



Approved

**City of Ypsilanti
City Council Goal Setting Minutes**

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Spark East – 215 W. Michigan Avenue
Ypsilanti, Michigan

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order at 6:14 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL –

Council Member Anne Brown	Present	Council Member Robb	Present
Council Member Nicole Brown	Present	Council Member Vogt	Present
Council Member Murdock	Present	Mayor Edmonds	Present
Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson	Present		

III. INVOCATION –

Mayor Edmonds asked all to stand for a moment of silence.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE –

"I pledge allegiance to the flag, of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

V. INTRODUCTIONS –

None

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION –

1. Sigrid Melvin, 41 W. Michigan Ave., stated the Town Center has a serious issue with bed bugs and little is being done to rectify the problem. There are other issues such as leaking ceilings that have not been repaired for months. Ms. Melvin stated management rarely meets with tenants to address these problems and the building is not assigned a social worker.

VII. REMARKS FROM THE MAYOR –

- Stated many years ago the EMU Social Work program developed the residence councils and there are efforts to reengage those councils, specifically on how to handle tenant advocacy.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated there have been city inspections that have found evidence of what Ms. Melvin was referencing. Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated she has been in contact with MSHDA regarding that issue and will follow up with her source.

Council Member A. Brown stated Congressman Rutledge has been working with the residents of Chidester to ensure that their issues will be addressed.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS –

Amanda Edmonds, Mayor
Facilitators Naheed Huq and Trevor Layton, SEMCOG

Goal Setting Overview and Process

City Manager Lange provided a presentation on possible budget scenarios to regain budgetary sustainability for the City of Ypsilanti.

Mayor Edmonds asked if all three scenarios are assuming a 3% interest rate.

Mr. Lange responded yes.

Mayor Edmonds asked if the second scenario assumes \$1 million in sales between now and 2016.

Mr. Lange responded yes, after the \$245,000 of revenue developed from the Herman Kittle and Family Dollar leaving \$13 million remaining. This scenario separates the cost between the fund balance and \$2 million in the sale of property.

Council Member Murdock asked for the amount the City accumulated in the sale of property.

Mr. Lange responded around \$185,000 from the Family Dollar.

Mayor Edmonds asked how Mr. Lange came about the \$250,000 amount.

Mr. Lange replied the sale of Herman Kittle property.

Council Member Murdock stated the Herman Kittle deal has not yet been completed.

Mr. Lange responded correct, and added the City would have to sell about \$1.1 million worth of property to achieve this scenario.

Council Member Murdock stated in terms of tax increment financing (TIF) after Family Dollar how much will the City be in the hole regarding taxable value.

Mr. Lange stated around \$1 million state equalized value, but after Family Dollar the City will still be in the hole around \$2.2 million. Mr. Lange said the Herman Kittle project is a \$10 million project and the City would receive around \$2.2 million in tax revenue. Mr. Lange stated he did not include TIF in any of the scenarios, so if there is tax captured the projection would increase.

Council Member Murdock asked at what date the City will be able to deal with the debt.

Mr. Lange responded May 2016 is the first time to refinance without penalty.

Council Member Murdock asked if there is a window that this can be completed.

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Mr. Lange responded before the May 2016 date the City would be assessed a penalty, but it should be done as quickly as possible, however the City can pay the debt down at the same time as it goes through refinancing. Mr. Lange added refinancing can cost \$100,000's, so the best strategy would be to refinance only one time.

Mayor Edmonds asked if the funds needed to refinance are reflected in the budget scenarios.

Mr. Lange responded they are not.

Council Member Robb stated that he thought 2006 refinancing was less than \$100,000.

Mr. Lange stated he is not positive on the actual amount, just that it is expensive.

Council Member Murdock stated on May 2016 the bond can be refinanced.

Mr. Lange responded yes.

Council Member Murdock asked what would be the lifespan of the new bond.

Mr. Lange responded the limit would be 25 years for the total, or 15 years at 3%.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson asked if that would take the City to 2031.

