

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION

DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 10, 2010

Village Manager Dave Fieldman welcomed those present to the Strategic Planning session at 7:26 p.m. in the Committee Room. He explained that this is the third Strategic Planning session held this year. The first meeting was a Council retreat, followed by a session last week focusing on a mission statement. This session will focus on a vision statement and is an opportunity for Council members to bring forward action items.

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; Communications Director Doug Kozlowski; Community Events Director Mary Scalzetti; Finance Director Judy Buttny; Community Development Director Tom Dabareiner; Police Chief Bob Porter; Fire Chief Jim Jackson; Human Resources Director Wes Morgan; Village Clerk April Holden

Consultants: Larry Maholland and Megan Pierce, Sikich, LLP

Mr. Maholland said the agenda includes developing a community vision statement and evaluating information sources. He asked Council and staff to participate in a visioning activity that demonstrated the need for a vision. He then reviewed the current vision statement: “Downers Grove is a beautiful Village with unique neighborhoods and an authentic downtown. We are a technology community with hometown feeling and convenient access to the Chicagoland region. We are a great place for families to live and businesses to thrive.”

Following this, Mr. Maholland asked Council and staff to describe the Village to a prospective resident, including personal experiences one might highlight. He said to consider motivating factors for moving to or staying in a community, as well as perceived deterrents. Responses included transportation, community organization, diverse housing, an active community, a good business mix, sense of community, quality services, safe neighborhoods, traditional downtown, low taxes, planned infrastructure improvements, mature community, progressive Village Council, exceptional Village staff and proximity to healthcare facilities.

Mr. Maholland then asked Council to envision the Village designated as a “Top Ten City in Which to Live” seven years from now. He asked Council to describe the most significant changes that led to this designation.

Commissioner Schnell’s list included exceptional municipal services for all ages; green community with sustainable renewable energy sources with walking spaces; vision of capital improvements (stormwater

utility); completion of sidewalk matrix; roadway maintenance plan; improved tax base and diverse business community; new Civic Center and Police Department.

Commissioner Neustadt's list included a new Civic Center; renewable energy resulting in reduced Village expenses; well-maintained and constructed infrastructure; excellent municipal services with low/adequate property taxes; and increased businesses along Finley Road and other corridors.

Commissioner Durkin's list included long-tenured staff; well-maintained streets; well-maintained parkway trees; a vibrant commercial corridors; consolidated governmental services; big-box retail store.

Commissioner Waldack addressed residents treated as owners; very active geographical and virtual neighborhoods to direct government; and improved communication not reliant on web-based systems; more senior friendly.

Commissioner Beckman addressed establishing a strong green policy; developing alternative revenue sources; redevelopment of the Belmont corridor; providing EDC with the tools to develop underdeveloped parcels; continued development of the downtown; and a more holistic approach of services to all residents.

Commissioner Barnett said he would include a new Civic Center; renewed commitment to sidewalks; stormwater utility; a policy for regional traffic calming; a revenue policy with alternatives to property taxes; a no deficit budget; lean as a way of life in the Village; improved parkway trees; a short list of things the Village does exceptionally well.

Mayor Sandack's list included financial sustainability long-term; sustaining the infrastructure "core"; maintaining diverse economic engine responsive to conditions and flexible; a defined mission and true to the mission.

Commissioner Beckman shared a possible mission statement: To be the best community in the Chicagoland area in which to live and from which to do business; to become the paradigm of the most well-managed and forward thinking Village in the US.

Mr. Maholland summarized the ideas that would make up a vision statement: Infrastructure and facilities; financial sustainability; exceptional municipal services; diverse and strong local economy; fiscal stewardship/resiliency; well used public transportation; and Village policy for neighborhood traffic management. He said he and Ms. Pierce will develop draft vision and mission statements, and will meet with staff to discuss goals, action steps and performance measures. This will appear on the September 7 Council agenda.

Mr. Maholland then led a discussion of primary and secondary customers, including the way we communicate and ways to engage stakeholders as well as options for community input. A Village-wide survey has the potential to reach people who might otherwise not be heard from and is a way of judging services. Current information sources are Coffee with the Council, TCD3, Council meetings, visits to the Village Hall and face-to-face interactions. Suggested information sources include a Village-wide survey and an automated customer service survey. It was noted that customer feedback, youth and general

residents are groups not currently solicited for information.

Mr. Fieldman reiterated that the draft vision and mission statements are scheduled to appear on the September 7, 2010 Council agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

April K. Holden
Village Clerk