

Draft

Olympia City Council

2016 Mid-Year Retreat Summary Notes

Appreciative Inquiry / Progress since January 2016 Retreat/Reflections on Gracious Space

- January retreat united Councilmembers
- Councilmembers felt “in-sync”, “we hit the ground running”
- Council works in environment of mutual respect
- Learning to work through issues together is ongoing
- Communication restrictions present challenges in working through issues together
- How Councilmembers come together at the end of difficult processes is key to trust building
- The “elephant in the room” is the income tax proposal which has impacted relationships
- Councilmembers expressed strong desire to work through the issue without fracturing future relationships

‘Three Wishes’ from January Retreat

The Three Wishes

1. Address homelessness so that everyone has a home that is safe & affordable and has access to medical care
2. The City has a thriving downtown economy that includes
 - No empty/vacant buildings
 - Ample parking
 - Resolution of Sea-level rise
 - Dirty/contaminated soil cleaned
 - Seismic risk gone
 - Transportation challenges solved
3. Olympia is held up as the city every other city wants to emulate
 - Residential density is increased
 - Vitality of neighborhood centers is increased
 - High volume transit systems are enhanced to encourage vitality of downtown

Reflections on Three Wishes

- Homelessness was Council’s first wish; however, there is no clear strategy about how the City can impact this regional issue. Next steps include:
 - Clarify City’s role in homelessness
 - Support Providence Community Care Center which will be an asset to our efforts
 - Schedule a Study Session after July to discuss County’s role
 - Develop an Action Plan
- Many items or projects in the City’s current work plan and budget are aligned with wishes two and three.

Review of Core Values and Ground Rules from January Retreat

Core Values

- **Integrity:** Being authentic, protecting trust to address the public's needs; owning who you are and where you come from
- **Stewardship:** Acting as [guardians] stewards of the common good of the City
- **Wisdom:** Being open and willing to seek/consider input; being compassionate and just
- **Serve with joy** and kind-spirited humor

The Core Values are still relevant and meaningful. They are a basis for building and maintaining public trust and for staying true to our core purpose.

Ground Rules

- Be thoughtful about perspective (“balcony” vs. “dance floor”)
- Share the floor
- Listen
 - Minimize side-bar conversations
 - Be open to hearing other people's perspectives
 - Listen without judgment (inquiry before advocacy)
 - Question assumptions (yours own and others)
 - Respect confidences and confidentiality
- Be honest
- Use tact and be gracious
- Respect the body, the process, and each other

The Ground Rules are very good. Consider posting Ground Rules at Council Meetings to guide expectations for public behavior. Council and public then share expectations for decorum within and between the Council and the public.

Challenges since January Retreat

Disruptions at Council and Public Meeting

- Need for pro-active response to address underlying issues and mitigate disruptions
 - What are options for prevention?
 - Need for more information and discussion about how to best respond
- Council and Public Safety
 - Support the Mayor in response to disruptions
 - Take the initiative to be actively supportive and united (all leave the Council Chamber if meeting is recessed)
 - Strength in united front and actions
 - All members have a role in calling for respectful public input
- Mitigate Risk
 - Cannot help but feel threatened – both Council and public
 - Need for new rules addressing what items can be brought into meetings (e.g. signs, sticks, drums etc.)

- Contingency Plan Next Steps
 - Staff will take lead in framing legal parameters for Council review
 - Staff will research other jurisdictions to identify 'Best Practices'
 - Consider rules for City Hall meeting participation

Public Comment at Council meetings

- Need clarity for public about purpose and process of public comments
 - Help people understand that it is not a two-way conversation
 - Provide more and better information regarding process of public comment
 - Not a two-way conversation
 - Respectful dialogue is expected
 - Limited public forum
- Consider alternative options for providing public comment
 - Video to record comments?
 - E-mail recorded public comment?
 - Written comments only?

Perspectives on Council Work Since January

Council Work

- Council work is going well in general
- New members feel supported by their Council Committee Chairpersons and Council as a whole
- A clear strategy to participate in the regional response to homelessness is not yet reflected in City's work

Committee Assignments and Reports

Condense Council Reports

- What do we want to accomplish with our reports?
 - Provide pertinent information that is relevant to the work of the Council
 - Announce (only) events that are germane to all Councilmembers or the public
- Streamline process by Mayor reporting first
 - Mayor announces past highlights and upcoming events
 - Additional Council reports supplement the initial Mayor's report

Interjurisdictional Committees

What is the expected role on interjurisdictional committee representation?

- The ability to represent Council viewpoint is sometimes challenging due to time restrictions or complexity of information
- Process to inform Councilmembers of upcoming votes on interjurisdictional committees
 - If possible, represent the Council as a body on interjurisdictional issues

2016 Issues / Planning for Remaining Year

- Community Conversations

- How should Councilmembers engage in small group community conversations?
 - What is the purpose of the communication?
 - Who participates?
 - What are the topics
 - How to use the information?
 - Kellie Purce Braseth will assemble packet of support materials for Council review and discussion
- Need for Big picture understanding of alignment of current projects with Comp Plan Goals
 - Staff will provide document illustrating the alignment
 - Sidewalk improvements and street maintenance projects
 - Actions on Homelessness
 - Study Session after July to discuss City's role in the regional response to homelessness
 - Proposed scope of work to assess issues of homelessness downtown is going to the Land Use and Environment Committee
 - Human Rights and Racial Justice conversation to continue
 - Artesian Commons update is needed
 - Park's staff briefing
 - Olympia School Board Joint Meeting (get on calendar)
 - Roll out of Bond issue
 - What are District's plans

2017 Issues for Council Preparation

***Include dedicated time in future mid-year retreats for discussion of next year's issues ***

- Public Safety Levy
 - Outreach and Process
- Economic Development Council – Low Wage Worker Discussion
 - Finance Committee
- Capitol Lake/Deschutes Estuary workgroup
 - Mayor Selby will provide Council briefing
- Funding Septic System Conversions
 - Council Study Session
- Animal Service Fees