Mr. Lange responded yes.

Council Member Murdock stated currently the City has reserved three years of payments, and it is possible to follow that same process till 2019. Mr. Murdock added the three years could provide the City with some time to spur development on Water Street.

Mayor Edmonds asked Council Member Murdock if it would be helpful to look at the restricted and unrestricted parts of the fund balance. Mayor Edmonds asked to see some of the assumptions of possible sales being developed by the Economic Development consultant.

Council Member Murdock asked how many acres on Water Street are actually sellable.

Mr. Lange responded about 13 acres.

Council Member Robb asked if the City needs \$2 million worth of taxable value an acre to make the debt payment.

Mr. Lange stated he is looking at the sale price of the land.

Council Member Murdock stated the whole purpose of the tax increment finance plan for the development is to create enough taxable revenue to pay the debt.

Mr. Lange stated first the property must be sold. The TIF capture will do little to help pay the debt, at least in this decade.

Council Member Murdock stated the sale of the property isn't going to make the payments.

Mr. Lange stated it will help to lower the debt.

Council Member Murdock stated the reason the City holds three years of payments in the reserve is if an interested party built anything it would take three years to develop any revenue.

Mayor Edmonds asked for more in depth scenarios to help Council better understand the situation.

Council Member Robb asked what the Mayor plans on doing with that data, staff time is finite and before we dedicate staff time to creating these scenarios it should be known what will be done with the data.

Mayor Edmonds responded it helps Council look at proposed projects and what the return will be on those projects in order to allocate resources effectively.

SEMCOG Facilitator Naheed Huq provided an overview of what the function of SEMCOG is.

1. Debrief of Goal Setting meeting of January 8, 2015 – Layton
2. Outstanding Questions

Council Member A. Brown asked that the City Manager and the DPS Director include the park system in their goals for next year.

DPS Director Kirton asked for more specific parameters regarding the park system.

Council Member A. Brown responded increase the maintenance and make necessary repairs to avoid safety hazards. If the City plans on using the parks as a component of economic development that aspect needs to be part of the plan.

Mr. Kirton stated those goals can be accomplished but it takes funding and personnel to complete. Mr. Kirton added years ago the recreations department was reduced due to budget constraints.

Council Member A. Brown stated park maintenance needs to be a goal, or they will continue to become dilapidated.

Mr. Kirton stated at the moment the City employs one person that maintains 91 acres.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson asked if this employee only mows lawns for eight hours a day.

Mr. Kirton replied yes, during the summer months unless it rains.

Council Member Murdock stated there is no doubt that there have been issues with the parks due to lack of staff. Mr. Murdock stated the park system is a valuable asset to the City and should be properly maintained.

Mayor Edmonds asked Council Member A. Brown which category would parks be placed.

Council Member A. Brown responded either under economic development, or citizen engagement.

Council Member Murdock stated it could also fall under the umbrella of asset management.

Mayor Edmonds asked how Council Member Murdock would articulate that goal.

Council Member Murdock responded the City should be ready to take advantage of opportunities to address certain plans.

Mayor Edmonds stated priorities should be addressed so that the City can allocate funds effectively.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson asked Chief DeGiusti what is involved in the Police Department's five year strategic plan.

Chief DeGiusti responded the plan is not yet complete it is a goal of the department this year.

Mayor Edmonds asked Council Member Robb if there is a goal statement to recognize the City's effectiveness and efficiency of using data.

Council Member Robb stated if he were running this session he would ask each Council Member what their goals are for this year and they can be formed into policy that the City Manager can accomplish.

Council Member A. Brown asked if there was anything listed under economic development other than jobs.

Ms. Huq responded at the time this was finalized the Water Street issue was kept separate and much of the economic development goals were focused on that specific area of the City.

