

SPECIAL MEETING DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

April 27, 2002

The special meeting of the Des Moines City Council was called to order by Mayor Wasson at 8:30 a.m. at Port Ludlow Conference Center, 200 Olympic Place, Port Ludlow, Washington.

ROLL CALL - Present: Mayor Don Wasson, Mayor Pro Tem Richard Benjamin, Councilmembers Gary Petersen, Bob Sheckler, Maggie Steenrod, Scott Thomasson and Susan White. Also present were Acting City Manager Tony Piasecki, Assistant City Attorney Linda Marousek, Harbormaster Joe Dusenbury, Public Works Director Tim Heydon, Finance Director Scott McCarty (arrived at 1:38 p.m.), Community Development Director Judith Kilgore, Park and Recreation Director Patrice Thorell, Commander Kevin Tucker, and Deputy City Clerk Angela Chaufy. Facilitator: Mike Ragsdale.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Setting of Agenda

Facilitator Ragsdale set the following agenda for the meeting:

- Discuss the City Manager Hiring Process
- Review and discuss the City's vision and mission statements
- Review and discuss Council's Strategic Objectives.

The following items were then identified as potential discussion topics:

- Third Runway
- Economic Development
- Senior Center
- Park and Recreation Master Plan Process
- Council Rules and Procedures
- Transportation Impact Fees
- City Hall Improvements
- Crime – Law and Order
- Role of the Marina

City Manager Hiring Process

Assistant City Attorney Marousek explained that qualifications for the City Manager should be discussed in open session while discussion regarding a specific individual should be conducted in executive session.

At this point in the discussion, all staff with the exception of Acting City Manager Piasecki, Assistant City Attorney Marousek, and Deputy City Clerk Chaufy left the room.

In regard to City Manager qualifications, Councilmember Petersen said that he felt a City Manager should exhibit openness while dealing with Council and staff, provide good guidance to Council, demonstrate faith in each department, and show respect for staff.

Facilitator Ragsdale identified the following options for filling the City Manager position:

- Promotion from within;
- Non-recruitment announcement process;
- Recruitment through a specific recruitment company; and
- Broad recruitment in public and private sectors.

Councilmember Benjamin said that he felt a City Manager should be apolitical, mission oriented, willing to research information, and up to a challenge.

At 9:07 a.m., Council adjourned into executive session to discuss personnel issues. Acting City Manager Piasecki and Deputy City Clerk Chaufty left the meeting.

At 10:10 a.m., Council reconvened in open session.

MOTION was made by Councilmember Steenrod and seconded by Councilmember White to place the filling of the City Manager position on the next City Council meeting agenda.

MOTION was made by Councilmember Sheckler to appoint an ad hoc committee to make a recommendation regarding the City Manager position to Council.

The maker and seconder of the motion **accepted the motion as a friendly amendment.**

Mayor Wasson appointed Councilmembers Sheckler and Thomasson and himself to serve on the ad hoc committee.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Vision and Mission Statement Review

Councilmember Sheckler informed the group of the development of the vision and mission statements. He suggested that Council focus on desired revisions to the statements.

Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin recommended that the fiscal responsibility section include language regarding the need for a strong business base.

Councilmember Thomasson noted that the fiscal responsibility statement was a reflection of the City's current condition.

In regard to the stewardship statement, Councilmember Steenrod commented that the current wording excluded the business community.

Councilmember Sheckler suggested that the word "community" replace the word "residential".

Acting City Manager Piasecki proposed that the fiscal responsibility section be changed to:

We commit to comprehensive financial planning that provides for adequate cash reserves, recapitalization, maintained infrastructure, quality spending, and minimizing debt while living within our means and working actively to diversify our economic base.

He also suggested that the word "residential" be removed from the Stewardship statement.

Council concurred with these recommendations.

Other Potential Discussion Topics

Councilmember Thomasson suggested that Council discuss the financial status of the City.

