Approved

CITY OF YPSILANTI
COUNCIL GOAL SETTING/SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
215 W. MICHIGAN AVE.
YPSILANTI, MI 48197
Tuesday, February 9, 2015
6:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 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 –

The Mayor 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. INTRODUCTION, MEETING OVERVIEW AND APPROVAL

None

VI. REVIEW OF HANDOUTS

Naheed Huq and Trevor Layton, SEMCOG

1. Verify goals and actions listed are accurate and complete

Trevor Layton, SEMCOG, provided an overview of the materials in the provided packet;

Council Member A. Brown asked if "prioritize past projects in Parks Master Plan" from Goal #1, "achieve fiscal sustainability through sustainable administrative practices and improved efficiency", can be moved to Goal #2, "maximize economic development by leveraging community assets and partnerships".

VII. Exercise 1: Identify three highest priority actions for each goal (Red for council, blue for department heads)

Naheed Huq, SEMCOG, asked both Council and Department Heads to identify three items that they feel are the highest priority actions.

1. Discussion and Questions

Naheed Huq listed the following strategies the process deemed most important under each goal;

- Goal #1 – Achieve fiscal stability through sustainable administrative practices and improved efficiency.
    - Approve and begin implementing a five year plan and restructure debt
    - Prioritizing Water Street property sales and management, and create a strategy to sell off excess City owned property.
    - Ensure maintenance of existing assets.
- Goal #2 – Maximize economic development by leveraging community assets and partnerships.
    - Promote Water Street Development and anchor projects.
    - Leverage relationships with business resource providers, financial and education institutions, as well as developers and investors to support business growth.
    - Prioritize projects in parks Master Plan.
- Goal #3 – Continue to enhance safety of all residents, businesses, and visitors.
    - Ensure police and fire staffing levels meet the needs of the community.
    - Leverage relationships with other units of government to develop sharing of resources and mutual aid agreements.
    - Prioritize code enforcement and partnership with County Sheriff to strengthen neighborhoods.
    - Increase number of compliant rental properties through increasing priority on inspections.
    - Increase participation in public outreach safety programs, including engaging citizens in five year police strategic plan.
- Goal #4 – Strengthen the reputation and perception of the City of Ypsilanti by marketing its assets, diversity, opportunities, and inclusiveness.
    - Create a marketing strategy that emphasizes the unique assets of Ypsilanti, including EMU, museums, parks, and safety.
    - Promote the City's assets through press releases, website, social media, ect.
- Goal #5 – Enhance outreach and communication to increase participation in community initiatives and decision making.
    - Create a framework for regular communication between City officials and residents through newsletters, social media, and town hall meetings.
    - Promote community and business involvement through initiatives such as "Adopt-a-Park," neighborhood watch, and fundraising efforts.
    - Encourage participation in community-based public safety programs.
- Goal #6 – Encourage long-term staff wellness and work satisfaction.
    - Increase employee satisfaction and productivity, while managing healthcare costs, through wellness, education, and prevention efforts.
    - Utilize technology to streamline and manage workloads.
    - Ensure staff knowledge of and adherence to all personnel policies.
- Goal #7 – Develop a sustainable culture in the City of Ypsilanti based on energy efficiency, environmental stewardship, and judicious planning.
    - Market Ypsilanti as a place for sustainability/green business.
    - Leverage community expertise through establishing a Sustainability and Energy Commission to move Climate Action Plan forward.
    - Support solar and other community-driven sustainability initiatives.
- Goal #8 – Ensure effective and efficient administration and delivery of community services.
    - Digitize community records to increase quality and efficiency of services.
    - Develop regular reporting system to keep City Council abreast of progress on key initiatives.
    - Align staffing levels consistent with community priorities and fiscal constraints.
    - Implement and support residents and businesses in working under new Zoning Ordinance.

Mayor Edmonds asked if "update ordinances to maintain administrative standards" meant codifying ordinances.

Trevor Layton, SEMCOG, responded yes, the statement was referring to codifying.

VIII. Exercise 2: Develop broad statement(s) on how to define success for the goal

1. Discussion and Questions

Naheed Huq, SEMCOG, stated the reason why priorities are identified is so the City knows where to allocate resources. Ms. Huq stated the next exercise will help to identify measures that illustrate if Goal #1 has been achieved.

