

**: OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS:****: OF THE CITY OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS :**

A Special Meeting of the City Council of Peoria, Illinois, was held on Wednesday, July 6, 2011, at 5:36 P.M., at the Peoria Public Library, Lower Level Conference Room, 107 N.E. Monroe, Peoria, Illinois, for the purpose of holding a City Council Retreat, with Mayor Jim Ardis presiding and with proper notice having been given.

**ROLL CALL**

Roll call showed the following Council Members physically present: Akesson (arrived at 5:50 P.M.), Gulley (arrived at 5:54 P.M.), Irving, Rigganbach, Spain, Spears, Turner, Weaver, Mayor Ardis – 9; Absent: Sandberg, Van Auker - 2.

Others present at the Special Meeting were: City Manager Patrick Ulrich, City Clerk Mary Haynes, Administrative Specialist III Angie Herrick from the City Clerk's office, Peoria Public Library Associate Director Roberta Koscielski, interested citizens, and members of the media.

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Ardis requested a moment of silent prayer or silent reflection, and then he led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PETITIONS, REMONSTRANCES & COMMUNICATIONS****(11-287) CITY COUNCIL RETREAT ON STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Mayor Ardis welcomed all of those in attendance.

City Manager Patrick Ulrich distributed two handouts: Strategic Plan 2011-2016-2026 and a Matrix of Action Steps with Problem Analysis of Each Strategy and Timelines for Completion.

Lyle Sumek, facilitator for the retreat, reviewed the intent of the evening's discussion. He noted the Council would be challenged to finalize its list of priorities under each of the five goals. He noted he and City Manager Ulrich had met with Staff earlier in the day to determine their priorities. He said the issues highlighted by Staff were circled on the handouts. He noted the goals determined at previous sessions were not being presented for additional debate; it was time to make decisions on policy actions and movement toward completion of these actions.

City Manager Ulrich reiterated he and Mr. Sumek had met with Staff earlier in the day and it was very productive, with approximately 95% of the work plan completed. He noted he would like to present the final plan to Council on July 26, 2011.

In discussion with Council Member Turner, City Manager Ulrich confirmed the restructure to take place in the near future would play a role in the implementation stage of the Plan.

Mr. Sumek noted he had pushed Staff hard to establish deliverable, real goals, with timeframes for completion.

City Manager Ulrich noted some of the actions may only require changes in policy and would involve little or no resources to achieve.

**GOAL 1 – SMART POPULATION GROWTH**

Mr. Sumek polled the Council and it was determined the following significant challenges were of a high priority under Goal 1: perceptions of School District 150 and poor quality of schools and

educational programs; irresponsible property owners and tenants who are not taking responsibility for their buildings, homes and properties; aging neighborhood infrastructure needing major maintenance and replacement; City's role in enforcement or compliance with the adopted codes; and lack of shared vision for future growth.

### **Landlord/Tenant Accountability Strategy**

Council Member Spears said he felt all property owners should be taxed at the proper level to make it fair for everyone. He expressed concern that constantly fining all landlords could be detrimental to landlords who owned individual properties, compared to larger apartment complexes. He noted rental properties subsidized by HUD were not being properly taxed. He gave the example of a one-bedroom unit making \$800 in rent per month, which should be properly assessed at \$80,000. He said these units should be listed appropriately, as they would be assessed when a realtor places the property on the market. He said he felt Staff needed to figure out a new way to fight the battle of accountability.

In discussion, Council Member Weaver questioned whether or not the tenant accountability and landlord accountability needed to be separate issues.

Council Member Spears said landlords who take care of their properties would more likely work to screen for and identify quality tenants. He said landlords who own run-down properties and were indifferent about the up-keep of these places were more likely to drive down prices and accept anyone into their locations.

Council Member Spain said he felt the two were interrelated. He noted the City did not currently track tenant violations; therefore, it was important to emphasize what could be done on the tenant side of the accountability issue.

Mayor Ardis questioned at what point the City was responsible to track tenant behavior and violations. He said he felt it was not the City's role to do so.

