

## **MINUTES OF COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION**

### **DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS**

**AUGUST 18, 2007**

Consultant Lyle Sumek, Lyle Sumek Associates, Inc. welcomed those present to the strategic planning session at 7:30 a.m. at the Public Works Facility, 5101 Walnut Avenue.

**Present:** Mayor Ron Sandack; Commissioners Marilyn Schnell, Martin Tully, William Waldack, Sean P. Durkin, Geoff Neustadt, Bruce E. Beckman

**Staff:** Village Manager Cara Pavlicek; Deputy Village Manager Dave Fieldman; Assistant Village Manager Mike Baker; Director of Communications Doug Kozlowski; Village Clerk April Holden; Management Analyst Megan Bourke; Information Services Director Liangfu Wu; Director of Counseling and Social Services Andy Matejcak; Interim Public Works Director Robin Weaver; Director of Community Development Tom Dabareiner; Director of Human Resources Wesley Morgan; Police Chief Robert Porter; Fire Chief Phil Ruscetti; Management Analyst Brandon Dieter; Community Events Director Mary Scalzetti

**Consultant:** Lyle Sumek, Lyle Sumek Associates, Inc.

**Residents:** John Schofield, Mark Thoman, Andy Clark, Tim Meaney

Mr. Sumek outlined the agenda for the session. Topics include “Vision 2022,” “Plan 2007-2012,” “Downers Grove Mission/Service Businesses,” “Core Beliefs,” and “Execution – Action Agenda 2007.”

Mr. Sumek urged Council members to figure out what they want to do, not how to do it. Do not assume that all issues being reviewed are done. The plan is a guiding document.

The Council revised the Vision 2022 as follows:

#### **Vision 2022 – Guiding Principles**

##### **Principle A: Beautiful Village**

1. Attractive gateways and entrances and corridors. Make the land around train tracks look better.
2. Tree canopied streets.
3. Beautiful streetscapes, green and colorful spaces and landscapes that define Downers Grove.
4. Attractive commercial developments that are well built and well maintained, including existing structures.
5. Attractive residential developments that are well built and well maintained, including existing structures.
6. Attractive well-built modern municipal buildings and facilities and public spaces.

#### Principle B: Unique Neighborhoods

1. Each neighborhood having a defined character, sense of place and identity.
2. Diverse quality housing stock with distinctive architecture.
3. Top quality infrastructure tailored to each neighborhood.
4. Neighbors knowing and helping neighbors.
5. Neighbors taking personal pride in their neighborhood.
6. Sense of community uniting neighborhoods.

#### Principle C: Authentic Downtown

1. Vibrant community focal point for bringing residents and guests together.
2. Attractive, distinctive buildings.
3. Unique mix of local and national retail shops and services
4. Exciting destination for dining, arts and entertainment both indoor and outdoor.
5. Pedestrian friendly and walkable.
6. Respect for and celebration of Downers Grove's history and heritage.
7. Great public spaces for residents and community gatherings.

#### Principle D: Technology Community

1. Reputation as a "Technology Community."
2. State-of-the-art technology access for businesses and residents.
3. Technology-related businesses locating and staying in Downers Grove.
4. Wireless access throughout the Village.
5. Effective, efficient delivery of Village services through user friendly technology and facilities.

#### Principle E: Hometown Feeling

1. Respecting and promoting Downers Grove's history and heritage.
2. Strong community events bringing residents and generations together.
3. Residents and businesses taking pride in and contributing to the community.
4. Active lifestyle with residents out enjoying and having fun in the community.
5. Active community and service organizations.
6. Village-Park District-Schools partnering for a better Downers Grove community.
7. Readily recognized professional municipal brand and image.

#### Principle F: Convenient Access to Chicagoland Region

1. Quality, well maintained streets with efficient, safe traffic flow.
2. Three rail stations providing public transportation to the "Chicagoland region."
3. Bike and pedestrian connectivity with the community and between neighborhoods.
4. Downers Grove – a commuter friendly community.
5. Easy access to Interstate System.
6. Residents' and employees' access to transportation services.

