

## Peterborough Jobs Summit Offers Taste of Deep Democracy

Image



Event creates space for people in the room to design new possibilities based on what they can do and existing community assets

PETERBOROUGH - A Jan. 14 jobs and local economy summit hosted by Maryam Monsef, Member of Parliament for Peterborough-Kawartha, offered a taste of what could be called deep democracy. People in the room co-discovered existing assets in the community, imagined new possibilities and considered their own level of commitment to bringing something new into being.

At least six initiatives intended to increase jobs and enliven the local economy are the result. All were co-designed by people in the room. Each has a self-identified

core team that will be taking ownership for moving it forward.

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And those are only the formal, public results. Judging by the reverberating theme of gratitude for the new connections and friendships ignited, networks expanded and sense of community enlivened as the summit closed, who knows what else will ripple out.

With this summit, a form of democracy that goes far beyond casting one's vote was made real and visible. A suggested term for it was deep democracy.

One way to think about deep democracy is that it's a politics that sets the table with the power and freedom for citizens to create their own vision and then make it come true.

It is different than inviting citizen feedback or buy-in on existing initiatives.

The set of dialogues in the jobs summit offered a clear path for citizens to take in co-creating a vision and then making it real — beginning with connecting deeply with one another around shared intentions, all the way to voicing into the room what they would like or what they had to offer in order to actualize these new ideas.

"I've been waiting for this kind of thing for a long, long time," Peterborough Ward 4 councilor Keith Riel said in closing. He suggested ways be found to have it happen

quarterly or bi-annually.

Maryam said she is committed to hosting an annual jobs summit, and invited organizations interested to see gatherings of this kind occur more frequently to step up and partner in making that happen.

The success of this event sets the table very nicely for introducing the possibility of hosting a conversation of this depth and nature at a nationwide level, Maryam also said.

In addition to Maryam's leadership, the summit could not have happened as it did — in an organic, thoughtful, yet structured and on-time way — without the tremendous energy and gifts of event co-ordinator and facilitator Jocasta Boone and her hosting team colleagues including Peter Pula, Ben Wolfe and Cheryl Lyon. Maryam also expressed deep gratitude to Lauren Hunter, her executive assistant, and the 100 plus participants for being “brave enough to jump in and try something different.”

A formal report on the summit will be released Feb. 15.

To view a photo album from the summit by Ben Wolfe, click [here](#).

To see a related video, click [here](#).

*This media was originally posted to [PeterboroughDialogues.media](#) the news site of the Peterborough Dialogues, a local engagement project designed and hosted by Axiom News.*

**UPDATE:** Visit [PeterboroughDialogues.media](#) to read some comments that have been posted in response to this story around the use of the term deep democracy.

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