Community Development Director Kilgore asked that Council discuss school construction impacts and the Pacific Highway South area south of Kent-Des Moines Road.

Councilmember White asked that Council discuss the annexation policy.

Crime – Law and Order

Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin encouraged Council and staff to study communities that had successfully deterred crime in their neighborhoods. He cited Tukwila as an example of a city that had used Council's policies and the abatement process to clean up their city. He felt that Des Moines also needed to address short-term crime response.

Councilmember Steenrod suggested that Council focus on key areas to improve the perception of the City. She felt that vandalism should be dealt with in the short-term to improve the City's image.

Commander Tucker informed Council that the Police Department would be proposing legislation regarding graffiti and motel/hotel identification requirements to Council.

Assistant City Attorney Marousek said that nuisance abatement was a possible tool for dealing with crime.

Community Development Director Kilgore noted that code enforcement could also deter crime. She informed Council that the Police, Public Works, and Community Development staff worked together to deal with certain situations.

Acting City Manager Piasecki said that it was important to prioritize staff's response due to limited staff availability.

Councilmember Sheckler commented that some cities had standing Council committees to address public safety issues and their prioritization. He suggested that Des Moines adopt such a committee.

Councilmember Thomasson said that it was important to address the issues directly rather than just deal with the symptoms. He felt it was important for Council to become educated about the high crime areas in the City.

Councilmember Steenrod said that she would like higher visibility for this issue.

Acting City Manager Piasecki suggested that a comprehensive public safety plan be developed with input from the Police, Community Development, Public Works, and Park and Recreation Departments, and the community. The plan could initially be reviewed by the Public Safety and Transportation Committee.

Councilmember White said that she was interested in serving on the committee.

Councilmember Sheckler voiced support for having a standing Council committee identify the issues unique to Des Moines, prioritize the needs, and provide policy direction to staff.

Councilmember Petersen noted the increase in prostitution on Pacific Highway South.

Councilmember Steenrod expressed an interest in serving on the committee. She said it was important to also study the issue from a business perspective.

Acting City Manager Piasecki suggested that the comprehensive public safety plan emphasize a proactive, rather than reactive, policing response.

Councilmember White suggested that the City Currents be used to inform the public of the issue.

Councilmember Thomasson felt it was important to get the neighborhoods to work with the City to deal with crime. He said that the Public Safety and Transportation Committee formerly dealt with these issues and suggested that they do so once again.

Acting City Manager Piasecki summarized the outcome of the discussion as stating that a public safety strategy involving various city departments and the community should be developed. The strategy should emphasize a multidirectional approach to eliminate the criminal element in Des Moines.

Facilitator Ragsdale suggested that the Acting City Manager determine the question for the committee.

Council concurred.

Economic Development

Councilmember Thomasson stated his belief that the Chamber of Commerce was to promote economic development while the City was responsible for its infrastructure. He said that he would like to have the regional and local chambers of commerce address economic development.

Community Development Director Kilgore said that economic development could be defined as business attraction/retention, land development, and/or legislation.

Councilmember White suggested that an employee dedicated to economic development be hired by the City to promote the City and to work with others to promote it.

Councilmember Steenrod informed Council that the Chamber of Commerce has been working since November 2001, to identify key needs and desires of the business committee. Rather than employee a person to promote economic development, she suggested that retired, qualified businesspersons provide volunteer services.

Facilitator Ragsdale suggested that Council read the City of Tukwila's statement regarding economic development. He encouraged Council to not limit their thinking about economic development to an increased sales tax source.

Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin noted that the Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development committee had almost finished gathering data to promote the city to business developers.

Facilitator Ragsdale asked Community Development Director Kilgore to provide her vision of economic development to Council after lunch.

Other Potential Discussion Topics

Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin asked that Council discuss the topic of communication.

At Noon, the meeting recessed for lunch.

At 1:00 p.m. the meeting resumed.