## Principle G: Great Place for Families to Live

1. Safe and secure feeling for all family members.
2. Choices of activities and events for families.
3. Access to excellent medical and healthcare services.
4. Convenient access to parks and recreational programs.
5. Top quality schools with after school activities.
6. Connectivity for strollers, pedestrians and bikes.

## Principle H: Businesses to Thrive

1. Corporate identity: Downers Grove – the home to major corporations.
2. Unique, quality restaurants serving residents and corporations.
3. Quality, successful hotels for business travelers and guests.
4. Stable tax rate and diversified tax base.
5. Responsive Village government services to support businesses.
6. Public/private partnerships to support business.
7. A variety of available commercial spaces – size, cost, location.

## Goals 2012

Council revised the 2012 goals as follows:

- 1) Top Quality Village Infrastructure and Facilities
  - a) Objectives
    - i) Improve delivery of emergency services
    - ii) Improve neighborhood infrastructure – curbs, gutters, streets and sidewalks and improve stormwater and drainage system
    - iii) Replace Village facilities: Operating efficiently, promoting productivity and supporting effective customer friendly services
    - iv) Complete major capital projects on time, within budget
    - v) Upgrade water system
  - b) Short-Term Challenges
    - i) Funding for projects and uncertain costs of projects
    - ii) Aging infrastructure and deteriorating quality with increasing maintenance costs
    - iii) Creating new infrastructure vs. maintaining and upgrading infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks)
    - iv) Residents' expectations and understanding
    - v) Stormwater: Amount and dominating scope of project
  - c) Major Projects
    - i) Fire Station 2 (open in 7/08)
    - ii) Maple Avenue Water main project
    - iii) Sidewalk matrix projects (27)
    - iv) Brick Streets – three projects

- d) Top Actions for 2008
  - i) Watershed Improvement Plan: Development and funding
  - ii) CIP: Comprehensive review and revision
  - iii) Village Civic Center Facility: Policy direction, action and funding
  - iv) Belmont Underpass: Property Acquisition, zoning action with plan
  - v) Prairie Avenue reconstruction project: Land acquisition design and bid
  - vi) Gateway/Entrance sign: Design, funding and installation
  - vii) Parkway tree replacement program: Developmental funding
  - viii) Development of comprehensive, integrated, intermodal transportation system
- 2) Preservation of Our Residential and Neighborhood Character
  - a) Objectives
    - i) Tolerance of neighborhood private redevelopment
    - ii) Continue reinvestment in the neighborhoods
    - iii) Safe and secure neighborhoods
    - iv) More pedestrian friendly and connected neighborhoods
    - v) Homes and rental units up to code
    - vi) Preservation of neighborhood, including urban forest and brick streets
    - vii) Maintain appropriate percentage of homeownership
  - b) Short-Term Challenges
    - i) Implementing stormwater/watershed improvements in neighborhoods
    - ii) Personal property rights and community benefit
    - iii) Aging neighborhood infrastructure and service capacity
    - iv) Sidewalk matrix conflicting with neighborhood design characteristics
    - v) Traffic impacts on neighborhoods and urban connectivity
  - c) Major Projects
    - i) Historic Preservation Ordinance implementation
  - d) Top Actions for 2008
    - i) Sidewalk policy direction in light of watershed improvement plan
    - ii) Zoning Code: Major review
    - iii) Urban forest program: Funding for maintenance
    - iv) Affordable housing report (from Ad Hoc Task Force)
    - v) Comprehensive Plan: Development
    - vi) Neighborhood infrastructure plan
- 3) Exceptional Municipal Organization
  - a) Objectives
    - i) High performing directors, supervisors and employees responsible and accountable for the task, work products and goal achievement
    - ii) Top quality core services responsive to current and future community and citizen needs
    - iii) Financially sound and sustainable Village government
    - iv) Village government trusted and respected by residents
    - v) Village organization aligned with the vision, mission and core beliefs
    - vi) Be “green” mindful in the Village operations
  - b) Short-Term Challenges

