

# DOING DEMOCRACY



McCall Public Library

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Casey Bruck and Meg Lojek

McCall Public Library

2019





# What is “Doing Democracy” ???

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- A free community discussion series at our library, open to everyone, with the purpose of examining local issues and how they relate to the bigger picture.
- The hope is to foster a culture of civil discourse that allows multiple perspectives and creative conflict leading to the discovery of common needs and perhaps common visions.

# Webinar poll

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What are some words or phrases you  
associate with **democracy**?

# Background – how we got started

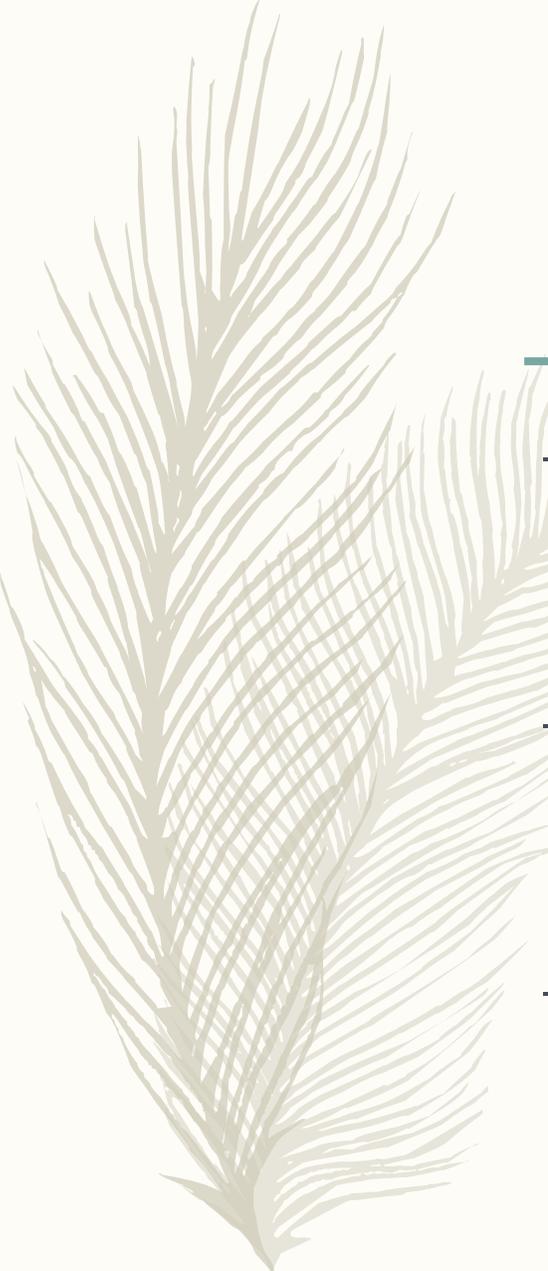
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– Judy Anderson



– Melissa Coriell





# Goals and Purposes

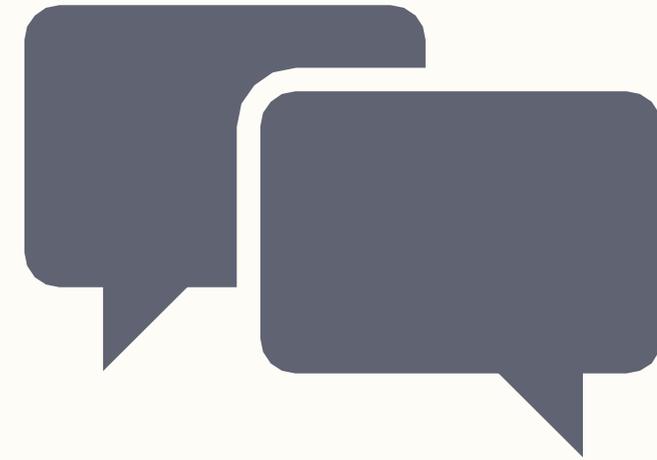
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- To support the library and expand its role in the community by promoting dialogue about issues that face our community. The library's role would be enlivening our democracy by creating a culture of civil discourse that allows for multiple perspectives, creative conflict, and the discovery of common ground.
- To train a group of people in facilitating public discussion by creating an atmosphere where the experience of public discussion is possible and where people may feel uncomfortable, but always safe. To educate ourselves and the public on skills of democracy.
- To nurture a more connected community through honoring relationships and fostering engagement, by doing the work of recognizing community needs and co-creating a vision of a vital, healthy and caring community.