Council Member Vogt stated a balanced budget would be a metric of success of financial stability.

Mayor Edmonds asked what could be used as a measure of ensuring maintenance of existing assets.

DPS Director Stan Kirton stated it would depend on the asset, in terms of City owned properties a measure could be how many organizations/companies have made inquiries.

Mayor Edmonds stated if the asset being examined is vacant land or homes the compliance rates with City Codes could be a measure.

City Manager Lange stated that would be a very compelling reason to sell properties due to the overhead cost to the City to maintain them.

Ypsilanti Downtown Development Director Tim Colbeck stated another measure would be a decreased City overhead dedicated to City owned property.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson asked for an example of City owned property with overhead.

Mr. Lange responded properties identified throughout Ypsilanti that are owned by the City that cannot be maintained such as mowing the grass, shoveling the sidewalks, and liability insurance.

Council Member A. Brown stated it is the kind of property that could be sold and used for in-fill housing.

City Planner Bonnie Wessler stated staff is developing a property disposition policy to identify areas where in-fill housing could be a possible opportunity, whereas other areas are unbuildable and breakdown what needs to be done at each property in order to make it attractive for possible sale.

City Attorney John Barr stated the goal is to create a strategy; first a list of all property owned by the City should be created and then see if the property qualfies for City operations. Once that is complete the City should plan what properties will be sold and how. The same tactic can be used for personal property.

Council Member A. Brown asked if in-fill housing would be sold for market rate, or would it be sold for a discount cost.

Ms. Wessler responded it could be either, they would have to be decided on a case by case basis.

Mayor Edmonds stated a policy, or a set of policy solutions would need to be developed in order to dictate steps to be taken. Mayor Edmonds stated a performance measure would be if the policy would is adhered to.

Ms. Huq stated the next step is to examine what measures could be used to determine success of Goal #2.

Mayor Edmonds stated a measure could be the number of development projects in the pipeline for Water Street. A measure describing anchor projects could be the ground breaking for the Recreation Center.

Mr. Lange stated that is something that is not controlled by the City completely.

Ms. Huq stated Mr. Lange was correct that the City does not control every element of that issue, but it was listed as a priority and resources should be allocated to ensure its success.

Mr. Lange stated another measure would be the sale of property for new development.

Mayor Edmonds stated in terms of "projects in Parks Master Plan", priorities could be set for theuse of parks capital improvement funds as well as external funding leveraged. Mayor Edmonds asked what would be a measure of "relationships with business resource providers, financial and education institutions, as well as developers and investors to support business growth have been leveraged".

Mr. Kirton replied storefronts have been filled.

Mr. Colbeck stated the measure of increased employment and new businesses.

Fire Chief Max Anthouard stated business growth is a measure.

Mr. Colbeck stated that could be measured by how many building permits were pulled.

Mayor Edmonds suggested number of overall leads, or expressed interests in bringing business and developments to Ypsilanti.

Mr. Colbeck suggested the sale of real estate. Mr. Colbeck added an improvement on an existing building would also be an excellent qualifier of economic development.

Chief Anthouard stated a business could be asked why they chose another community over Ypsilanti to open their business.

Council Member Robb answered the reason why businesses are opening elsewhere is Ypsilanti does not have the demographics. The average family in the City makes an average of $48,000 a year.

Mr. Lange stated the City just approved a liquor license for a downtown business and the City had a meeting with another business possibly opening in Ypsilanti's industrial park.

Council Member Robb stated Ypsilanti has a good building stock which is beneficial over having to build new buildings.

Mr. Barr stated a change in the taxable value is a possible metric.

Ms. Huq stated the intention for gathering these thoughts is to assist in deciding what should be measured. Ms. Huq asked what measures could be used to determine the success of Goal #3 and if police and fire staffing levels are meeting the needs of the community.

Council Member Vogt stated crime rate levels as well as response rates would be possible indicators.

Chief Anthouard stated hiring rates could be a possible indicator.

Mayor Edmonds asked Chief Anthouard beyond hiring rates what would be an indicator that staffing levels are at the appropriate levels.

Chief Anthouard responded the Insurance Safety Office (ISO) rating staying stable.

Mr. Colbeck stated number of calls could signify that staffing is at an appropriate level.

