



AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: November 20, 2012

Item Number: E-2

To: Honorable Mayor & City Council

From: Jeff Kolin, City Manager

Subject: SUMMARY REPORT FROM CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
HELD ON OCTOBER 21, 2012

Attachments: 1. City of Beverly Hills City Council Retreat Summary Report

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council:

- Adopt the norms developed at the workshop as reported beginning on page 3 of the summary report and provide direction to create a separate document listing the norms that will be incorporated into the City Council Policy and Operational Manual.
- Provide direction to schedule a follow-up workshop in the month of April or May. The remaining items from the October workshop could be discussed at the December 14 Priority Setting Session, a Study Session, or held until April or May. An overview of the City Council norms could be reviewed with the newly constituted City Council at the April /May workshop.

Meeting Date: November 20, 2012

- Provide direction regarding a possible Citywide Strategic Planning Process in 2013 to enhance the annual priority setting process through the development of longer term goals.

INTRODUCTION

The City Council held a workshop on October 21, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The workshop was a noticed public meeting and held in the Municipal Gallery at City Hall. Participants in the workshop were, Mayor William Brien, Vice Mayor John Mirisch, Councilmember Barry Brucker, Councilmember Lili Bosse, Councilmember Julian Gold, City Manager Jeff Kolin, City Attorney Larry Weiner and City Clerk Byron Pope. The workshop was facilitated by Jan Perkins with the firm Management Partners.

DISCUSSION

A summary report of the workshop activities and outcomes has been prepared by the facilitator and is included as an attachment to the staff report. A list of City Council norms were developed from individual interviews with City Council members and reviewed and modified during the workshop. They are listed beginning on page 3 of the summary. The summary report also developed expectations for City Council and Staff and the role that they play in an effective team partnership.

Several items suggested for discussion by Councilmembers were not discussed due to lack of time.

- Re-examine our processes for setting priorities and reprioritizing when new things come up that need attention.
- Assess our use of Standing and Ad Hoc Committees.
- Discuss how the Council is involved in setting the budget and the types of information desired by the Council pertaining to the budget.

These items can be addressed at the City Council Priority Setting Session on December 14 or at a future Study Session.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts at this time.


Noel Marquis, Acting Director of
Administrative Services

Finance Approval


Jeff Kolin, City Manager

Approved By

Attachment 1

**City of Beverly Hills
City Council Retreat**

October 2012

Management
Partners



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Summary Report

Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision – the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.

Andrew Carnegie

On October 21, 2012, the City Council held a retreat from 9:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. It was a public meeting properly noticed pursuant to the Brown Act.

Participants in the workshop were:

- Mayor William W. Brien, M.D.
- Vice Mayor John A. Mirisch
- Councilmember Barry Brucker
- Councilmember Lili Bosse
- Councilmember Julian A. Gold, M.D.
- City Manager Jeff Kolin
- City Attorney Larry Weiner
- City Clerk Byron Pope

The facilitator for the workshop was Jan Perkins of Management Partners.

Workshop Objectives and Agenda

The objectives for the day were as follows:

- Create a set of Council norms to enable the Council and staff to carry out the City's business most effectively
- Strengthen Council and staff teamwork

The agenda for the meeting was as follows:

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Public comment
3. Review list of items suggested for discussion
4. Discussion of roles and expectations
5. Wrap up

Workshop Ground Rules: At the start of the workshop, the facilitator asked Council and staff for suggestions about ground rules to help the Council and staff have a successful workshop.

- Listen to each other
- Focus on issues not on people
- There are no bad ideas or bad questions
- Be completely honest
- Be respectful but do not filter comments
- Keep phones off
- Have fun

Workshop Preparation

Facilitator Jan Perkins interviewed each member of the City Council and the City Manager to hear his or her comments about what would be useful to discuss in a workshop. She consolidated the comments heard and prepared a handout for the workshop. The summary is provided below.

A workshop binder was prepared in advance of the July 3rd session. Management Partners provided examples of norms and protocols in other cities, as well as several articles to provide additional perspective on the topic of protocols. The articles and examples provided in the binder are listed below.

