

**MINUTES OF AN OPEN MEETING TO CONDUCT A
VISION 2020 PLANNING SESSION
OF A MAJORITY OF THE QUORUM
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS**

A meeting of Greater Peoria Vision 2020 was held Monday, October 14, 2002, at L.R. Nelson Corp., One Sprinkler Lane, Peoria, Illinois, at 6:26 p.m. Council Members present: Gulley, Morris, Nichting, Spears, Teplitz, Mayor Ransburg – 6; absent: Ardis, Grayeb, Sandberg, Thetford, Turner – 5.

Also in attendance were Facilitator Lyle Sumek, Lyle Sumek Associates, Inc., Heathrow, Florida; Deputy City Clerk Beth Ball; Susan Grant of the City Clerk's Office; and members of the media.

Clerk's Note: These Minutes are to be used in conjunction with the 75-page handout "Working Draft #2" (purple cover) dated October, 2002.

Mr. Sumek explained the section dealing with Values, or how we operate, needed refinement. He distributed copies of Working Draft #2, which was a reflection of the work already done by the participants. He referred to the first page which recapped the basic value-based principles to guide policies, decisions and actions which would define what the Council wanted for the community. He said this Vision was then linked to five-year goals, objectives were identified for each goal, and focus was directed to: 1) its meaning to citizens, 2) gaps to be worked on, and 3) prioritized actions to be taken. Mr. Sumek said a two-part Action Agenda was then developed for the next year – a Policy Agenda for the Council and a Management Agenda for department heads. He said these actions would then be reflected in the budget. He emphasized these should be considered direction for staff – in particular, holding the City Manager accountable – with monthly status reports required. He continued that at some point, there needed to be an Action Plan with steps, timeframes, and identifying which staff member (department head, City Manager) would be responsible.

Mr. Sumek stated another major component was the City operating as a business. He said core businesses were identified in the discussions regarding transitioning from being in public service to being in the service business, which included establishing Guiding Values to define the City's corporate culture and how the City should operate. He said they needed to talk tonight about what the next steps should be. He stated a critical next step in the process would be the Citizen Summit. He explained a third draft document would result from these additional steps.

Beginning on page 10, Mr. Sumek reviewed the list of 11 **"Principles to Guide Policies & Decisions"** (selected from 23 suggested originally):

1. Strong, diverse and growing economy
2. Convenient access to urban centers by air, rail or highways
3. Peoria as a medical and educational center
4. Safe community – people feel safe
5. Quality, stable neighborhoods
6. Vibrant downtown serving as a focal point for City and region
7. Quality educational opportunities developing a prepared workforce
8. Preservation of our natural beauty
9. Promotion of our history and heritage
10. Pre-eminent arts and cultural center for downstate
11. Regional destination for recreation, entertainment and business conferences

The consensus was that these were still valid. Mr. Sumek assured the participants there would be another opportunity for further review.

Mr. Sumek then addressed the five-year goals previously developed, as listed on page 12 (should be for 2008 rather than 2007):

1. City operating as a service business
2. Healthy, stabilized neighborhoods
3. Educational excellence: from pre-school to university
4. Stronger Peoria economy
5. More people living in Peoria
6. Downtown/Riverfront becoming a regional center

Mr. Sumek asked whether these were still valid goals, i.e. outcomes they wanted to see in five years. He suggested that #6 might be better identified as “Heart of Peoria” rather than “Downtown/Riverfront.” He referred to the objectives for Goal #6 listed on page 33. It was also pointed out that Peoria was already a regional center. In discussion, it was agreed to revise Goal #6 to read “Enhancing Heart of Peoria as a Regional Center.”

Mr. Sumek asked the Council Members to spend several minutes reviewing the detailed information on Goals (pages 12-36) as previously prioritized, to determine if further edits were needed.

Goal #1: City Operating as a Service Business (pages 13-16)

Council Member Nichting pointed out that affordability needed to be considered, or balancing wants and needs.

Mr. Sumek suggested adding “Determine actual costs of delivering services” on page 15 (Gaps: Challenges & Opportunities).