3. Ex 1: Review and Approve Mission Statement

Ms. Huq stated SEMCOG drafted a mission statement for Ypsilanti based on discussion from the January 8, 2015 meeting and it is as follows; "creating a community of excellence through investment in sustainable services, financial stability, citizen engagement, and inclusive policies that enhance the economic, cultural, and social wellbeing of all citizens". Ms. Huq asked if the mission statement reflected the views of the Council.

Council Member Vogt stated he found the statement surprisingly good.

Council Member N. Brown echoed Mr. Vogt's statement.

DPS Director Kirton stated the word "creating" makes Ypsilanti sound like a new city.

Ms. Huq asked for a word that would better suit Ypsilanti.

Council Member Vogt suggested established.

Mayor Edmonds suggested ensure.

Council Member A. Brown suggested the mission statement begin "Ypsilanti will be a community..."

City Clerk McMullan suggested the statement begin "Ypsilanti is a diverse community focusing on excellence..."

Mayor Edmonds stated "Ypsilanti is a diverse and sustainable focusing on..." and finish with live, work, or visit, instead of citizens.

Council Member Robb stated a mission statement suggests what Ypsilanti wants to be, the proposed mission statement describes what we are.

Council Member Vogt stated the mission statement should begin "Ypsilanti will be a..." and saying Ypsilanti "is" suggests that Ypsilanti has already reached its goals.

Mayor Edmonds raised an issue regarding "will be" as opposed to "is" stating it does not show value in what is already present in Ypsilanti.

Council Member Robb stated the function of city government is to provide services and would prefer this mission statement be simple, unless it is a goal of the city as a whole.

Council Member A. Brown stated the mission statement can be simple and this statement can act more of an operating statement so staff can understand the City's focus.

Mayor Edmonds stated whether the length is short or long this statement should broadly encompass what Ypsilanti is working to become.

Council Member Robb stated he agrees and that is why it should primarily focus on services as Council does not hold events that teach diversity or inclusiveness.

Mayor Edmonds stated Council creates policy that impacts those issues.

Council Member Robb stated he agrees, but the proposed statement does not focus on services, or policy it says the community as a whole is diverse.

Mr. Lange stated when he mentions Ypsilanti to individuals outside of the state it is equated to Eastern Michigan University and the mission statement should reflect that.

Mayor Edmonds stated that she has not heard a consensus from Council that Ypsilanti should be branded as a College Town and she does not feel that should be Ypsilanti's main branding.

Council Member N. Brown stated that the mission statement should not be too wordy, but the word dedicated may be useful in the mission statement.

Assistant City Manager Ericka Savage stated a mission statement is different than marketing as are tag line. Ms. Savage stated the goals should be separate and the mission statement should focus on what the City wants to do.

City Attorney John Barr asked what the purpose of a City is and he agrees with Council Member Robb and that should be reflected in the mission statement. Mr. Barr added there is a difference between a purpose and a method.

Ms. Huq stated she can rework the mission statement and can send it to Council for review and suggestions.

Mayor Edmonds stated mission statements can change by the type of organizations that develop them.

4. Ex 2: Approval of 2015 Priority Goals/Focus areas

Should any of the master Plan guiding values be added to priority goals?

Mayor Edmonds asked City Attorney Barr how goals of department heads and goals of Council Members interact with one another.

Mr. Barr replied the city employees are hardworking and dedicated and have the best interests of the city in mind. Mr. Barr stated he would keep things simple and decide on three things that Council wants to focus staff time.

City Manager Lange stated three priorities are economic development, safety including police, fire, and code enforcement, and Water Street.

Council Member A. Brown asked if employee health and satisfaction could be moved under the Human Resources umbrella.

Council Member Robb stated not necessarily, he would like to overhaul the City's healthcare system stating the City's premiums are 20% higher than those at his employment.

Council Member A. Brown asked if Mr. Robb's policy is managed by Human Resources.

Council Member Robb replied yes, but in regards to Ypsilanti it is a goal of fiscal stability.

Ms. Huq asked if employee health and satisfaction be moved under the "balanced budget" category.

Council Member Robb stated it would be helpful to review last year's goals to see what was accomplished and decide if those that weren't accomplished should still be pursued.