Mr. Sumek indicated he amended the landlord/tenant accountability action item to include the word "comprehensive."

City Manager Ulrich said it would be important to focus on landlords who are frequent violators first.

Council Member Spears suggested attaching a Special Assessment to troubled properties so that fees are placed on the property taxes.

City Manager Ulrich said this was something that could be approached as a Legislative issue.

Council Member Weaver noted the County Court records were not currently on-line. Mayor Ardis mentioned this could change with the new State's Attorney.

### **Code Enforcement Performance & Direction**

Council Member Irving expressed concern that codes were not followed to the letter, but he said he felt the Council was at a point where action was needed, not additional analysis of the problems.

Council Member Weaver noted most cities did not have as many inspection processes as the City of Peoria.

City Manager Ulrich said Illinois was one of the few states that did not have a State-wide building code; therefore, building requirements and enforcement issues were not the same in every City.

In discussion with Council Member Spears, City Manager Ulrich explained garbage collection was a concern for neighborhoods and the City as a whole. He said excessive litter becomes a public health issue and some violators have received numerous citations.

### **TIF for East Village Growth Cell**

City Manager Ulrich highlighted actions for the TIF for East Village Growth Cell: housing stock upgrade; Nursing School expansion; and Green Development.

Council Member Gulley said he felt it was important to expand the Growth Cell to include specific properties or unincorporated areas.

Council Member Akeson said she felt it was important to take advantage of the TIF within certain distance of the boundaries.

Council Member Riggerbach said he did not feel the boundaries needed to expand and the housing stock upgrade would be difficult until there was actual money in the fund.

### **Rail Link to Bloomington/Normal Advocacy**

Mayor Ardis said he had spoken with Transportation Director Ray LaHood regarding the Amtrak Feasibility Study that was requested two years ago. He said the results of this study were due to come in at any time. He said the timing appeared to be good regarding the transportation link between Peoria and Bloomington, with support coming from every direction.

### **School Strategy & Action Plan**

City Manager Ulrich said he had been meeting with Dr. Grenita Lathan to continue dialogue regarding improvement of the School District. He said he had organized a Joint City Council and District #150 School Board Meeting on August 8, 2011.

Council Member Gulley questioned whether or not his idea regarding the shift of CDBG funds for programming with District #150 was still being considered. He said he remembered discussion regarding the Council developing a strategy to influence the School District to help change the perception being generated there. He said he wanted to make sure the idea did not get lost.

In discussion with Council Member Weaver, City Manager Ulrich confirmed once the Plan was finalized and approved, it would be rolled out and communicated to the organization to explain how action steps meet objectives to accomplish goals. He said there would be a regular reporting vehicle to communicate the City's vision to the community and all stakeholders.

Council Member Spears mentioned the Council Communication format that was currently used to track goals.

### **Crime Reduction Strategy**

City Manager Ulrich noted, regarding Crime Reduction Strategy, Police Chief Settingsgaard was looking at utilizing and/or redirecting policing strategies.

**Sidewalk Policy and Program Direction**

City Manager Ulrich also noted the Sidewalk Policy/Program was under review and an assessment of current conditions of seal-coated surfaces should be completed by December 2011.

Council Member Irving requested additional information regarding how the seal-coating program related to alleys, specifically.

**Pioneer Parkway Phase I Study and Advocacy for Funding**

Council Member Weaver said he felt the Pioneer Parkway project should be viewed in two different ways: current Phase and future extension.

Council Member Irving expressed concern that the established timeframe and the funding level was not realistic for completion.

**Community Engagement on Appropriate Behavior**

City Manager Ulrich noted community dialogue on this issue was very important, especially in light of recent events in the City. He said an action outline needed to be developed for this topic.

Council Member Spain said the Council might want to review the parental responsibility discussion that had taken place a few years ago as a starting point. He noted the parental responsibility discussion placed the enforcement back on the parents to follow through.

Council Member Weaver noted District #150 was doing a "Parents University."

