

## Saint Paul City Council

### **Organizational Committee Planning Session**

Thursday, January 5, 2017 2:00pm – 6:00/7:00pm

Friday, January 6, 2017 9:00am – 12:00pm

#### Location:

University of Minnesota Continuing Education and Conference Center  
1890 Buford Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108

### **Organizational Committee Planning Session Objectives:**

1. Identify individual and collective policy priorities for 2017.
2. Determine topics of the 2017 policy sessions.
3. Build stronger working relationships among Council members.

**Council Members:** Dan Bostrom, Amy Brendmoen, Rebecca Noecker, Jane Prince, Dai Thao, Chris Tolbert, and Russ Stark/Council President.

**Meeting Facilitation and Documentation:** Mariann Johnson, M.T. Johnson & Associates.

#### **Meeting Materials:**

- Two Day Agenda
- Day One Handouts:
  - *Debate, Discussion and Deliberative Dialogue*
  - *Facilitator's PowerPoint Presentation*
  - *Overview of City Council Authority*" (Provided by City Staff)
  - *Initial Draft: Suggested 2017 Policy Planning Priorities*
- Day Two Handouts:
  - *Day Two Revision: Suggested 2017 Policy Planning Priorities*
  - *New Suggested 2017 Policy Planning Priorities*

### **Review of the Meeting Objectives and Agenda**

Council members reviewed the meeting objectives and agenda, and discussed their expectations for the planning session. The facilitator stressed that the agenda's specific timeframes should be considered somewhat "fluid" – allowing time for important discussions to be held, while ensuring the meeting objectives are met.

### **Meeting Guidelines**

The facilitator reviewed and discussed a series of leading/best practices for meeting guidelines (See handout, "*Facilitator's PowerPoint*"), frequently used in the course of deliberative dialogues. She suggested participants use the guidelines for the two-day priority setting discussions.

The facilitator highlighted the last guideline, "Engage your emotional intelligence when self-defensiveness arises." She discussed the development of skills/steps necessary to deal with the natural defensiveness that often arises in the course of important public deliberations and decision-making.

She cited research on the correlation between a reduction in self-defensiveness and increased problem solving capabilities. (Sources: Radical Collaboration by Jim Tamm, and; Daniel Goleman, "Leadership that Gets Results"/Harvard Business Review and author of numerous books on emotional intelligence and leadership)

#### Steps to Deal with Defensiveness

- 1) Acknowledge self-defensiveness as a natural occurrence/part of the human condition. ("Self Awareness" component of emotional intelligence and leadership)
- 2) Slow down your stress physiology: take a few deep breaths, relax body/change your posture, take a drink of water, etc. ("Self Regulation" component of emotional intelligence and leadership)
- 3) Pay Attention to Self-Talk: negative, rumination, defeating, attacking, not helpful? Don't perpetuate negative self-talk. Acknowledge the difficulty and choose/replace negative self-talk with a principle-based perspective. ("Self Regulation")
- 4) Plan for Action – Take steps necessary to address *your* unique signs/patterns of defensiveness. (Be quiet for a few seconds, take a break/buy yourself some time to slow down your reactivity, choose not to go on the attack/blame, or to shut down, etc.) (Development of "Self Regulation" and "Social Skills" components of emotional intelligence and leadership)
- 5) Recover and begin again. Build resiliency and skills, over time.
- 6) PRACTICE the above in low risk situations, not when you are most defensive.

#### **Council Member Discussion Question:**

*What Motivated You to Run for Higher Office/to Serve as a Council Member for the City of St. Paul?*

#### Themes:

- Most did not set out to run for public office but were encouraged to do so by others.
- Desire to be a problem solver – for their constituents and the City of St. Paul.
- Commitment to public service – to give back.
- Wanted to work to improve the community and community engagement. Instill values of community activism.
- Helping others to help themselves. Empower citizens to be part of government- to become problem solvers.
- Desire to create a better, stronger city.