# “Design Jam” Generating topics for discussion

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At the very first meeting, we simply asked participants what THEY wanted to talk about.

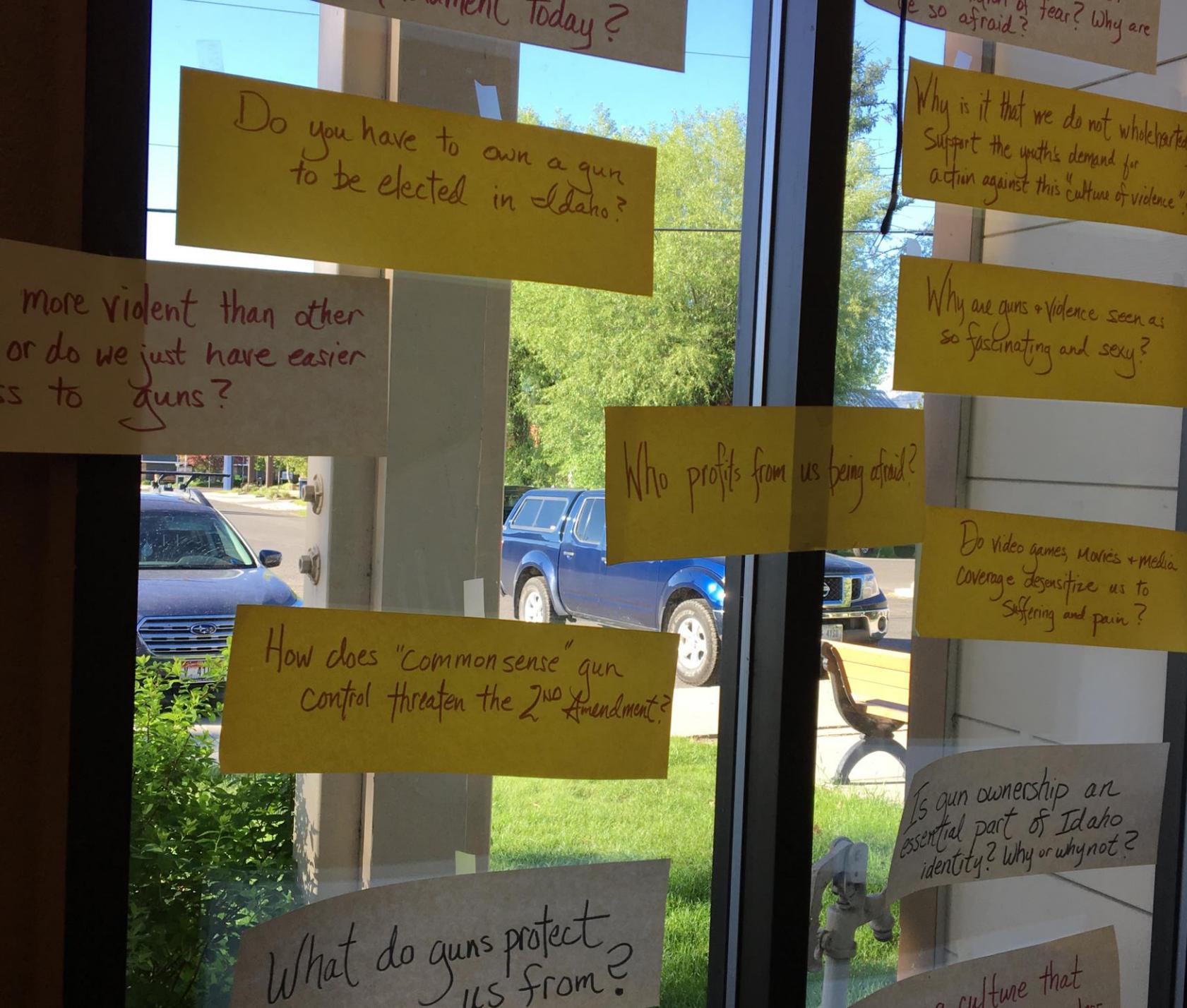


# McCall Library sample topics: Doing Democracy

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- Recycling
- Public Lands
- Midas Gold/ Stibnite Mining Project
- “What do we do with all these old people?”
- “What do we do with all these young people?”
- Recreational use/regulation of Payette Lake
- White privilege





Do you have to own a gun to be elected in Idaho?

more violent than other or do we just have easier access to guns?

Who profits from us being afraid?

How does "commonsense" gun control threaten the 2<sup>ND</sup> Amendment?

What do guns protect us from?