**Eagle View Plan: Clark Street Repaving/Funding**

Council Member Gulley said he felt it was important to include this item in the action plan. He said he wanted to see a Special Service Area added, with roads being fixed. He said Clark Street was so heavily utilized it was important to complete this upgrade.

**Growth Cell Analysis Report**

City Manager Ulrich noted the Growth Cell Final Analysis Report would come forward in July for the Council to review.

**GOAL 2 – FINANCIALLY SOUND CITY GOVERNMENT**

Mr. Sumek polled the Council and determined the following significant challenges were of a high priority under Goal 2: labor contracts and employee expectations; pensions and the long term costs (controlled by the State), health insurance, workers compensation and the long term employee costs; potential for service collaboration with other governments and the private sector; aligning services with the available resources; and uncertain revenue sources particularly sales tax revenues (this item originally had "from Internet sales" attached, but the consensus of the Council was to remove it).

Council Member Spears said he felt a good goal for the City to set would be to become 80% of the County's sales tax base, which would be a 20% increase from the current level. He said this goal could have a deadline of five years and it would be one that's progress could be easily measured.

In discussion with Council Member Gulley, City Manager Ulrich said the best way to increase the City's tax base was to bring in new commercial developments.

Mayor Ardis said he felt it was a worthy goal. He suggested establishing a matrix to measure the progress of this goal, which could also help the City to make decisions on economic development initiatives.

Council Member Akeson expressed concern regarding the promotion of "big box stores" coming into Peoria. She said with these stores come lower paying, entry level positions. She said the City's wealth could not grow unless businesses with good jobs and decent starting wages were encouraged to establish within the City.

Mayor Ardis noted the Council needed to identify how to reach the goal within the parameters set by the City Council.

Council Member Akeson expressed concern regarding relying solely on sales tax for revenue.

Council Member Weaver said he felt an 80% goal was not realistic in the timeframe of five years. He also questioned how to address the City's reliance on sales tax for revenue.

Council Member Spain said he felt the City Manager should come back with a recommendation at another time for Council. He said he felt this was an issue that could not be resolved at this meeting.

Council Member Spears noted a strategy also needed to be developed for handling the "big box stores," especially if or when they ended up vacant.

City Manager Ulrich suggested increasing the commercial tax share within the region by 10% in the next five years and increasing per capita income.

Council Member Spears remarked that free parking across the river is an issue and the City should consider the impact of parking meters.

#### **Shared Services with Peoria County (Short Term)**

In discussion with Council Member Irving, City Manager Ulrich confirmed there was no need for a public referendum to institute any shared services concept. He said an agreement between the two parties was the only requirement.

#### **Early Retirement Program: Direction**

City Manager Ulrich noted he had made a request of IMRF to analyze the cost of offering an early retirement incentive to its members.

#### **Shared Services with Peoria County (Long Term)**

City Manager Ulrich said the Peoria County Sheriff and the City of Peoria Police Chief were currently working to identify duplicative services.

#### **Employee Compensation & Benefit Policy: Direction**

City Manager Ulrich said a strategy needed to be developed for this action. He said, currently, there was no incentive for an employee to leave a Union position to go to a Management position.

**Healthcare Cost Containment Strategy**

City Manager Ulrich noted he had made a request of the Joint Labor and Management Healthcare Committee to find \$2 million in savings in this area.

**Sale of City Services to other Jurisdictions: Direction**

Council Member Gulley questioned whether or not the City's new mentality should be to be sure to hit a goal of full cost recovery for any service provided. He said he felt the City already assisted neighboring communities without compensation.

Council Member Spears requested information regarding the City's insurance coverage for providing these services.

**GOAL 3 – GROW BUSINESSES**

Mr. Sumek polled the Council and it was determined the following significant challenges were of a high priority under Goal 3: continuing medical and health science expansion; attracting new businesses to locate in the City; bureaucratic City policies, regulations and procedures impeding business attraction and growth-perception of the City of Peoria as business unfriendly; tapping the potential of the River and Peoria Airport for logistics and distribution; private sector access to the capital market; lack of City incentives and economic development tools; and lack of an agreed upon economic vision.