Mr. Barr suggested closure rates on criminal cases as an indicator.

Mayor Edmonds asked Police Chief DeGiusti what would indicate appropriate staff levels.

Chief DeGiusti responded actual crime reports don't always indicate appropriate staff levels. Appropriate levels are based on response time, type of service, and community policing. Chief DeGiusti echoed Mr.

Barr stating a high closure rate is an indicator of appropriate staff levels and added public perception of safety.

Ms. Huq asked how perception of safety could be measured.

Chief DeGiusti responded through survey and response rate of that survey.

Mayor Edmonds asked if crimes against strangers versus crimes against parties that know each other is examined.

Chief DeGiusti stated that is available, but it is not used in forming strategy of officer deployment.

Mayor Edmonds stated her suggestion was based as a metric of perception of safety.

Chief DeGiusti responded when violent crime is examined it includes domestic violence, and Ypsilanti has maybe the highest in the County. The issue becomes how police can strategize how to minimize that, which is little the department can do other than educational programs.

Mayor Edmonds stated the community could have a campaign that describes the services Safehouse offers or referrals to other resources.

Chief DeGiusti stated there are already State Mandates, as a part of the Domestic Violence Statute, that require providing certain information to victims. If the City wanted to provide billboards advertising Safehouse it would be at the discretion of Council.

Mr. Barr asked Chief DeGiusti if Ypsilanti has one of the highest closure rates in the County.

Chief DeGiusti replied that is correct, well above 60%.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated an increase in community policing and developing relationships between police officers and citizens has an impact in crime rates.

Chief DeGiusti responded the level of service is directly correlated to staffing levels, more officers means more personal services are provided.

Council Member Murdock stated it seems Mayor Edmonds was speaking toward more external social programs.

Mayor Edmonds responded she was speaking toward more community policing as discussed by Chief DeGiusti, such as the School Resource Officer and reading to school children.

Chief DeGiusti stated the actions that Mayor Edmonds is discussing are nice options, but changing to a Community Policing model would completely change the way the Police Department conducts business. Community Policing, in structure, takes a very large staff.

Council Member A. Brown stated she sees community policing as establishing personal relationship with the citizens.

Mr. Barr stated the City allocates a lot of funding to train police how to interact with citizens and little funding goes into teaching citizens how to interact with the police.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated a program was planned that focused on that subject at the high school, which was canceled due to inclement weather, but another is planned on February 19th at New Hope Church.

Mayor Edmonds suggested a decreased amount of code enforcement citations issued as a metric.

Chief DeGiusti responded in the short term the City would hope that the citation levels increase, and as behaviors change the citation levels would decrease with that change.

Trevor Layton, SEMCOG, asked how success of Goal #4 would be measured.

Mayor Edmonds suggested the amount of positive stories being told about Ypsilanti.

Council Member Vogt stated positive stories getting to the press and on the City's website.

Mr. Barr stated every goal needs to list what department/individual is responsible for implementation of strategies. With the limited staff levels in the City it becomes difficult to implement marketing strategies.

Mayor Edmonds stated the Ypsilanti Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) has a large budget that can be leveraged to assist in marketing.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated Ypsilanti is a part of Washtenaw County, which houses five institutions of higher learning; perhaps students could perform marketing tasks for Ypsilanti to earn college credit.

Ms. Wessler responded that comes with a cost, as that student would need to be overseen by a staff member to ensure that the City's brand meets the standards of the City.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated if the City collaborated with the CVB it could possible to offset some of the personnel time.

Ms. Wessler replied if the City collaborated with the CVB it would be an Ypsilanti-wide effort not specific to City of Ypsilanti.

Mr. Colbeck stated the CVB has a limited mission; there are some things that they will not promote. A CVB's mission is to increase hotel stays in an area; it would not be in their purview to promote a local business.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated it depends on what the student would market.

Ms. Wessler responded yes, the City should definitely keep the door open to that possibility.

Mayor Edmonds suggested positive media and identifying target opportunities to leverage other support as a measure.

Ms. Huq asked for measures indicating success of Goal #5.

Mayor Edmonds stated volunteer hour can be tracked and number of applications for programs such as, "Adopt-a-Park" and "Adopt-a-Block".

Council Member A. Brown suggested tracking attendance at community public safety programs.