Why is it that we do not wholeheartedly support the youth's demand for action against this "culture of violence"?

Why are guns + violence seen as so fascinating and sexy?

Do video games, movies + media coverage desensitize us to suffering and pain?

Is gun ownership an essential part of Idaho identity? Why or why not?

a culture that

# What does a program look like?

We ask early bird attendees to write one or two questions related to the topic, Then we hang them up for everyone to see and process.



# Go-Round Introductions

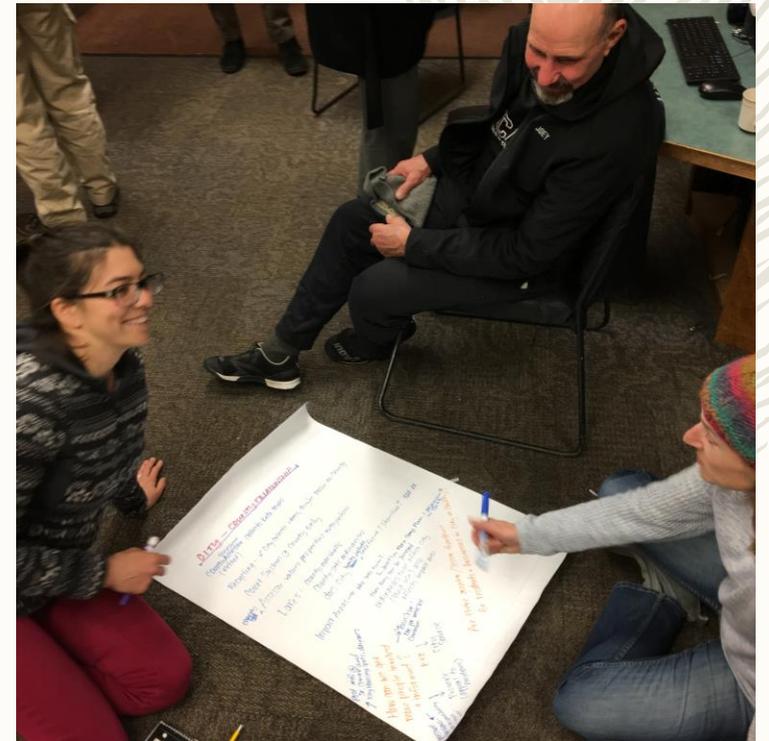


15 Minutes

- Our Established Ground Rules:
- 1 Respect the speaker.
  - 2 Be an active listener, not just waiting for your turn to talk.
  - 3 Participants are responsible for outcome of discussion.
  - 4 Respect everyone's time, no filibustering.

