A local community must determine the best avenue for communicating with its citizens. Overall, assisting education and awareness fosters a culture of civility. It equips citizens with the knowledge and understanding they need to participate, engage, and collaborate with their local government, leading to better decision-making, stronger community bonds, and a more civil society.

Together open communication, promoting transparency and accountability, and assisting education and awareness help create a local government that values civility, respects diverse perspectives, and works collaboratively with its citizens for the betterment of the community. When these pieces are in place, local government is more productive and successful, and serving the interests of the people is the purpose of government.

Works Cited

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