

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 3, 2010

Village Manager Dave Fieldman welcomed those present to the Strategic Planning session at 7:39 p.m. in the Committee Room.

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

Staff: Village Manager Dave Fieldman; Deputy Village Manager Mike Baker; Village Attorney Enza Petrarca; Public Works Director Nan Newlon; Information Technology Director Liangfu Wu; Management Intern Mary Van Milligen; Public Relations Specialist Janene Cerulli; Community Events Director Mary Scalzetti; Finance Director Judy Buttny; Community Development Director Tom Dabareiner; Police Chief Bob Porter; Fire Chief Jim Jackson; Human Resources Wes Morgan; Village Clerk April Holden

Consultants: Larry Maholland and Megan Pierce, Sikich, LLP

Mr. Maholland outlined the purpose of the session is to jointly discuss opportunities and challenges to reach consensus. He outlined the agenda to include a “then and now” activity, a strategic planning presentation, and a discussion regarding a mission statement.

For the first exercise, Mr. Maholland distributed a sheet entitled, “Why We Should Think Differently” in which a number of topics compared activity now to that of ten years ago. The topics were: Sales taxes; prevalent trends among neighboring municipalities; interest rate (30 year fixed rate mortgage); focus of infrastructure improvements; Village staff size; development; major corporate headquarters; trends in auto sales; unemployment rate; Village services; economic development; change in home values; recent economic phenomenon; new Apple device; and Stanley Cup champion. Staff and Council were each asked to identify one topic they felt was the most significant to the Village. Staff responses were: Sales tax (2); focus of infrastructure improvements (3); Village staff size (2); development (1); recent economic phenomenon (4). With respect to the Council, the most significant topics were: Commissioner Schnell and Mayor Sandack – sales taxes; Commissioner Durkin – trends in auto sales; Commissioners Waldack and Neustadt – Village services; Commissioner Beckman – recent economic phenomenon. Commissioner Barnett said he felt the most significant topic was utility tax trends, which did not appear on the list.

Mr. Maholland said that strategic planning is about thinking differently. There are five fundamental questions stakeholders want leaders to answer: 1) Why do we exist?; 2) What do we stand for?; 3) Where are we heading?; 4) How do we get there? and 5) How do we stay on the right path? Venues for information gathering are disappearing. Information once came through routine contact but there have been cultural and technological changes in the world. The strategic planning framework provides structure. Information sources provide current reality. He discussed core values as a foundation

important to staff while the mission is important to the Council. He provided a formula for change: D (dissatisfaction with the current state) $\times V$ (vision) $\times F$ (first steps) $> R$ (resistance to change). He spoke of the organizational capacity in terms of possibilities, desires and capacity to manage.

In terms of vision, Mr. Maholland said vision is an expression of the foreseeable future. It inspires, integrates, appeals to all stakeholders and is feasible. A mission statement defines why an organization exists. Values are what guide decision-making. Values underpin standards and procedures, employment and retention, organizational culture, behavior and interactions, and the external view of the organization.

Mr. Maholland clarified terms: A vision is a picture of where you are heading and is forward-looking five to ten years; a mission statement is statement of why we exist. In terms of the Village, the mission statement would be long term (100 years) and developed by the Council. Values include how you expect people to act and relate to staff.

Mr. Maholland then reviewed the current mission statement: "Our Village government provides exceptional municipal services that are valued by our Citizens and Businesses. We are fiscally responsible, have passion for our customers and have an eye on the future. We engage our citizens and partner with others to make Downers Grove a great community in which to live and to do business." Commissioner Durkin suggested using another word for "customer." Commissioner Waldack suggested replacing "customer" with "owner." Commissioner Schnell noted that a great deal of thought went into each word so as to not offend anyone. Commissioner Neustadt discussed the idea of community interactions. Commissioner Schnell said the sense of community is what makes Downers Grove special. Commissioner Beckman noted that successful mission statements are short and well-known. Commissioner Barnett suggested that not all of what is in the current statement needs to be directly stated.

At this point, the Council and staff were divided into five groups and asked to answer the following questions: 1) What are the basic social and political needs the Village exists to fulfill? 2) As stewards of the Downers Grove community, what are the unique traditions and physical attributes you most seek to preserve? 3) What do you want people to experience in their interactions with elected officials and staff? Each group's answers were posted on the walls and briefly reviewed.

With respect to the next steps, the consultants will develop a mission statement for review. The next session will be held immediately following the Council meeting on August 10, 2010.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

April K. Holden
Village Clerk