# Break Into Smaller Groups

1 Hour





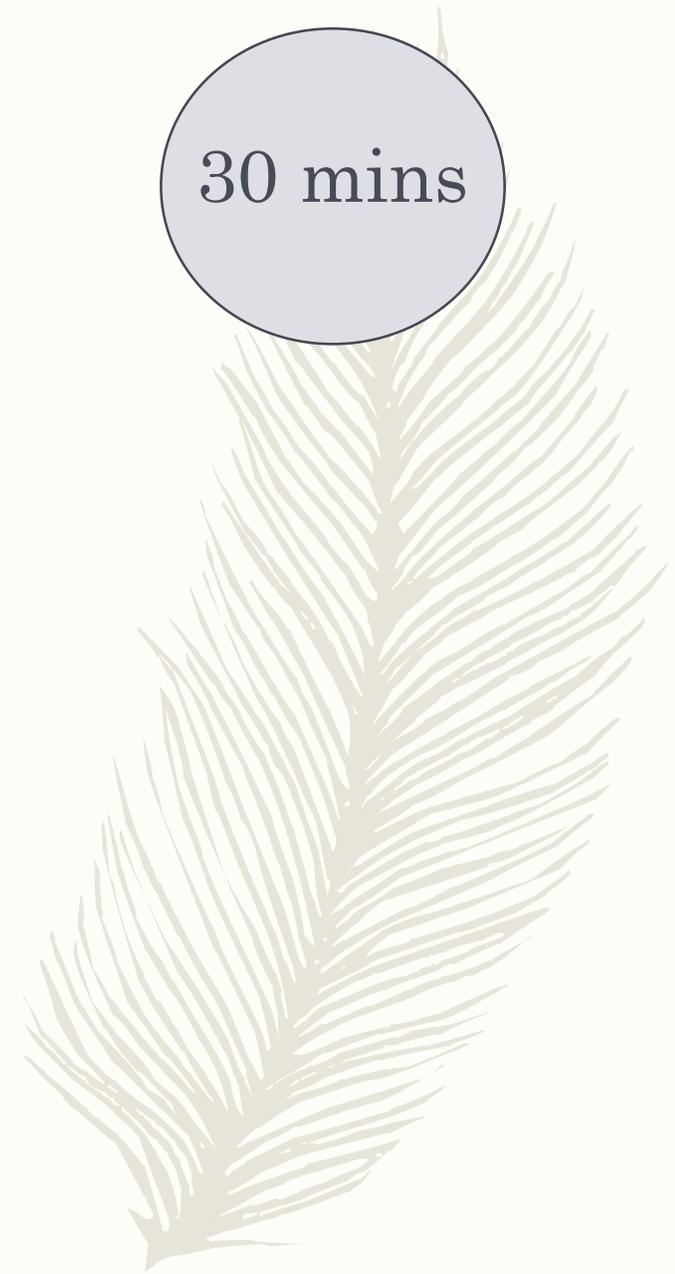


Action!