Economic Development, Continued

Community Development Director Kilgore encouraged Council to "think big" regarding economic development. She asked them to focus on the following components:

- Land Development
 - Downtown Area
 - Kent-Des Moines Road South to South 272nd Street
 - Pacific Ridge
 - Business Park Area
- Cultural Shift
 - Economic Development Council
 - Code review
 - Bonus Programs
- Business Attraction

Community Development Director Kilgore suggested that the City also work closely with Highline Community College and the Highline School District to enhance economic development.

Public Works Director Heydon stated that signage, lighting, and appearance also affect economic development.

At 1:38 p.m., Finance Director McCarty arrived.

Councilmember Benjamin suggested that mini-cruise ships and gambling be brought to Des Moines.

Park and Recreation Director Thorell suggested the possibility of establish shuttle bus routes that run between the airport hotels and downtown Des Moines.

The group briefly discussed the possibility of the City taking a lead in causing assemblage of property to happen and the potential ramifications of such action.

Acting City Manager Piasecki suggested that the City continue the diplomatic process in discussing boundary lines with the City of Kent.

Mayor Wasson and Councilmember Sheckler expressed an interest in also participating in the discussions.

Council concurred that development of the area between Kent-Des Moines Road and South 272nd Street on Pacific Highway South should be included in economic development discussions.

Council agreed that development of the North Central Neighborhood area should be encouraged.

Community Development Director Kilgore was directed to explore membership in the Economic Development Council. Specifically, she was directed to research their current political standing.

Council determined that the regulatory climate and City codes should be reviewed to streamline the development process and eliminate redundancies and conflicts.

Regarding possible influence of the Council concerning the Highline School District's current quality of education, Council concurred to consider a draft resolution stating their displeasure with the current condition of education quality and pledging to work with the school district to improve that quality. A similar resolution regarding Highline Community College was to also be developed.

Community Development Director Kilgore was directed to bring a discussion paper to Council at a later meeting, which would allow Council to prioritize the various issues identified during the discussion. A detailed, estimated timeline would also be presented at that time.

At 2:45 p.m., a fifteen-minute break was declared.

Financial Matters

Acting City Manager Piasecki introduced the subject.

Councilmember Sheckler said that internal cuts and/or asking citizens to pay for desired services were two options available to Council.

Councilmember Thomasson stressed the importance of maintaining the credibility of Council throughout any budget reduction process.

Finance Director McCarty explained that the Revenue Stabilization Fund was established to address temporary gaps in the budget.

Upon request, Park and Recreation Director Thorell described Park and Recreation special districts.

Councilmember Steenrod felt that it was appropriate to use City reserve funds as long as there was a mechanism in place to replace the funds.

Council discussed the possibility of allowing casinos in the City.

Councilmember Sheckler stated that he preferred to allow casinos in the City or to administer across the board departmental cuts rather than eliminate the Parks and Recreation Department.

Councilmember Peterson recommended that the City conservatively use reserve funds and continue to look for additional revenue. He said that he would like to keep the Parks and Recreation department.

Mayor Wasson agreed with using reserves conservatively while exploring alternate revenue sources, making cuts, and encouraging casinos in the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin felt that Parks and Recreation programs were essential to the City. If cuts were needed, he suggested that a qualified firm be utilized to identify inefficiencies. He felt it was necessary to create momentum for the City such as through a casino.

Councilmember Steenrod commented that staff was the city's greatest asset. She encouraged the City to use attrition and technology to cut costs.

Mayor Wasson suggested implementing an incentive program for employees to identify potential cost reductions and improved efficiencies.

Acting City Manager Piasecki summarized the discussion's direction as follows:

- Conservatively use reserves;
- Continue to look for budget cuts;
- Research the codes regarding casinos; and
- Explore potential annexation boundaries.

NEXT MEETING DATE – Special Meeting, April 28, 2002

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela M. Chaufy
Deputy City Clerk