

PRELIMINARY
SPECIAL MEETING DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

February 22, 1996

The special meeting of the Des Moines City Council was called to order by Mayor Thomasson at 6:35 p.m. at Wesley Gardens, 815 South 216th Street, Des Moines, WA.

ROLL CALL - Present: Mayor Scott Thomasson, Mayor Pro Tem Terry Brazil, Councilmembers Bruce Roberts, Dan Sherman, Gary Towe, and Don Wasson. Absent: Councilmember Bob Sheckler (vacation). Also present were City Manager Bob Olander, City Attorney Gary McLean, Public Works Director Tim Heydon, Finance Director Jim Hathaway, Chief of Police Don Obermiller, Harbormaster Joe Dusenbury, Park and Recreation Director Patrice Thorell, Planning Manager Corbitt Loch, and Deputy City Clerk Angela Chaufy. Facilitating the meeting was Nancy Truitt Pierce of The Washington Firm, Ltd.

Introductions

In turn, everyone introduced the person on their right and noted their admirable qualities. The Councilmembers then summarized their personal objectives for serving on the Council.

Review of Vision and Mission Statements

The following vision and mission statements developed at the June, 1995 retreat were reviewed:

Vision: A friendly and safe waterfront community.

Mission: City Government: To enrich residential living by providing leadership, administration and community services that reflect the pride and values of Des Moines.

Values: Professionalism, Resourcefulness, Integrity, Dedication, Excellence

Imperatives: Stewardship

We commit to: Managing and protecting our natural and urban environment in order to enhance the quality of residential life for the future.

Community First/ Community Oriented Government

We commit to: Responsive and accessible government; respect for the diverse opinions and populations that enrich our community; fostering partnerships that maximize our resources; involving our citizens and enhancing our community.

Fiscal Responsibility

We commit to: Comprehensive financial planning that provides for adequate cash reserves, recapitalization, maintained infrastructure, quality spending, and minimizing debt while living primarily on a residential tax base.

Protect Life and Property

We commit to: Ensuring personal and community safety and security and protecting property.

Council Staff-Relations

Ms. Truitt Pierce spoke of Council's role of representing the diversity of the community. As a result of this diversity, she stated that Council must recognize decisionmaking versus discussion processes and formal versus informal discussions. She illustrated the relationship between Council and staff as an hourglass, with Council, representing the community, at the top of the hourglass, providing direction to the City Manager. The City Manager, in turn, directs Council's inquiries and direction to appropriate staff personnel.

Councilmember Roberts noted that the hourglass example also can be flipped, illustrating the staff to Council process.

Through discussion regarding Council committees' role and current effectiveness, Council identified the following suggestions:

- Focus the committee's study of a subject by identifying key issues, policy direction, and timelines when the topic is first remanded to the committee.
- Provide detailed account of committee's study in staff report.
- Distribute minutes of the committee meetings.
- Develop a checklist of issues that committee should address.
- Form ad hoc committees to study certain special interest issues.

Council concurred that the City Manager should study possible options while Council should provide more policy direction for committees. The committee process was placed on the agenda for the June retreat.

At 8:10 p.m., Mayor Thomasson declared a five minute break.

Ms. Truitt Pierce encouraged Council to hold each other accountable and to talk to each other as difficulties arose.

Mayor Thomasson also noted that Council should refrain from personal attacks during debate. Disagreements should not be made nor taken personally.

Identification of Council/Staff Expectations and Responsibilities

Upon Ms. Truitt Pierce's direction, Council and staff met separately to formulate the following lists of expectations and responsibilities:

What Council Wants From Staff

- Provide unbiased and accurate information.
- Give staff's recommendation with explained rationale.
- Provide a consistent format.
- Be thorough - Have all the questions been addressed?
- Do not guess what Council wants and then gear the recommendation toward that assumption.
- Expect questions.
- Keep Council informed of community inquires and concerns.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the Vision Statement.
- Provide better communication of weekly activities.

What Council Can Expect From Staff

- Directions followed positively and resourcefully - Support for Council.
- Quality analysis, alternatives, and recommendations.
- Honesty.
- No surprises.
- Timely and advance information, both formal and informal.
- Equal treatment of Councilmembers.
- Projection of good professional image.
- Good customer service.
- Respect and support for Councilmembers both publicly and privately.
- PRIDE

What Staff Wants From Council

- Give direction on how strong to make or argue a recommendation.
- Understand staff's limited resources --if Council adds a project then also provide direction on which other project to drop.
- Read/review the materials.
- Continue "No surprises" - give advance warning.
- Do not bash staff in public.
- Provide consistent direction.
- Need the information you are requesting.
- Do not be upset if staff cannot or does not accept individual direction.

What Staff Can Expect from Council

- Clear and consistent direction with thorough analysis.
- Preparedness.
- Substantive questions asked in advance.
- No micro-management.
- Give credit where credit is due.

NEXT MEETING DATE - February 29, 1996 Regular Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela M. Chaufy
Deputy City Clerk