Mayor Edmonds offered filling communication gaps to reach as many citizens as possible.

Council Member A. Brown stated a youth commission was suggested by a Council Member and that is an item that could be driven by a Council Member rather than City staff.

Ms. Huq stated this strategy of this process is to identify what is important for Ypsilanti.

Mayor Edmonds stated tasks are not being specifically allocated in this process. Future task allocation will be at the discretion of the City Manager and Council.

Mr. Lange stated he feels that there is great community involvement in Ypsilanti stating that there are always several individuals in attendance during City Council Meeting.

Council Member N. Brown disagreed with Mr. Lange and it seems those attending City Council Meetings are always the same and a method needs to be devised on how to reach citizens who do not in attend.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson recommended taking Council Meetings to the people.

Mayor Edmonds proposed tracking attendance at community meetings.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson asked City Attorney Barr if there is a legal reason that Council Meetings must be held in Council Chambers.

City Attorney Barr responded there is not a legal requirement for holding Council Meetings in Council Chambers.

Council Member N. Brown said her concern is more with having conversations with members of the public.

Mayor Edmonds stated the School Board has approached her about holding a joint meeting. Mayor Edmonds recommended a joint meeting with Ypsilanti Township.

Mr. Layton asked what metric could be used to measure the success of Goal #6.

Mayor Edmonds informed Council that the strategies listed under Goal #6 were developed by Human Resources Director Judi Smith.

Council Member N. Brown asked if staff could be surveyed regarding work satisfaction.

Mayor Edmonds suggested examining staff tendency and turnover.

Mr. Barr stated "utilization of technology to streamline and manage workloads" was heavily favored by Council.

Mayor Edmonds stated a reduction in employee sick days as a possible metric.

Mr. Layton asked what measures would be used to prove the success of Goal #7.

Mayor Edmonds stated the establishment of an Energy Commission would be a possible metric. Also, the Climate Action Plan has very specific goals that could be tracked and further market Ypsilanti as a green/sustainable community.

Mr. Kirton stated Ypsilanti will be featured in the DTE Quarterly for its conversions to LED lights.

Council Member Murdock stated to measure use of solar power solar panels could be counted with a goal of 1,000.

Mr. Lange stated the City is completing the implementation of the three solar power grants.

Mr. Layton asked what measures would be used to show success of Goal #8.

Council Member N. Brown stated completion of digitizing community records.

Assistant to the City Manager Ericka Savage asked for clarification on what should be digitized.

Council Member Robb stated every document being stored at Iron Mountain should be digitized.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated will someone be hired to complete that task, because the Clerk's Office is pushed to the limit.

Ms. Savage stated the City has been solicited by companies to assist in record digitization, but this would take buy-in and the City would need to provide material to be scanned.

Mr. Barr stated the City could use funds budgeted for Iron Mountain services for record digitization.

Mayor Edmonds stated the strategy of this task would be for the City Manager and the City Clerk to create document digitization plan.

City Clerk McMullan stated currently, each department uses Iron Mountain at their discretion, meaning not every document flows through the Clerk Department, so it would be a huge project.

Ms. Wessler stated there are also legal requirements mandating the City to maintain original hard copies.

Mr. Barr stated there are documents stored at Iron Mountain that are not necessary.

Mr. Colbeck stated by law minutes and other documents are required to be held for a certain number of years, but is the City destroying documents after the legal retention period.

Ms. McMullan stated a retention schedule could be sent to all departments.

Mr. Layton asked if there were any thoughts regarding measures of success for "aligning staffing levels consistent with community priorities and fiscal constraints".

Mr. Lange stated if a City has unlimited funding there would be exceptional service, but that is not the reality.

Mayor Edmonds stated levels would be consistent with community priorities and, on a hypothetical basis, marketing is considered a priority a budget line item must be there to meet that community priority.

Chief Anthouard stated priorities should be aligned to the staffing that is in place.

Mr. Colbeck stated it appears the City is already staffing appropriately to achieve some of the major long term goals by hiring an Economic Developer.

Council Member A. Brown stated there are certain staffing levels required to effectively remove snow and other services DPS provides.

Mayor Edmonds asked how the City would know if it has successfully and appropriately staffed.

Chief Anthouard responded if department goals are met, the department is staffed effectively.