## **Review of the Saint Paul City Council Charter and Council Member Responsibilities**

(See handout, “Overview of City Council Authority”)

During the facilitator’s pre-meeting assessment interviews with the seven Council members, questions arose regarding the Council’s auditing role and responsibilities:

*“The Council makes performance auditing decisions and monitors the operation and performance of city agencies and holds regular oversight hearings on city departments to determine how programs are working and whether budgeted funds are being spent well.”*

### **Sec.4.08 – Independent Audit**

*“The Council shall provide for an annual independent audit of all city accounts and may provide for such additional audits as it deems necessary. Any audit of all city accounts made pursuant to law by the state public examiner and other state officer designated by law shall be deemed an independent audit.”*

### **Key Discussion Points:**

- Council members expressed a desire for more timely and consistent response to their requests for information from City staff.
- Clarity is needed regarding the Council’s role in auditing City department performance.
- Need a more formal structure, a better follow-up process, or a new project management tool to manage Council member requests and staff responses.
- Are we asking the right questions, so that we get the information we need?
- It is the Council’s role to provide for checks and balances with the Mayor’s Office.
- In the past, departmental performance audits were conducted in collaboration with the Mayor’s office.
- How can we streamline or better coordinate our requests for information?
- Audits, investigations, operational analysis and policy analysis are tools that can be employed to show progress, evidence of good stewardship of City resources and tax dollars.
- Audits can be very complex, time consuming and expensive. We would need to be very specific about what it is that we want to audit, and why.
- City staff should provide information within 2 weeks of a Council member’s request.

### **NEXT STEP/ACTION:**

- 1) Council members will schedule and hold monthly org committee meetings to address and review staff responses to Council member requests for information.
- 2) Clarify the City Council’s role in auditing the performance of the City’s departments.

### **Additional Council Member role issues identified during the pre-meeting assessment interviews:**

- Part time Council position vs. full time responsibilities. Tension between the amount of work that needs to be done and the constraints of a part time Council position.
- Limited staff positions/resources to support Councilmembers in executing their roles and responsibilities.
- How to more proactively set budget guidelines/influence the City’s budget?

- Balancing representing Wards vs. the City as a whole.
- Increased Council time is spent on directly assisting community members problem solve needs when interfacing with City agencies, etc.

**NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS:**

- 1) Hold budget committee meetings in the Council Chambers so deliberations are more transparent/accessible to the public.
- 2) Strategize how to obtain necessary additional staff and Council resources.

**Review and Discussion of the Assessment Findings and INITIAL Planning Priorities**

The facilitator reviewed summary findings of the assessment interviews held with each of the seven Council members. (See handout, “*Facilitator’s PowerPoint*”).

Specific assessment finding headings included:

- Council strengths and challenges
- Key operational items in need of change/improvement
- Composite of Council members’ guiding principles and
- DRAFT, INITIAL policy priorities for 2017.

**DRAFT and INITIAL Policy Priorities for 2017**, as identified in the assessment interviews and listed by frequency of response, most to least frequent response.

- 1) **Budget and City Financing**
- 2) **Opportunities for Youth and Young Adults**
- 3) **Economic Development**
- 4a) **Police and Community Relations**
- 4b) **Public Safety**
- 5) **Individual Priorities**

Please see handout, “*Initial Draft: Suggested 2017 Planning Priorities*” for a list of detailed items under each of the priority headings. Council members discussed additions to the list of priority topics and the bulleted items under each of the headings.

## **DAY TWO**

### **Council members reviewed four broad CRITERIA for further identification and refinement of the Council's 2017 policy planning priorities:**

- 1) Timely – Sense of Urgency (i.e., Budget)
- 2) Connected/interdependency with other important City Issues
- 3) Broad community Impact
- 4) If there is another group/process handling this topic already, then not a high priority for a special policy session. Existing groups/processes will be identified and the topic will be deferred to that group.

