

QC pushing participatory gov't

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In line with its goal of promoting citizen engagement, the Quezon City government on Wednesday held the oath-taking of the interim executive committee officers of the People's Council.

The council, which serves as the "umbrella arm" of 2,232 city-accredited Civil Society Organizations (CSO), will work with the local government to ensure that every program or policy is indeed responsive to the needs of the QCitizens.

Recently, Mayor Joy Belmonte signed the implementing rules and regulations of City Ordinance SP-1942,S-2009 or the Participation, Accountability, and Transparency (PAT) Ordinance that strengthens and institutionalizes the system of partnership of the local government and its constituents.

After its ratification in 2009, it was only during Mayor Belmonte's administration that the PAT Ordinance was fully enacted. She said that in 13 years, this law, which would have established cooperation between the government and the people, has not been implemented. Because when there is a PCQC, all processes, from planning, to budgeting, to program implementation, will be more scrutinized.

"True clean and honest government is when the people are involved in governing. Now that there is a PCQC that can cooperate with the city government, QCitizens can hope that every peso and cent that comes from their taxes will go to meaningful programs that will help raise the living standards of every resident," the mayor explained.

Under the IRR of the ordinance, the PCQC can sit in the city's local special bodies (task force, committees, etc.) through their elected representative whose expertise is in line with the bodies' target sector. They will participate in all the committee's deliberation, conceptualization and evaluation of projects.

PCQC members include representatives from sectors of Business, Professional, Women, HomeOwners Associations, Persons-with-Disabilities, Urban Poor, Solo Parents, LGBTQIA, Cooperatives, Charitable/Socio-Civic, Social Justice/ Peace and Order, Health and Sanitation, Academe/Education, Youth, Labor/ Workers, Transportation, Senior Citizens, Socio-Cultural, Environmental/Urban Protection/Solid Waste, Livelihood/ Vendors, Religious.

The city also plans to add Muslim or Bangsamoro, Sports and Media in the represented sectors.

They will also conduct research and will have a data bank for sectoral concerns and document community initiatives in development. The result of their research will be considered in the identification and development of the city's programs and projects.

PCQC will serve as the city's lobby group on behalf of its members and networks. They will also assist the city government in informing their sectors about the city's initiatives for them which addresses concerns that affect their rights.

According to Barangay and Community Relations Department (BCRD) Head Ricardo Corpuz, the city has already been working with CSO for years as they are members of the City Development Council (CDC), the planning body of the LGU.

"The CDC is made up of officials, barangay captains, and even sector representatives from the Council of Sectoral Representatives. They have always been with us. We must institutionalize our collaboration with them so that we can further strengthen citizen participation in governance and encourage others to unite," Corpuz said.

He also added that with the creation of PCQC all members of local boards and councils should be accredited by the BCRD. The PCQC will assign the people's representatives to the respective local government boards and councils coming from the accredited CSO while the BCRD will serve as their secretariat.

The institutionalization of the People's Council is aligned with Mayor Belmonte's 14-point agenda, specifically agenda number 14 which is to "Listen to our citizens and understand what they need."