In discussion with Mayor Ardis and Council Member Akeson, City Manager Ulrich determined the Internet aspect of these actions came from identifying that many citizens did their shopping solely on the Internet. He said he would look into what the current market for this was and report back to Council.

**City Economic Development Framework**

City Manager Ulrich noted a matrix system needed to be added to this item.

**Business Forum/Business Assistance**

Council Member Weaver questioned the status of the Enterprise Zone and he asked what was needed at this time for it.

Council Member Spain said he felt there was a need to extend the timeframe as soon as possible, as it expired in less than two years.

**Sign Ordinance**

Council Member Spain noted the Staff was working diligently to come back with an Ordinance which met the needs of Council.

**Bradley University Strategy: Development**

Council Member Spain expressed concern regarding timing of possible expansion for Bradley into Main Street Corridor and those neighborhoods.

Council Member Akeson questioned how the City engaged Bradley, as well as other institutions regarding expansion of their boundaries. She said she felt it was important for these large institutions to respect the neighborhoods and set some limit on how far a business could expand into the boundaries of said neighborhoods.

Council Member Spain concurred that the impact on neighbors for the expansion of any institution was important to consider and these guidelines or expectations should be fine tuned in the process.

During discussion, it was determined an additional action would be added. This item was identified as balancing the impact of Institutional growth and the needs of neighborhoods.

Council Member Riegenbach said it would be important to keep in mind there would be different dynamics in different neighborhoods.

### **State University Strategy**

City Manager Ulrich noted Staff had determined this item should be moved over to the policy item category for 2011-2012. Council Members concurred.

### **Business Friendly Performance Audit and Actions**

City Manager Ulrich said this audit was underway and the results of it would be presented to Council in September 2011.

Council Member Spain said this tool could be utilized to gauge the City against other regional economies.

Council Member Spears said he felt it was important for businesses to change their attitudes and begin to take pride in the City, by taking pride in their businesses. He noted businesses in other communities swept sidewalks, cleared snow, etc.

In discussion with Council Member Gulley, City Manager Ulrich confirmed a business audit had previously taken place. He said this one may only serve to validate what was discovered with the first. He said a big difference with this audit would be taking into consideration the looming budget deficit.

Mayor Ardis reported there had been no execution or follow-through with the previous business audit.

Discussion was held regarding looking at new ways to do business and Council Member Spears noted, regarding revamping the Inspections process, the Council could conclude the best way to handle building inspections was to hire a company to do the inspections and issue a certificate, rather than rely on the City's resources to do so.

### **GOAL 4 – RESPONSIVE, EFFICIENT CITY ORGANIZATION**

Mr. Sumek polled the Council and determined the following significant challenges were of a high priority under Goal 4: changing the current organization service and operational practices; aligning the City organization focusing core services and values and prioritizing and eliminating some City services (challenges 3 and 4 were combined into one, as the Council determined the two were interrelated); developing a City team from Mayor and City Council to employees based upon mutual trust and respect; City reorganization and service consolidation; benchmarking the services and the performance of the City organization; powerful unions with pro union contracts; and managing citizen expectations on service response and service requests.

### **Residential Police Officer Program**

Council Member Spain expressed his desire to keep this item in place under policy actions for 2011-2012. He said this program could benefit individual neighborhoods and the City as a whole. He noted grants could be written to fund this program. Council agreed to leave the program in place.

**Performance Evaluation and Pay for Performance System**

Council Member Irving said he felt it was important for Staff to be aware that base pay could also be affected if an employee performance was evaluated as poor, as a salary could actually decrease.

Council Member Spain noted it was also important to look to the Unions to identify any contractual issues which could be affected by this kind of program.

**GOAL 5 – LIVELY DOWNTOWN/WAREHOUSE DISTRICT**

Mr. Sumek polled the Council and determined the following significant challenges were of a high priority under Goal 5: attracting private investments to the area; role of the City of Peoria in public-private partnerships; linking the Downtown with the medical expansion and Warehouse District; more quality hotel rooms for business travelers and visitors who desire to stay; and funding for infrastructure upgrades.