- i) Front-line employees buy-in: Active participation in strategic planning
    - ii) Effective communications: Department to department
    - iii) Personal accountability for actions and decisions: Larger departments with bargaining units
    - iv) Varying level of customer services
    - v) More positive work environment and teamwork – keeping the momentum
  - c) Major Projects
    - i) PRIDE implementation
    - ii) Performance management training program: Development
    - iii) Revised budget format with projections
    - iv) OnBase document management system
    - v) Labor negotiations and contract – FOP and Local 150: Operating Engineers
    - vi) Police re-accreditation: Preparation
  - d) Top Actions for 2008
    - i) Council policies and ethical standards: Adoption
    - ii) Purchasing policy: Review and update
    - iii) Financial plan (5 year) and policies: Development
    - iv) Customer service evaluation and enhancement
    - v) Branding and master marketing plan: Development
    - vi) Boards and Commissions: Training program: Development
- 4) Authentic Downtown – the Heart of our Community
- a) Objectives
    - i) Have a high performing downtown association with accountability
    - ii) Increase occupied retail commercial business space
    - iii) Develop effective outdoor public spaces
    - iv) Village government trusted and respected by residents
    - v) More people attracted to downtown – destination for residents and nonresidents
    - vi) Increase service businesses and retail stores, grocery stores, hardware stores
    - vii) Easy access to and parking in downtown
  - b) Short-Term Challenges
    - i) Traffic and railroads
    - ii) Defining and attracting the “right retail” businesses for downtown
    - iii) Competition with other towns
    - iv) Physical limitations – location, space, boundaries
  - c) Top Actions for 2008
    - i) Downtown master plan and vision: Review (including height, density, parking, etc.)
    - ii) Parking study and long-term plan
    - iii) Main-Maple redevelopment project and future direction
- 5) Vibrant Major Corridors
- a) Objectives
    - i) More attractive commercial developments
    - ii) More contribution to local economy
    - iii) Corridors having authentic and unique identity
    - iv) Attract nonresidents to Downers Grove

- v) Full service community for residents
- vi) Upgrade existing and aged commercial buildings
- vii) Easy access and traffic functionality
- b) Short-Term Challenges
  - i) Multiple and difficult property owners
  - ii) Competition with trade areas (other cities – Lombard, Woodridge, Bolingbrook, etc.)
  - iii) Aging and tired commercial areas
  - iv) Village and EDC: One strategy and action plan – EDC self-sufficiency
  - v) Lack of community support for economic development tools
- c) Top Actions for 2008
  - i) 75<sup>th</sup> corridor plan: Development and actions
  - ii) Butterfield corridor plan: Development and actions
  - iii) Business incentive: Policy direction and tool availability
  - iv) Ogden strategy: Review, update and implement actions
  - v) Gateway/Entrance sign program: Development and implementation
  - vi) Enforce red lights: Development and implementation
- 6) Strong, Diverse Local Economy (primary responsibility for this is with the Economic Development Corporation)

With respect to the execution of the 2007 policy agenda, the Council defined the following top and high priorities:

#### Top Priorities

Watershed improvement plan  
 Village Civic Center facility  
 Belmont underpass  
 Comprehensive plan development  
 Business incentive policy

#### High Priorities

Gateway/Entrance project  
 Parkway tree replacement program  
 Council policies and ethical standards  
 Downtown vision and master plan  
 Ogden Avenue strategy

With respect to the execution of the 2007 management agenda, the Council defined the following top and high priorities:

#### Top Priorities

CIP: Comprehensive plan  
Neighborhood infrastructure plan  
Purchasing policy  
Financial plan and policies  
75<sup>th</sup> corridor plan

#### High Priorities

Sidewalk direction  
Zoning code  
Customer service evaluation  
Boards & Commissions training  
Main & Maple redevelopment project  
Butterfield corridor

With respect to the Citizen Summit, it was noted that there were business people who attended the summit as residents. The Village has liaisons that meet with the EDC, Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown Management Board. It was important to hear from residents.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

April K. Holden  
Village Clerk