### **OPTIONS for Discussion and Deliberation of the Council's Policy Priorities**

- 1) Twelve Council Policy Sessions to be held between January – June/July 2017
- 2) 3:30 Meeting
- 3) HRA Meeting
- 4) Existing Structures (groups, processes) where the policy topic is already being explored by the Council

Based on yesterday's discussion, the facilitator provided updated Policy Planning handouts:

- 1) Day Two Revision: Suggested 2017 Policy Planning Priorities
- 2) New: Suggested 2017 Policy Planning Priorities

**NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS:** The remainder of the meeting will be spent selecting the policy priorities, and as time permits, identifying key objectives for each of the selected policy sessions. Council staff will be responsible for scheduling the policy session dates, following the meeting.

## **TWO OVERARCHING 2017 POLICY GOALS**

Council members reviewed the two new policy matrix handouts. After a thorough discussion, Council members identified two overarching goals for this year's policy deliberations.

### **Overarching 2017 Policy Goal: *Equity*** **(Poverty, Social, Racial, Aging and Gender Equity)**

#### **Objectives:**

- Keep equity in the forefront of our policy discussions. Work to understand the consequences of our decisions.
- Include aging population equity issues.
- Incorporate a discussion of equity in all our policy sessions; include as one of our fundamental policy questions.
- In addition, address this overarching goal through (1) the City's Annual Racial Equity Report and (2) creation of a new Legislative Advisory Committee on Poverty.
- Receive findings report from the Poverty Legislative Advisory Committee.

### **Overarching 2017 Policy Goal: *Enhanced Communication and Coordination with the County***

#### **Objectives:**

- Invite Ramsey County to City meetings for discussion of specific/topic related issues.
- Better utilization of joint Property Tax Meetings for this purpose.
- Further explore this topic at 2017 org committee meetings.

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## **2017 POLICY PRIORITIES**

Twelve City Council policy sessions are available between January and June/July 2017. Three are already scheduled: January 11<sup>th</sup>/Greater MSP, and February 8<sup>th</sup> and March 8<sup>th</sup>/Right of Way.

### **1a) Budget and Financing**

#### **Session Objectives:**

- 1) Assess what is affordable for the City and St. Paul Taxpayers. Consider what is realistic.
- 2) Discuss Budget Follow-up Reports on a regular basis.
- 3) Including aging and equity to the budget process; innovation and efficiency questions should be specific to cost-saving efforts?
- 4) Departments need to get budget materials well in advance (preferably Wednesday) before the next budget meeting.
- 5) Revise the Council's Budget Template to provide more meaningful information.

## **1b) Right of Way (ROW)**

1. PILOT – led by business leaders. Tie into Right of Way.
2. Include street assessment /reconstruction /financing.

## **2) Community Engagement (Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) Process)**

### Session Objectives:

- 1) Pick up from last presentation – Best Practices update.
- 2) What are City departments currently doing? Status Report: How are we engaging the community? Hear from our Community Engagement staff person.
- 3) Considerations:
  - Bridge builders between and among specific communities?
  - Staff Person? Separate Function? Council Role?
  - Indicators of Success for community engagement?
  - How do we - as City Council - engage the community?

### Notes:

- Hold a community forum/listening session and include as a policy session.
- See bulleted items listed in policy matrix handouts.

## **3) Economic Development (Port Authority, Planning and Economic Development, Greater MSP)**

### Session Objectives: TBD

### Notes:

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- See bulleted items listed in policy priorities handouts.

## **4) Transit & Pedestrian Safety - Regional**

### Session Objectives: TBD

### Notes:

- Requires two policy sessions.
- CTIP.
- Metro Transit: Big picture and local.
- See bulleted items listed in policy priorities handouts.

## **5) Community Relations and Public Safety**

### Session Objectives:

- 1) Hear challenges from the police.
- 2) Help police live in the community, become residents.
- 3) Discuss recruiting new officers/youth from the community.

### Notes:

- Hold this policy session later in the spring.
- Also see bulleted items listed in policy priorities handouts.