# Come Back Together

30 mins



# Final Go-Round

15 minutes



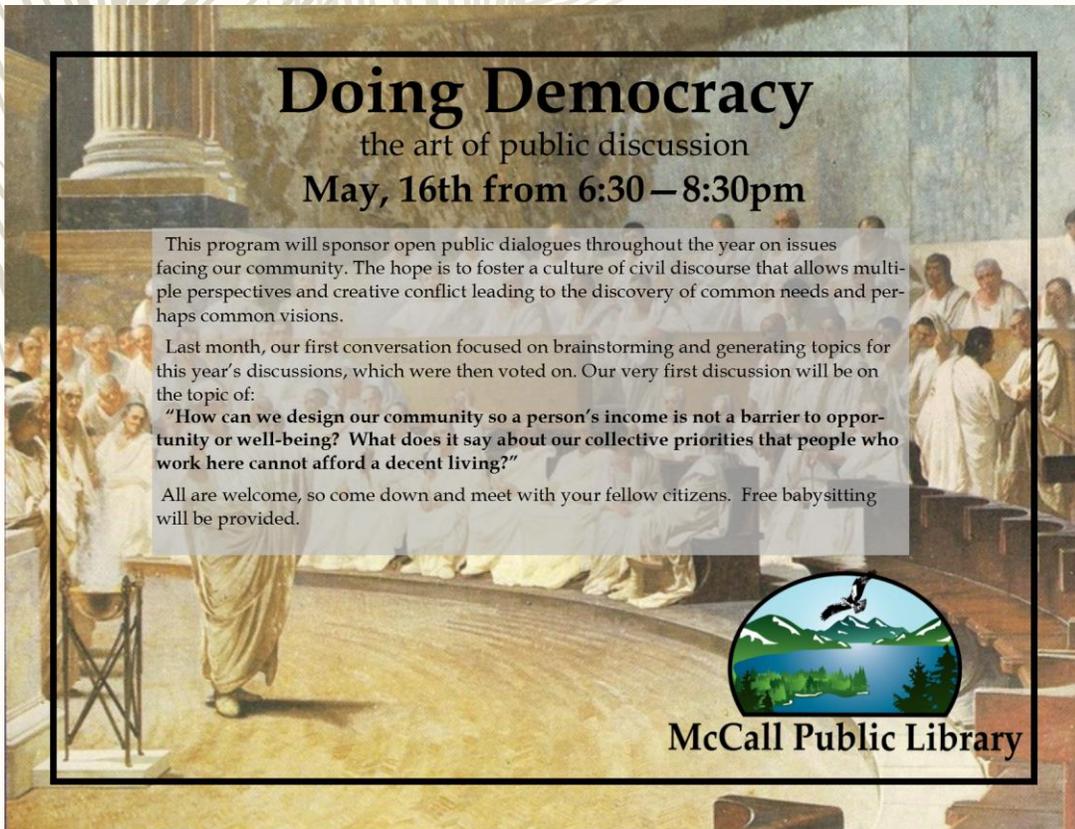
# Webinar poll

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What are some topics for discussion you could do in your community?

# Promotion

Then



**Doing Democracy**  
the art of public discussion  
May, 16th from 6:30 – 8:30pm

This program will sponsor open public dialogues throughout the year on issues facing our community. The hope is to foster a culture of civil discourse that allows multiple perspectives and creative conflict leading to the discovery of common needs and perhaps common visions.

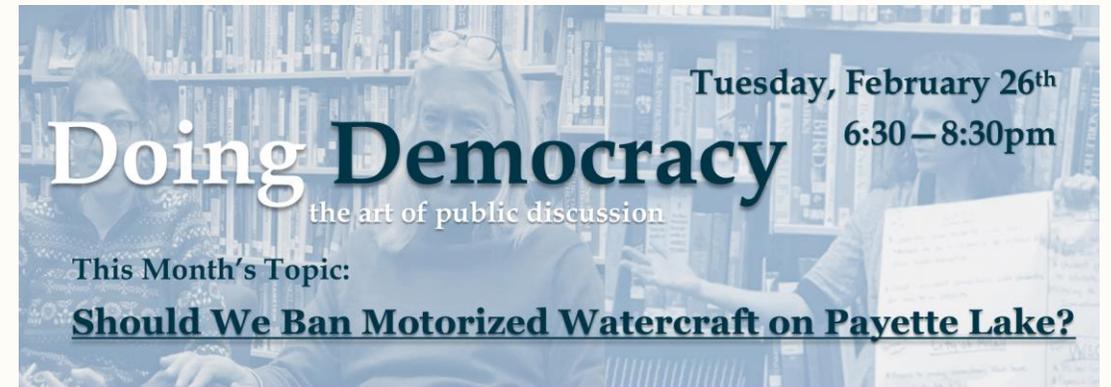
Last month, our first conversation focused on brainstorming and generating topics for this year's discussions, which were then voted on. Our very first discussion will be on the topic of:  
"How can we design our community so a person's income is not a barrier to opportunity or well-being? What does it say about our collective priorities that people who work here cannot afford a decent living?"

All are welcome, so come down and meet with your fellow citizens. Free babysitting will be provided.



