

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS

JUNE 5, 2010

Village Manager Dave Fieldman welcomed those present to the retreat at 7:05 a.m. in the first floor meeting room of Fire Station 2, 5420 Main Street.

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

Staff: Village Manager Dave Fieldman; Village Attorney Enza Petrarca; Village Clerk April Holden

Consultants: Larry Maholland and Megan Pierce, Sikich, LLP

Residents: Mark Thoman, Tom LeCren, Lynn Leo

Mr. Maholland outlined the purpose of the retreat: 1) Provide an opportunity to discuss matters that interfere with the effectiveness of Council decision-making; and 2) Develop and reinforce previously agreed upon foundational values that will provide for productive interactions among Council members. The goal is to improve decision-making, and review and revise the governance model. The agenda included reviewing the readings previously made available to Council and survey results of individual meetings, developing a shared picture, understanding the current reality, agreeing to a change strategy, and adjusting the code of conduct. He then reviewed the ground rules for the session.

The consultants led a discussion among the Council members about the 2010 budget process and what each Council member saw as the major issues, followed by a discussion centered on whether the budget process changed working relationships among Council members and what was learned from the public process.

Mr. Maholland then asked Council to think about the nuances of the process. He referenced readings and suggested changing vocabulary. How trust is defined, how politics impacts trust and the difference between trust and confidence was discussed. Values, including respectfully listening, active listening, taking responsibility and resolving issues, moving on and choosing to trust were examined.

Ms. Pierce asked the Council to think about and discuss their “Prouds” and “Sorries” as they relate to things Council members are proud the Village has done and things they are sorry the Village has done or not done.

The “Prouds” centered around matters including infrastructure, Fire Station 2, fiscal responsibility, staff, development, technology improvements and environmental issues. “Sorries” centered around budget and program cuts, property tax increases, deficit, delays in infrastructure, failure to maximize boards and commission members. This exercise was followed by a discussion of how “Prouds and Sorries” evolve.

Important issues identified were: Carry forward financial planning, keep good governance, pursue all infrastructure and implement more environmentally “green” initiatives.

The consultants addressed the matter of when personal beliefs become opposing views in the context of issues and the governing process. Issues included valid arguments, dissenting views, understanding others, opinions, trust, outcome, time management, etc.

Ms. Pierce asked Council members to discuss generational issues in terms of their greatest commonalities and most significant differences. This was followed by a review of the Code of Conduct. The existing Code of Conduct was distributed and reviewed. Council members agreed to eliminate and combine some of the items. The consultants will prepare a revised Code of Conduct for the Council’s review.

At the conclusion of the retreat, the consultants asked for feedback. Audience attendees noted that this was an excellent process and good exercises, they were disappointed that more residents did not show up, there are hurt feelings and grudges which is not productive individually or collectively. Council members said they would appreciate ideas from the consultants as to how the Council can improve and on interaction among Council members.

Mr. Maholland noted that from his experience, this is a good Council that has been successful, is doing and great job and is willing to talk about issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:13 a.m.

April K. Holden
Village Clerk