## 6) Opportunities for Youth and Young Adults

Session Objectives: TBD

Notes:

- Include: school board, afterschool programs, police/efforts to divert youth from crime, community relations, young immigrants, youth ambassadors, rec and library directors.
- See bulleted items listed in policy priorities handouts.

## 7) Fire Study Report/Public Safety

Session Objectives:

- 1) Receive the Fire Study report in June. Schedule as the June policy session.
- 2) Other objectives, TBD

Notes:

- Fire study: be completed by June/July to affect the 2018 budget.
- Include buildings and equipment.

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## ADDITIONAL POLICY TOPICS AND VENUES

### Minimum Wage

**Venue:** Hold a Public Forum

**Objectives:**

- 1) Hold a listening session(s) to hear different perspectives and to help inform what we might propose. Get people with diverse perspectives all in the same room.
- 2) Include a presentation by the person from the University of MN that worked with the City of Minneapolis, and/or identify a panel to frame the issues. Diversity of perspectives sought.
- 3) Public Hearing/Listening Session held in the Community.
  - One hour for presentations
  - One hour for community comment
- 4) Timing of meeting: sometime in 2017

### Housing

**Venue:** Discuss this topic at upcoming HRA meetings.

Session Objectives: TBD

Notes:

- Include vacant building program review.
- Population overview.
- Tax credit scorecard.

### Changing Demographics and Future Planning

TBD

## **POSSIBLE TOPICS TO EXPLORE AT NEWLY RESTRUCTURED 2017 ORG COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

- 1) COPP Funding
- 2) Learn from Innovation Team about what other different cities are doing, i.e., changes/trends/demographics. Consider best practices and trends for planning purposes.
- 3) Receive update on Organization Trash Collection

## **Ten Leading Practices of Effective City Councils**

The facilitator reviewed a series of leading practices for City Councils, as summarized by Carl H. Neu and supported by the MN League of Cities. She commented that Saint Paul City Council members appear to be following a majority of these “Top 10” practices.

- 1) Think and Act Strategically.** Visionary, strategic planning. Demonstrate accountability to your constituents.
- 2) Collaborate and Coordinate. Wisely Leverage Community and Government Partnerships and Resources.** Respect “Shared Constituency.”
- 3) Understand and Demonstrate Elements of Effective “Teams.”** Need for effective group dynamics and Individual member advocacy. Council members serve as part of a whole system, with synergistic responsibilities and consequences.
- 4) Master Small Group Decision-Making Skills**
  - Interpersonal Skills: listening, leadership development, communication.
  - Task Skills: knowledge base, staying Informed.
  - Problem Solving Skills: data based decision-making, use of objective criteria, gathering of diverse perspectives, etc.
- 5) Hold a Clear Vision for Your Personal Role as a Council Member.** Regularly revisit and renew your principles and goals.
- 6) Develop and Ensure Effective Council/Staff Partnerships.** Respect the governance policy making continuum.
- 7) Allocate Governing Body Time and Energy Appropriately.**
  - Priority Setting
  - Study / Policy Sessions
  - Council Meeting Deliberations
  - Working with Community Constituents
- 8) Establish and Follow Clear Meeting Procedures.**
  - For Council Members
  - For Members of the Public
  - For Presenters: amount of time, clear objectives, etc.
- 9) Community Engagement – Establish Plans and Accountability.**
- 10) Plan for Continual Learning and Leadership Development,** as a Council and individual Council members.

## **Parking Lot**

### **2017 Policy Session Considerations:**

- Framing of questions: what to ask? Need to be specific with questions and staff requests.
- Establish clear expectations with staff: ask to receive responses to questions or requests within two weeks.
- Make sure there is adequate time for presentations. Set clear expectations for time allotted to presenters and for Q and A.
- Provide a list of questions we want answers to a month in advance, so that City staff can prepare for the policy session.

### **2017 Monthly Org Committee Meetings (Newly Restructured):**

- Provide opportunities for policy session follow up with City staff.
- Opportunity to review and tie up any loose ends.