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Now



**Doing Democracy**  
the art of public discussion  
Tuesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>  
6:30 – 8:30pm

**This Month's Topic:**  
**Should We Ban Motorized Watercraft on Payette Lake?**

- How is Payette Lake's health affected?
- How are other communities addressing this issue?

*Doing Democracy sponsors open public dialogues throughout the year on issues facing our community. The hope is to foster a culture of civil discourse that allows multiple perspectives and creative conflict leading to the discovery of common needs and perhaps common visions. The content and guidelines have been chosen by the participants, not by a leader or the library itself.*



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# Successes and Challenges

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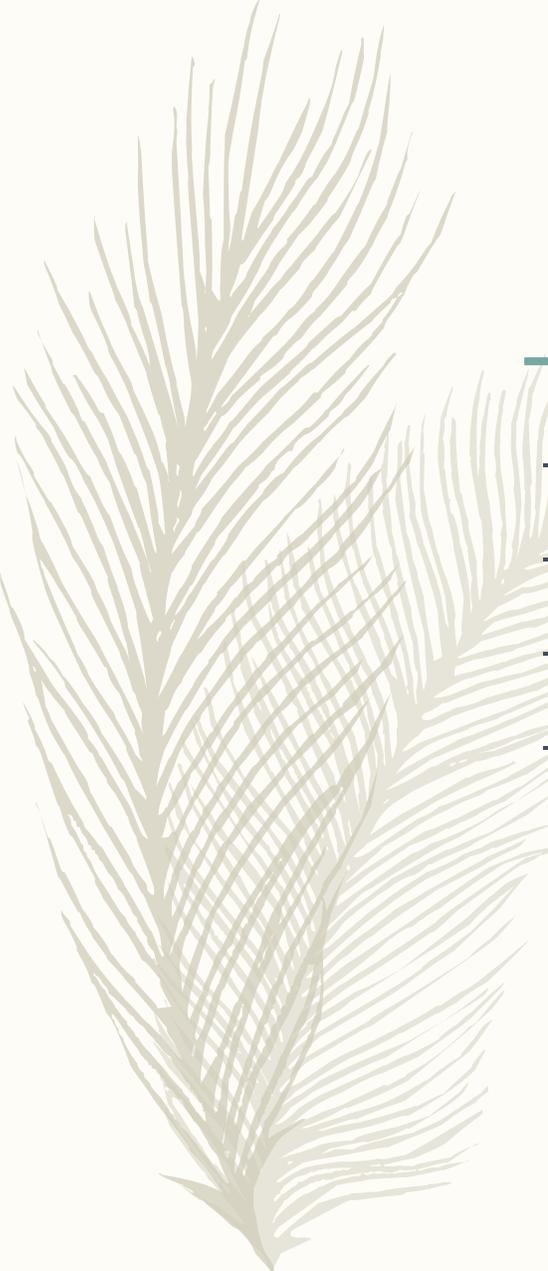
- Everyone has kept it civil in spite of sensitive topics
- Holding sway with elected officials
- City has asked us to host certain topics they needed public input
- “ripple effect”
- Everyone gets equal time to speak
- Recognition by AIC award
- Not an action group (some folks get frustrated by that)
- Getting folks on both sides of an issue to come
- Time, program can easily run too long



# Related Resources

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- Doing Democracy: 10 Practical Arts by Frances Moore Lappe, Small Planet Institute [www.smallplanetinstitute.org](http://www.smallplanetinstitute.org)
- Asking Big Questions: Inside a successful library discussion by Peter Bremer and LeAnn Dean, Library Journal November 1, 2016.
- [Daring Democracy: Igniting Power, Meaning, and Connection](#) by Frances Moore Lappe, 2017



# Next Steps

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- Look for us at ILA conference, Nampa, October 4th
- Call Casey at 208-634-5522
- Attend a McCall session to experience (TBA, September)
- Contact: [library@mccall.id.us](mailto:library@mccall.id.us)

Questions?



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Thank you.