There was discussion regarding the definition of “world class” (Objective #5, page 13) and whether that term was ambiguous, or perhaps pretentious for the City to bestow upon itself. It was agreed the important point was for the citizens to recognize that Peoria had a top-quality City management and workforce. Mr. Sumek suggested modifying Objective #5 to read: “World Class City Management and Workforce: Recognized by our Citizens, Serving as a Model for Other Communities.”

Goal #2: Healthy, Stabilized Neighborhoods (pages 17-20)

It was discussed that the word “stabilized” projected a negative image, i.e. just “getting by.” “Livable” and “affordable” were likewise deemed unappealing descriptors. It was agreed that “desirable” was a more positive adjective, but still lacked a certain punch.

Mr. Sumek suggested adding “People want to live here” on page 18.

Council Member Gulley brought up his concern regarding responsible renters. Council Member Nichting suggested it was actually a rental vs. home ownership issue. He stated some people should never own a home, even if they could afford one, because they weren’t capable of maintaining a home. It was pointed out that Council Member Gulley’s concern could be covered under the “Willingness to Address Rental Housing” challenge on page 19.

It was also discussed that a range of affordable housing must be provided, because what was affordable for one person would not be for another. Mayor Ransburg pointed out that even families with relatively high incomes sometimes had difficulty affording a home. Council Member Morris noted that a spectrum of housing price options was not currently available in Peoria’s core area.

Mr. Sumek said he would cover these points in the next draft.

In response to concerns about the meaning of Action Agenda item #2 (page 20), Mr. Sumek suggested revising it to read: “Crime Reduction Strategy: Problem-Specific.”

Goal #3: Educational Excellence from Pre-School to University (pages 21-24)

In discussion, it was agreed that in order to convey the concept of lifelong education (not just elementary and high school), the “pre-school to university” modifier was necessary.

Goal #4: Stronger Peoria Economy (pages 25-28)

Mr. Sumek noted the participants at the last meeting changed this from “Strong” to Stronger.”

Council Member Morris said this heading did nothing to distinguish Peoria from every other community. He stated that Peoria should be one of the economic anchors in Illinois.

Mr. Sumek pointed out that originally, the objectives had included “Strong Presence of Caterpillar”, but only one person at the last meeting wanted to include it. It was discussed that a seemingly predominant industry might not always be around (e.g. Hiram Walker), but that the Council needed to decide which types of businesses they wanted to see strengthened over the next five years.

Council Member Morris said manufacturing – not the service industry – was absolutely the basis of the economy. He added that intellectual capital was the other critical component.

Mr. Sumek summarized that the five-year goal of a Stronger Peoria Economy, per the foregoing discussion, would be based on corporate headquarters, research and technology, and medical/health services.

Mr. Sumek suggested the Goal be revised to Growing Peoria Economy, and that since Objective #5 (page 25) was a methodology rather than an outcome, it be replaced with “Home of Major Corporation Headquarters.” The Council Members concurred.

[Council Member Morris left at 7:52 p.m.]

Goal #5: More People Living in Peoria (pages 29-32)

Council Member Spears indicated the real aim would be to increase the City’s population without expanding its boundaries.

Council Member Nichting observed that the five objectives (page 29) were inter-related, and that achieving one would lead to achieving the others.

Mr. Sumek questioned whether “more people living in Peoria” was, in fact, a goal, or more likely an outcome of the other goals.

Council Member Teplitz pointed out these objectives were closely linked with the economy and development in the City.

Mayor Ransburg said he felt it was important to assert that we want more people living here, even to the extent of doubling our population.

In discussion regarding the type of population growth envisioned, it was agreed that importing a large number of public aid recipients would not benefit the City. It was further discussed that attracting a younger, educated middle-class – the backbone of a healthy workforce (e.g. office workers, teachers, police officers) – was vital to avoid becoming a community of “haves” and “have nots.”

Mr. Sumek said he would add as an objective (page 29): Attracting young, educated middle-class to live here.

Council Member Spears stated he would like to see in Peoria the kind of community spirit found in smaller cities whereby everyone worked together to fulfill a need in the community rather than leaving it up to government to fund with tax dollars (e.g. a public swimming pool, library, etc.).