Council Member Akeson said she felt a major action item that should be added to this goal was a roadway design for the downtown. She added there needed to be tighter development design standards for this area.

Council Member Spears expressed concern for the lack of year-round activities being held on the Riverfront. He said he felt there needed to be an increase in utilization of the Riverfront throughout the year in order to fully capture money from the area.

**SETTING THE POLICY AGENDA**

Mr. Sumek polled the Council and it was determined that the following targets for action were the top priority: Code Enforcement performance and direction; School strategy and action plan; shared services with Peoria County (short term); City services priority and plan; City Economic Development framework; and hotel development project.

Mr. Sumek polled the Council a second time to determine the following targets for action were the next highest priorities: landlord and tenant accountability strategy; rail link to Bloomington/Normal advocacy; Early Retirement program and direction; financial policies update; business forum/business assistance; Bradley University strategy development; State University strategy development; and Residential Police Officer program.

**SETTING THE MANAGEMENT AGENDA**

Mr. Sumek polled the Council and it was determined that the following targets for action were the top priority: neighborhood crime reduction strategy and plan; community engagement on appropriate behavior; Community Investment Plan for capital and equipment; Fee for Service Study and direction; and City Structure Reorganization completion.

Mr. Sumek polled the Council a second time to determine the following targets for action were the next highest priorities: Business Friendly Performance Audit and actions; enhanced Customer Service Plan development; Succession Planning and Leadership Development direction; and Downtown Parking Master Plan development.

**MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OPERATING PROTOCOLS**

City Manager Urich distributed a list of Mayor and City Council Governance Protocols for review by the Council. He said any recommendations for modification of the list could be made at this time. He noted his number one policy was to have “no surprises.” He said he liked to be kept informed of what was going on within the organization.

In discussion with Council Member Spears, City Manager Urich clarified requests for simple information referred to data that was readily available or required yes or no answers. He said he had no problem with Council Members approaching Department Heads directly for this type of information.



City Manager Ulrich said topics requiring extensive research should be directed to him first, especially if the item required more than two hours of Staff time. He requested the final report of information be copied to the Mayor and all Council Members.

City Manager Ulrich said citizen complaints may be directed to the Department Heads initially. He said unresolved citizen complaints needed to be directed to him. He said the Peoria Cares line was able to log all complaints, including information regarding tracking and resolution to the issues brought forward.

Council Member Gulley expressed concern regarding duplication of collecting complaint information between the Peoria Cares line and Code Enforcement system, and the need to ensure efforts weren't being duplicated in this area.

Council Members Spears and Spain both indicated they frequently call the Peoria Cares line to log citizen complaints and request follow ups of those complaints.

City Manager Ulrich requested Council contact him directly regarding employee performance-related problems. He said that information would be handled in the strictest of confidence.

City Manager Ulrich requested all Council Agenda items be brought directly to him or, if working with a Department Head on a project, the Department Head from which the item originated.

Council Member Gulley expressed concern regarding the manner in which certain Council Members addressed Staff during Council Meetings. He said he felt it was inappropriate to belittle and attempt to embarrass Staff.

Mayor Ardis noted this issue was already in place as part of the current City Council rules. He said he felt it was not abused often.

Council Member Gulley said he felt it needed to be added as Protocol 8, just to emphasize the importance of being respectful on the Council floor.

Mr. Sumek said all of the decisions made at the evening's retreat would be compiled and studied, with the final product being delivered to the Council so that implementation could begin.

Mayor Ardis thanked Mr. Sumek for leading the discussion. He also thanked the Council Members and the City Clerk and her staff for their attendance.

#### **CITIZENS' OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL/TOWN BOARD**

It was determined there were no citizens who wished to address the City Council/Town Board.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

It was determined an Executive Session was not needed.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Council Member Riggensbach moved to adjourn the Special City Council Meeting; seconded by Council Member Akeson.

Approved by viva voce vote.

The Special City Council Meeting adjourned at 9:26 P.M.

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