Articles:

1. "Council Conduct with City Staff, the Public and Each Other," Mayor and Council Members Resource Guide, League of California Cities
2. "Strategies for Creating a More Collaborative, Effective Council," Institute for Local Government; Western City magazine, League of California Cities September 2011
3. "The Value of Going Back to the Basics," by Gus Morrison (Mayor of Fremont) and Jan Perkins (former City Manager of Fremont), Western City magazine, League of California Cities, June 2005

Examples from Other Cities:

1. Management Partners Compilation of Best Practices from Other Cities (Pertaining to Norms)
2. Thousand Oaks City Council Norms
3. Palo Alto Council Protocols
4. Santa Clarita Norms and Procedures
5. Mountain View Council Code of Conduct (Preamble)

Explanation of Norms

Norms are a set of operating principles or expectations agreed to by the team for working together. They set the plate for carrying out the business of the City in an effective and efficient manner. Norms are built on the basis of what will strengthen the City Council and staff's ability to serve their respective functions.

Carrying out the City's business requires both an effective City Council and an effective City staff, characterized by:

- A willingness to address the tough issues
- An ability and capacity to work well together
- A focus on representing the interests of the entire community
- A productive working relationship
- Orderly methods of establishing and pursuing priorities and a strategic direction
- Strong competencies in all areas of expertise of municipal government
- An ability to provide clear, accurate, timely information and recommendations to the Council
- An ability to get things done in a timely and professional manner
- Leadership to foster a corporate culture of teamwork and excellence

Results of Discussions

The following is a summary of the consensus discussions at the workshop. A number of specific processes were discussed along with roles of the Council and staff.

Norms:

Through interviews with the Council prior to the retreat, a list of potential norms was created. This list was reviewed and modified through discussion at the retreat. The revised list of Council norms follows.

Several of these are further explained in the paragraphs which follow this list.

- Teamwork between the Council and staff is important to carry out the business of the City
- There should be no surprises to Council by staff or to staff by Council
- Councilmembers should be accessible to residents
- Council and staff should show respect to each other
- Take concerns about staff to the City Manager; do not publically criticize individual staff members
- Have vigorous but respectful disagreements
- Seek consensus and compromise while respecting individual opinions and votes
- Respect the decision of the majority when there is a split vote
- Ask questions of staff prior to the Council meeting to get questions answered in advance and to help ensure that staff can provide complete answers at the Council meeting
- Keep confidential matters confidential
- Encourage dialogue with each other

1. **Roles of Council and Executive Staff:** The group identified what is expected of Council and of executive staff. The roles discussed are listed below.

Role of the City Council

- Set a long term vision, adopt the ordinances needed to carry out the vision, and hand it to staff to implement
- Lead by example
- Set policy direction
- Foster a high quality of life for residents and businesses
- Set priorities
- Represent both the short and long term interests of the City
- Represent the entire community
- Be the voice of residents
- Put community above personal interests; no hidden agendas
- Conduct community outreach
 - Keep an ear to the ground to listen to what community members are saying
 - Assess the pulse of the community; identify what can we do to better know what the majority of people want
 - Get information out to the total community

- Communicate the City's plan and what is going on
- Do our homework, review the facts and make decisions on behalf of the community
- Be the face of the community
- Protect the interests of the community
- Serve in a quasi-judicial role when required
- Serve in an oversight role
- When the Council changes course on a long term project, be cognizant and respectful of the work and expense that has gone into the project up to that point

Role of Executive Staff

- City Manager ensures consistency and quality of reports, performance of staff, and manages the organization,
- Foster ethical behaviors, educate staff about appropriate behaviors
- Implement Council direction
- Get information to Council in a timely fashion; on complicated projects get the information out early; minimize last minute information
- Provide recommendations to the Council through professional, objective staff work; state the pros and cons of issues; provide a roadmap to the recommendations
- Provide support to the Council
- Identify potential policy issues for Council consideration
- Stay in touch with the community (listen, collect ideas)
- Be aware of unintended consequences of actions or issues; identify them for council
- Be current in each of the respective municipal government disciplines so staff can be effective resources for Council

2. Norms about Council interaction with staff at Council meetings:

Through discussion, the Council identified the following norms that will assist the staff in carrying out its role and being effective members of the team.