Council Member Nichting commented that the emphasis on cultural diversity had actually resulted in even greater segregation instead of encouraging unity. In response, Mr. Sumek suggested adding the italicized phrase to #5 on page 30: Tolerance and embracing of cultural diversity *while strengthening our community identity and spirit*. He said this concept involved moving from personal interest to what was best for the city overall.

Goal #6: Downtown/Riverfront Becoming a Regional Center (pages 33-36)

Mr. Sumek suggested changing the above Goal to “A Vibrant Heart of Peoria.” He also noted that “Revitalizing Adjacent Neighborhoods” could be added under Challenges & Opportunities (page 35), per tonight’s earlier discussion.

Council Member Nichting asserted that some neighborhoods were beyond saving, and parcels in those areas should instead, as a long-term strategy, be land-banked for a future redevelopment opportunity. Council Member Teplitz concurred. Mr. Sumek pointed out that #2 on the Action Agenda (page 36) was part of that strategy. He said he would work on an Objective to address re-use or demolition/new use.

Mr. Sumek then turned to the six Guiding Values which were previously identified as being expected of every City employee (page 69). He explained that the list of qualities for each Value needed to be narrowed down to four. (Those selected by a majority of the participants are indicated by asterisks):

Guiding Value #1: RESPECT (page 70)

- * 1. Act with integrity
- * 2. Honest, direct communications
- 3. Listen before judging
- * 4. Treating others the way you would like to be treated
- * 5. Being courteous
- 6. Working with others to resolve conflicts
- 7. Assume good intentions

Guiding Value #2: RESULTS (page 71)

- * 1. Concerned about satisfied customers
- 2. Focus on bottom line
- * 3. Evaluate the outcomes and satisfaction
- 4. Solving problems
- * 5. Doing it right the first time
- * 6. & 8. combined: Achieving goals; measuring results
- 7. Completing work

Guiding Value #3: RESPONSIBILITY (page 72)

- * 1. Taking responsibility for behaviors and actions
- * 2. Being responsible for results and problems
- * 3. Hold others accountable – people you supervise
- 4. Be a role model for others
- 5. Completing job responsibilities
- * 6. Assuming ownership of problems with citizens (Mr. Sumek will clarify this language).

Guiding Value #4: RESOURCEFULNESS (page 73)

- * 1. Cost-conscious – looking for ways to save dollars
- 2. Plan work activities

- 3. Concerned about efficiency
- * 4. Looking for better ways to do the job – continuous improvement
- * 5. Willing to change
- * 6. Taking innovative action
- 7. Keeping costs in mind
- 8. Exploring ways to prevent problems
- 9. Allow for mistakes; learn for next time

Guiding Value #5: RELATIONSHIPS (page 74)

- * 1. Care about our customers
- * 2. Being a team player
- * 3. Listening to understand the message
- * 4. Willingness to help others
- * 5. Cooperative, positive attitude
- 6. Smiles while serving

Guiding Value #6: RESPONSIVENESS (Page 75 – only four listed)

- * 1. Timely response to calls
- * 2. Follow through on commitments
- * 3. Taking the initiative
- * 4. Placing citizens first

Mr. Sumek then asked the participants to indicate which of these six Values they strongly felt should reflect the City's corporate culture. The only Value which did not receive any votes was Resourcefulness.

Council Member Gulley proposed that even though the Resourcefulness value appeared weak, it should be retained. He said he felt the employees had a great deal to contribute to the process, but they're never heard. He stated the budget talks, for example, involved the Council, City Manager and Department Heads, but the people actually performing the jobs could provide valuable input, if given the opportunity. He said it was important for the Council to show consideration for the perspective of employees at all levels on significant issues.

Council Member Nichting asserted that some employees were not held to the same standard of accountability as others, which created problems and resentment. He agreed with Council Member Gulley that employees' suggestions were often not taken into consideration.

Community Summit

Mr. Sumek reminded the Council Members to provide Mayor Ransburg, as soon as possible, with a list of 5-7 individuals they wished to invite to the Community Summit to be held next month. He clarified this would be a one-time event lasting about three hours (probably 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.), and the hope was to involve a cross-section of the community, not just the established stakeholders.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded at 8:52 p.m.

Mary L. Haynes, MMC
City Clerk of Peoria, Illinois

By: _____
Deputy City Clerk