

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL RETREAT  
CITY OF COLLEGE STATION  
JANUARY 28, 2013

STATE OF TEXAS           §  
  §  
COUNTY OF BRAZOS       §

**Present:**

Nancy Berry

**Council:**

Blanche Brick  
Jess Fields, arrived after roll call  
Karl Mooney  
John Nichols  
Julie Schultz  
James Benham

**City Staff:**

Frank Simpson, Interim City Manager  
Kathy Merrill, Deputy City Manager  
Carla Robinson, City Attorney  
Sherry Mashburn, City Secretary

**1. Call to Order and Announce a Quorum is Present**

With a quorum present, the Retreat of the College Station City Council was called to order by Mayor Nancy Berry at 8:35 a.m. on Monday, January 28, 2013 in the College Station Utilities Training Facility, 1603 Graham Road, College Station, Texas 77842.

**2. Presentation and overview of the Retreat Agenda.**

Bob Cowell, Executive Director of Planning and Development Services, presented a brief overview of what he hoped to accomplish today and provided a binder of information to the Council.

**3. Presentation, possible action, and discussion regarding the 2013 update of the City Council's Strategic Plan.**

Bob Cowell, Executive Director of Planning and Development Services, began by presenting the FY2012-2013 Strategic Planning and Budget Process calendar, which begins in January. The Council will participate in a mid-year review of the Strategic Plan sometime in July before

budget presentations and public hearings. He defined Strategic Plan as “a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it.” Strategic plans involve the development of a long-term vision, clarification of the City’s mission and values, analysis of challenges/opportunities and strengths/weaknesses, development of goals and strategies to achieve the desired goals, and an action plan for the projects/initiatives that will implement the strategies. The vision and mission is usually viewed as belonging to the community; the goals are the result of a partnership between the Council and the citizens; strategies are jointly developed by Council and staff; and actions are developed and implemented by staff. A graphic illustration of the decision-making model was provided.

Mr. Cowell addressed the projected population growth which will bring with it new challenges and opportunities, related to ETJ, annexation, reporting guidelines for Council, etc. He noted that housing starts are showing a positive trend. There is also data on economic indicators: sales tax continues to increase; and value of new development continues to re-stabilize. Service calls have increased in both Police and Fire. The binder also provides information about the City’s indebtedness and fiscal/economic conditions and trends. These conditions and trends include a modest property tax value increase, recovering but vulnerable development activities, modest sales tax revenue increases, and the increasing demand for services with decreasing revenues.

Strategic Plan achievements since the last Strategic Plan update include budget reductions, low tax rate, reduction in ROI transfers, increased fiscal transparency, increased citizen communication, secured/maintained program accreditations, increased utility services, completed/updated master neighborhood plans, increased assessment/rehabilitation of neighborhood infrastructures, bio-corridor/medical district efforts underway, moved City-owned property to market, completed/initiated street projects and parks/mobility projects, and provided new fire and police resources and facilities.

An overview of some of the major considerations was presented, including political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal issues. In the SWOT analysis, some of the strengths that exist within the organization include strong customer service, commitment to citizens, etc. Weaknesses include limited engagement of the “middle” of the electorate and a limited diversity in the local economy. The City has several opportunities, such as the bio-corridor and medical district, and threats can be found with the stagnation in economic recovery or decline and the inability to maintain/rehabilitate existing facilities and infrastructure. Major considerations include the vulnerability of economic recovery, impacts of budget reductions and service cuts, stagnating revenue sources, etc.

A graph derived from the community survey highlighting what the citizens felt about service prioritization was presented. Areas of high importance, and to maintain funding, are to continue with public safety, managing trash and recycling, providing pathways, and maintaining the appearance of parks, landscapes and facilities. Areas of high importance, and may require additional dollars, include maintain streets/roads, attracting businesses and jobs, managing traffic congestion, enforcing traffic laws, programs to retain/support existing businesses, managing storm water drainage, and code enforcement services. The top three priorities are 1) public safety; 2) balanced budget, managed growth, sustainability, maintain infrastructure/core services,

maintain small town/family friendly city, quality growth and development; and 3) job creation, attracting new/retain existing. Quality of life, quality of City services, the direction the City is headed, and the value received for tax dollars was value rated three to four stars on each.

The 2012 initiatives or focus areas were: 1) financially sustainable City; 2) core services and infrastructure; 3) neighborhood integrity; 4) diverse growing economy; 5) improving mobility; and sustainable City. The Council participated in an exercise to determine if the Council agrees if these are the big areas the Council and staff need to focus on. Questions they were to answer were:

- Are the six strategic initiatives valid?
- Are the initiative goals still relevant?
- How would *you* define success for each initiative/goal?
- How does the *Council* define success for each initiative/goal?