Mayor Edmonds stated that was a part of the January 8, 2015 presentation.

Council Member Robb stated he would like to get certain things done such as switching healthcare plans. If Council Member A. Brown wants to work on parks then it can be suggested as a priority and open for debate. Mr. Robb added there has been discussion on how to improve the image of the City and the way to do that is to improve the public safety. What Council decides on as a priority will be reflected in the budget when it's prepared in May.

Mayor Edmonds stated the next exercise narrows the goals down to a more manageable directive for staff.

Council Member Robb stated much of what has been discussed so far does not mean anything and he wants to discuss things that can be accomplished.

Ms. Huq asked if it Water Street should fall under the Economic Development category.

Council Member Murdock stated Water Street should fall under the budget category as it is much more crucial to the financial stability of the City.

Should any of the goals be merged?

5. Ex 3: Development of actions for each priority goal

Actions

Champion

Measures/Data Needs

Fiscal Stability/Budget – Council Member Robb, Council Member Vogt, Fiscal Service Director Marilou Uy, Council Member Murdock, and Council Member A. Brown

Council Member Robb stated the champion of this issue is City Manager Lange. The actions are as follows;

- Present a detailed plan on the restructuring of the debt/ how to achieve all goals.
- Manage ongoing debt.
 - Reduce pension cost and millage.
 - Continuing healthcare reduction.
- Healthcare; investigate a wellness plan to reduce rates.
 - Hold Special Session to formulate plan.
- Energy Efficiency.
 - Continue to examine opportunities of solar on buildings and other City owned properties.
 - Staff complete Return on Investment of energy efficiency conversions.
 - Pen Dam report/ investigate how to generate power from that structure.
- Storm water management plan.
 - Apply for grant to complete that plan.
- Capital improvement plan.
 - Adopt that plan and prioritize what can be accomplished.
- Surplus properties/ are they sellable?
- Park Plan
 - Prioritize what can be done in that plan.
- Local Street Millage.
 - Are there mechanisms to continue street improvements?
- Streetlight assessment.
 - At what point does this become a serious option.

6. Break

7. Ex 4: presentation of priority actions

Mayor Edmonds asked if the drain commission office could assist in drafting a storm water management plan.

Economic Development – Mayor Edmonds and City Manager Lange

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- Sell City Owned Property, throughout the City.
 - Create marketing strategy.
 - Measure: Income from property sold.
- Ensure anchor developments move forward.
 - Make sure the Rec Center continues to move forward.
 - Find a second anchor.
 - Measure: Development deals being secured.
- Move occupancy of Angstrom facility moving forward.
 - Recruit and assemble clusters of users to create jobs and other economic activity.
 - Measure: At least one company secured.
- Proactively support retention and growth of businesses, especially locally owned businesses.
 - Develop outreach strategy.
 - Assist business gain financing and other resources.
 - Measure: Number of new jobs created.
- Attract startups.
 - Partner with universities.
 - Support incubators as appropriate.
- Bring more dollars to town.
 - Actively leverage relationships with financial institutions and investors.
 - Further collaborate with existing businesses.
 - Measure: Dollars brought to businesses.
- Support “palcemaking”.
 - Multimodal transit.

Council Member Robb stated there is a marketing strategy that is now seven years old, should the City develop a new plan.

Mr. Lange responded that can be done privately by Herman Kittles as they won’t invest without performing their own studies.

City Planner Bonnie Wessler stated the City is working with other communities in the County to perform a target market analysis for housing on the Water Street.

Mayor Edmonds stated as a “redevelopment ready city” Ypsilanti can investigate what services the MEDC would provide.

Council Member Robb asked when we approach possible investors and provide demographic analysis that information would come from the last plan, developed in 2008.

Mayor Edmonds stated the Water Street packet includes much of that information and it is fairly current.

Safety – Council Member Robb, Chief Anthouard, and Chief DeGiusti.

