



City of Olympia

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Meeting Minutes City Council

Information: 360.753.8447

Saturday, August 30, 2014

9:00 AM

LOTT Board Room

Special City Council Meeting - Mid-Year Retreat

1. ROLL CALL

Mayor Buxbaum welcomed everyone and outlined the agenda for the day. He indicated City Manager Steve Hall will serve as facilitator to keep discussions moving and on time. He urged everyone to self-facilitate to optimize their ability to complete the agenda. He shared a short video clip entitled "The Ladder of Inference".

Present: 7 - Mayor Stephen H. Buxbaum, Mayor Pro Tem Nathaniel Jones, Councilmember Jim Cooper, Councilmember Julie Hankins, Councilmember Steve Langer, Councilmember Jeannine Roe and Councilmember Cheryl Selby

2. BUSINESS ITEMS

2.A [14-0838](#) City Council's Mid-Year Retreat

Finance Committee

Councilmember Cooper, Chair of the Finance Committee, provided a brief overview of the Committee's accomplishments year-to-date.

Administrative Services Director Jane Kirkemo presented a 2015 budget preview, including Affordable Care Act implementation impacts, increasing retirement costs, and public defense costs.

Ms. Kirkemo and Councilmember Cooper summarized recent discussions on revenue options, including the cable TV tax recently approved by Council to fund on-going maintenance, and the status of the review of Business and Occupation (B&O) tax exemptions. The Finance Committee plans to make a recommendation on potential B&O tax changes to the full Council as part of the 2015 budget deliberations.

Assistant City Manager Jay Burney presented performance report cards for Champion Downtown and Adopt a Sustainable Budget, two of Council's 2014 goal areas.

General Government Committee

Councilmember Roe, Chair of the General Government Committee, provided a brief overview of the Committee's accomplishments year-to-date.

Public Works Deputy Director Debbie Sullivan led Council through an exercise around

Telling Our Story. Ms. Sullivan emphasized the importance of being on the same page in terms of talking points on key issues. The Council brainstormed about what was working well and what needed improvement in terms of the gaps in communicating important issues. Council related the following as working well or needing improvement:

- Building institutional memory around community issues
 - Be proactive
 - Provide education
- Focus on “What Council can do/What are the constraints in taking action?”
- Do not just provide a technical response - let citizens know we are listening
- Tell the public why decisions are made
- Identify Council consensus early
- Use Plain Talk
- Need to help developers with required public involvement
- Legislative strategy and policy
 - Develop annual work plan
- Framing issues early
 - Who, what, where, when, why, how
- Learn from our past successes
- Weekly 1:1’s with Steve - effective at getting messages out to Council
- Develop process and messaging to deal with leadership voids
- Communicate decisions made and why - externally and internally
- Be more proactive when staff sees issues coming
 - Inform Council early
- Better communication amongst Council on hot issues
- Start Council meetings with a positive message
 - Celebrate our success
- Shift communications style
 - Less bureaucratic
 - More marketing focused
- Hold a Study Session to discuss emerging issues
- More community dialogue on issues

Ms. Sullivan stated staff would take the feedback and work on a set of communication strategies to address the gaps, working through the General Government Committee. Once completed, staff will roll it out to the full Council.

Council engaged in a brief discussion about the role of the General Government Committee in taking on topics related to economic development and how the work of the Community and Economic Revitalization Ad Hoc Committee would conclude and roll into the General Government Committee work plan in the future. Council will have more discussions around this topic at its annual retreat in January, 2015.

Land Use and Environment Committee

Councilmember Langer, Chair of the Land Use and Environment Committee, provided

a brief overview of the Committee's accomplishments year-to-date.

Mr. Stahley reviewed the work plan and accomplishments for the Downtown Project. Specifically, Mr. Stahley discussed the current status of the imposed Alcohol Impact Area and results to-date. Based on findings, staff recommends petitioning the Liquor Control Board to add additional products to the list of banned beverages. Staff will bring this issue before Council at a future meeting for further discussion.

Councilmember Langer next provided Council with a set of draft performance measures for the Comprehensive Plan Action Plan. He indicated these measures were developed by staff and are to be used as a jumping off point for community discussion and outreach, and future Council discussion before they are finalized.

LOOKING FORWARD - 2015 AND BEYOND

Council finished their retreat by brainstorming thoughts and ideas around topics and ideas to focus on in 2015 and beyond. Topics included:

- City government - more relevance in community
 - Paradigm shift
- Different approach to public's business
 - Positive communication
 - Big picture focus
 - Dream big
- More focus on following Council guidelines
- Leave legacy for next Council to build on
 - Plans/actions in place
- Look at indirect charges
- Manage our stories
- Downtown Plan scoping underway
- Work with state agencies on species protection
- Bicycle boulevards
- Police/ambassador storefront downtown
- Resolve dash cam/body cam issues for police officers
- More Study Sessions
- Consider quarterly retreats
- Continue to focus on community development issues
- Complete the Comprehensive Plan and Shoreline Management Program updates
- Complete the community renewal area ordinance
- Consider hiring economic development director
- Continue criminal justice regionalization discussions
- Focus on Puget Sound health
- Recreation and tourism opportunities
- Change Council meeting time - start earlier
- More Downtown involvement

- Focus on partnerships
- Community engagement
 - Moving it forward
 - Getting different people involved
 - What do others do?

The discussion was completed.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.