Mr. Cowell noted that Vision is aspirational/generational; Goals are future oriented/aspirational; Strategy is action-oriented/broad; Action is action-oriented/very specific; and Performance Measures are progress/accountability. Council was asked if they had any items that did not fit into the one of the six initiatives. Councilmember Fields stated a City should be well-managed and responsible. The sustainable could be combined with the financial. Mayor Berry said this might best fall under the mission statement. Mr. Cowell said we could either add an initiative or add an element of that piece to each of the strategies. Under Financially Sustainable City, Councilmember Nichols noted the lack what is included in "current obligations/demands". Councilmember Benham recommended "fully fund all future obligations". Councilmember Brick recommended removing the word, "current", and received Council consensus. Under Neighborhood Integrity, Councilmembers Brick and Benham want to add the word, "safe". Under Core Services and Infrastructure, Mayor Berry asked to remove the agency names in the strategies. Councilmember Benham asked for a strategy to allow private industry to deliver high quality broadband technology for a Diverse Growing Economy. He recommended changing the fourth bullet to state "Expand diversification efforts into non-consumer oriented economy." It was also recommended to change bullet three to state "Support diversification of local economy – tourism, regional athletic events, regional medical center, etc – and non-consumer oriented economy." "Medical District" was added to bullet two. Under Improving Mobility, bullet two was recommended to be changed to read "Ensure streets have features that promote walkability and safety." Councilmember Fields asked for a strategy related to City outreach to neighborhoods, neighborhood organizations and HOA's under Neighborhood Integrity. Under Sustainable City, Councilmember Benham asked for an additional strategy related to recycling.

Mr. Cowell briefly addressed what we are currently doing as a City to achieve our goals.

#### **4. Presentation, possible action, and discussion regarding the timing of appointments to City Boards and Commissions.**

Sherry Mashburn, City Secretary, asked for direction related to the timing of appointments to City Boards and Commissions. She noted that the ordinance creating P&Z states that Council will make appointments to the P&Z at the second regular Council meeting after the election. She

reported that staff cannot remember ever appointing so soon after election. It is her recommendation to continue with our practice of making appointments a couple of months after the election and amending the P&Z ordinance to reflect that change. With Council's approval, she would like to move the appointments to January, with those that would be appointed this summer holding over.

Council consensus was to move the appointment process to January, to have current appointees hold over, and to amend the P&Z ordinance, if necessary.

**5. Presentation, possible action, and discussion regarding the development of the Lick Creek Park Nature Center.**

Chuck Gilman, Director of Capital Projects, provided background on the 2008 Bond Authorization for this project. Different scenarios were shared: Scenario A is a full-service facility; Scenario B is a self-serve concept; and Scenario C is a hybrid of A and B. In 2012 the Advisory Committee voted unanimously to proceed with Scenario C. At the September 13, 2012 Council meeting, consensus was to develop a scenario combining B and C. This was taken to the consultant who provided two alternative concepts. We are comfortable that we could get a LEED certified (silver) facility. We have been focused on the main building, but have begun working with the consultant on site amenities such as rainwater harvesting, an amphitheater, etc. Each alternative allows for 1.5 full-time employees. The construction cost for Alternative 1 is \$1.8 million, and Alternative 2 is at \$2 million. O&M for both alternatives is \$160,000 annually. An extensive list of possible programs was provided.

Council consensus was to proceed with Alternative 1.

**6. Presentation, possible action, and discussion on options for the future of the Conference Center facility and operations.**

David Schmitz, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided a brief history of the Conference Center and how it was being utilized. Options for the future include: no longer continue conference center operations; renovate the existing facility and continue operations; sell the facility and build a new facility; modify an unoccupied building; or include additional meeting, programming and rental space at both the Lincoln Center Expansion and the Library Expansion CIP projects. Staff recommends taking advantage of the two CIP projects to add meeting, programming and rental space.

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Councilmember Fields and a second by Councilmember Benham, the City Council voted seven (7) for and none (0) opposed, to direct staff to sell the Conference Center on George Bush Drive. The motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** Upon a motion made by Councilmember Mooney and a second by Councilmember Nichols, the City Council voted seven (7) for and none (0) opposed, to direct staff to explore the possibility of taking advantage of the two CIP projects to add meeting, programming and rental space. The motion carried unanimously.

**7. Presentation, recap and discussion regarding next steps.**

Bob Cowell, Executive Director of Planning and Development Services, provided a brief recap of the day and the schedule for Tuesday's meeting.

**8. Executive Session**

In accordance with the Texas Government Code §551.072-Real Estate, the College Station City Council convened into Executive Session at 3:37 p.m. on Monday, January 28, 2013 in order to continue discussing matters pertaining to:

- A. Deliberation regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property; to wit:
- Property located generally near the intersection of George Bush Drive and Holik Street in College Station

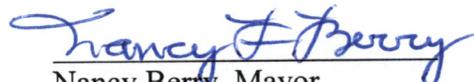
The Executive Session adjourned at 3:54 p.m. on Monday, January 28, 2013.

**9. Take action, if any, on Executive Session.**

No action was required from Executive Session.

**10. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** There being no further business, Mayor Berry adjourned the Retreat of the College Station City Council at 3:56 p.m. on Monday, January 28, 2013.

  
Nancy Berry, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Sherry Mashburn, City Secretary