- Continue to fully staff the Police and Fire Departments in accordance with the budget.

- 32nd Officer.
- Part-time officers.
- SAFER Grant.
- Continue to peruse the replacement of the fire engine.
- Mutual aid agreement
- Continue vigorous code enforcement.
- Broken windows theory – beatification of all City property and encourage the improvement of private property.
 - Working with the Sheriff’s Department to leverage extra assets.

Chief DeGiusti stated that he and Fire Chief Anthouard working toward more public programs and there was not much public involvement.

Council Member A. Brown asked how the Eastern Washtenaw County Safety Alliance effecting policing of Ypsilanti.

Chief DeGiusti responded it has been a great benefit.

Marketing – Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson and Assistant to the City Manager Savage

- Product: a great place to live, work, and play.
- Price: Affordable
- Place: Ypsilanti is filled with destinations (EMU, Museums, the river, events).
- Promotion: Press releases, restaurants, safe measures, social media exposure.
 - Tag lines: Best kept secret in Southeastern Michigan and the Home of Eastern Michigan University.
- Measures: Budget – funds for marketing, hire a professional marketing person to
 - Pick a feature a month on social media.
 - Tap into EMU students to help perform marketing strategies.
 - Advertising
 - Tap into SEMCOG, EMU, DDA, CVB, MML, and Suburb alliance.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson asked why the DDA was not represented at the goal meeting session. One report stated the DDA Board does not want the DDA director to try and pull interest into Ypsilanti. Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated the DDA board should be examined and changed if they are deemed ineffective.

Mayor Edmonds stated when she joined the DDA Board four years ago that was the feeling and now the board composition reflects the opposite. The new DDA strategic plan focuses both on business retention and development.

City Attorney Barr asked what the percentage of the budget spent on marketing is.

Council Member Robb stated about the percentage devoted to maintaining the City’s website.

Mr. Barr asked what the percentage that Ford Motor Company spends is.

Council Member Robb stated the difference is that Ford is selling a product.

Mr. Barr stated that Ypsilanti is also selling a product.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated the City is selling Ypsilanti as a place to live, work, and play.

Citizen Engagement – Council Member N. Brown and City Clerk Frances McMullan

- Developing communication method in which Council communicates with the community routinely.
 - Through newsletters, social media, town hall meetings.
 - Establishing a youth commission.
 - Appealing to the “friends” groups.
 - Promoting the “Adopt a Park” initiative.
 - Develop partnerships with local businesses.
 - Collaborating with Public Safety.

Mayor Edmonds stated the DDA just created an Adopt a Block program for urban clean-up.

Council Member A. Brown stated the Adopt a Park, in regards to the Park Commission is interested in placing the application on-line. She asked if Council meetings must be held at City Hall, or can the move around.

Council Member Robb stated certain Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements must be adhered to as well as microphones present at the facility.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated meetings have been held at other locations.

Employee Wellness – Mayor Edmonds

- Support City employee success in carrying out work of city government.
- Initiatives that retain a strong and satisfied workforce.
 - Professional growth/development.
 - Reasonable clear codes.
 - Opportunities for recognition.

Sustainability – City Planner Bonnie Wessler

- Reduce overall energy costs.
- Explore alternative energy sources in city facilities.
- Motor Pool.
- Encourage developers to follow green sustainable best practices
- Pursue storm water management plan
- Pursue grants to leverage these programs.

Council Member Robb asked when Council will see this list of goals and if this current list is chosen he will vote against it.

Ms. Huq stated the plan is to move through a prioritization process however the amount of information given to the facilitators would make it difficult to vote. This document can be refined via email and then, as a group, it can be decided how Council wishes to move forward.

Ex 5: Prioritization exercise

City Attorney Barr reminded Council of January 15, 2015 Special Meeting at 7:30 a.m.

IX. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION –

None

X. REMARKS FROM THE MAYOR –

- Informed Council that the Freight House crowdfunding campaign will be going live.

XI. ADJOURNMENT –

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.