- Talk to the City Manager about complaints about staff; do not criticize individual staff members in public
- When a Councilmembers wishes to express a negative opinion about staff work, he or she should focus on the work product and address comments to the City Manager
- Ask questions about agenda reports prior to the Council meeting so that staff can be prepared to answer the questions;

seek to avoid surprising staff with questions, whenever possible, at the Council meetings

- Understand that Council presentations are difficult for many staff members and a supportive environment is needed to encourage them to learn and improve; allow staff to answer a Councilmember's question fully before interjecting comments

3. Expectations about staff reports to Council: The Council and City Manager agreed that staff reports will include the following elements:

- A recommendation based on professional expertise, facts and Council policy
- Discussion of alternatives and the impacts of each; when no alternatives exist, explain why
- For issues extending over a long period of time, include the history of the item and prior Council actions to provide context and understanding of reasons for prior decisions and direction

4. Addressing complex issues: For complicated issues presented for Council action, staff will provide more time for consideration in advance of when a decision must be made. Having additional time will enable the Council to ask questions of staff in advance, fully review the materials, and potentially to allow for compromise on issues, when desired. Options for providing more time include:

- Providing agenda materials several days or more ahead of the regular schedule
- Having an initial meeting to discuss the issue without the need for a decision at that meeting, and then a subsequent meeting for action to be taken (a "two step" process)

5. Use of advance planning Council meeting calendar:

Councilmembers are encouraged to review this planning calendar which contains a list of upcoming agenda items and let the City Manager know when there is an item for which information is desired earlier than the Friday agenda packet.

6. Putting annual priorities into context of longer term issues and goals:

In addition to the annual priority setting discussions with Council, there is a desire to have discussions about longer term issues so that the annual priorities are set in context of broader goals and issues. This will also assist the Council and staff in understanding the

impact of new projects or matters that arise during the year that are not on a priority list.

7. Method of a Councilmember proposing an item to be studied: The Council refined the existing process through which a Councilmember can propose studying an issue:

- Councilmembers are encouraged to talk to the City Manager about ideas they are thinking about proposing for study so that the City Manager can determine what level of minimal staff work could be done to assist the Councilmember. An informal “one hour rule” is suggested to guide the amount of time that may be allocated for this initial, minimal research.
- Once a Councilmember decides to place an item on a study session agenda, he or she will describe the question involved and the reasons for proposing a study of the issue.
- Staff will then provide minimal information, sufficient to enable the Council to determine if they wish to authorize staff to study the issue. Among the information provided by staff in this initial report will be the amount of time a report or project is expected to require and the impact this work would have on other priorities.

What Staff Needs from Council:

Toward the end of the workshop, the City Manager noted a few things that would be helpful from the Council to help the staff to be more effective in their staff role.

1. It would be helpful for the City Manager to have more time with individual Councilmembers on a regular basis to discuss important issues, hear concerns, and ensure good communications.
2. The City Manager appreciates it when individual Councilmembers share information with him about community concerns they are hearing.
3. It will be helpful to hear from Councilmembers what they need in staff reports in order for them to be able to make decisions, and for Councilmembers to ask their questions about agenda reports prior to Council meetings so the staff can answer the questions and be most prepared for Council meetings.

4. When Councilmembers have requests for staff effort on an item, it is helpful when they recognize their impacts on staff time and other priorities.
5. The City Manager would like to hold these retreats as “tune ups” on a regular basis (one or two times a year) in order to have discussions about process and continuously improving how we carry out the business of the City.

Items Not Discussed

There were several items suggested for discussion by Councilmembers that, due to time, were not discussed. These could be the subject of future Council workshops or meetings.

- Re-examine our processes for setting priorities and reprioritizing when new things come up that need attention.
- Assess our use of Council standing and ad hoc committees.
- Discuss how the Council is involved in setting the budget and the types of information desired by the Council pertaining to the budget

Recommended Next Steps

1. Create a separate document containing the norms agreed to at the October 21, 2012 retreat. Review it with the Council, modify as needed, and adopt as Council norms.
2. Determine how and when to address the items that were not discussed on October 21 due to lack of time.
3. Schedule a retreat with the Council within a month after the next Council election to discuss roles, expectations and norms. The intent would be to enable the new Council to discuss and agree on what will be helpful to the effective operations of the Council and fostering positive Council/staff teamwork.
4. Consider a strategic planning process to enhance the annual priority setting by placing annual priorities in context of longer term goals and multi-year projects.