Mr. Layton asked what measure would be used for "implementing and supporting residents and businesses in working under new Zoning Ordinances" effectiveness.

Ms. Wessler responded its user perception and if applications are processed successfully. But it is dependent upon many other factors.

Mayor Edmonds asked if speed of the application process could be a metric of success.

Ms. Wessler responded that would again be dependent on each project, maybe feedback of applicants.

Mr. Barr stated when code enforcement for rental properties was implemented the City held a number of town hall meetings to inform the public of the change.

Council Member Murdock stated what will trigger activity is going to be when a citizen wants to do something that requires a variance, so perhaps the number of declines for variances would be a measure.

Mayor Edmonds asked if there is need for training for other parties to help disseminate zoning knowledge to the public.

Ms. Wessler stated this would be tough to track, perhaps the number of amendments to the zoning code and if requests lower each year.

Council Member Murdock stated a lower number of amendments might not be an indicator of success because there are things in the Zoning Ordinance that will need to be changed.

Council Member A. Brown asked if communication went out to businesses regarding ordinance changes.

Ms. Wessler stated there was a communication sent out to property owners that would see a significant change.

Council Member Murdock asked if it would be a good idea to inform realtors about zoning changes so they can inform people of how property can be used.

2. Discussion of process for developing measures and monitoring progress/success

Ms. Huq stated the City Manager along with Department Heads may want to develop two to three measures for each goal. Ms. Huq suggested a quarterly report be submitted to Council explaining progress.

Council Member A. Brown stated she would prefer reports be given more frequently in case changes in direction need to happen quickly.

Ms. Huq agreed with Council Member A. Brown and reports could be made monthly, but a quarter does give a slightly broader framework, but it is up to Council.

Mayor Edmonds stated quarterly makes sense, but more information could be provided by the City Manager.

Mr. Barr asked Council Member Robb how this would be handled in the business world.

Council Member Robb responded he wants Mr. Lange to be the City Manager that gets things done and that Council has not even vetted any of the tasks listed under goals.

Mr. Barr asked if Ford sets goals.

Council Member Robb responded, absolutely, and his objectives are very specific, he works for Ford and designs parts and there are metrics for builds, quality, and other specific tasks.

Mr. Barr asked who sets those goals.

Council Member Robb responded the Board of Directors set goals and those goals filter to appropriate departments.

Mr. Barr asked how often Mr. Robb must report to his superiors.

Council Member Robb stated he has meetings with his boss every week, but organizationally, something the size of the City, would meet quarterly.

Council Member N. Brown stated her employer operates very similarly. Ms. Brown stated she is a facilitator and goals are set with families and allocated to particular individuals to accomplish those goals and then they report what has been accomplished.

Council Member A. Brown asked at what point it would be decided if there needs to be an intervention.

Council Member N. Brown responded when goals are not being met, at that point strategies of how to achieve that goal need to be reevaluated.

Council Member A. Brown asked if this would be waited until quarterly reports.

Council Member N. Brown stated no, strategies are changed very quickly, and quarterly a more comprehensive look is taken.

Ms. Huq asked what the consensus is of how often this should be reported.

Mayor Edmonds asked what is realistic.

Chief DeGiusti responded that it is relative to the task; some tasks will have little to report on a month to month basis.

Mr. Colbeck stated if a new policy is being implemented it must be given time to work. Meeting monthly on a new policy will not allow enough time to deem it effective.

Council Member N. Brown agreed that the frequency of a report should be dependent on the type of task, but there needs to be more information provided to Council.

Mr. Barr asked how often Council receives the Council Information Letter (CIL).

Mr. Lange stated every month.

Mayor Edmonds stated more specific information will be in the Council Information Letter.

Ms. McMullan stated they need to be more focused on certain goals rather than what the department wants to report.

IX. Exercise 3: Choose top 5 overall strategies (green for council, yellow for department heads)

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson informed Council that four contractors within the city have been hired to work on Housing Commission projects.

Naheed Huq, SEMCOG, stated by the list of most important strategies it is clear that the most important item is the development of Water Street.

X. Next Steps

XI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION –

1. Bill Teepen, PO Box, stated his largest frustration is he does not know what is happening with Water Street and other vacant structures. Mr. Teepen also voiced his concerns about police department.

XII. REMARKS FROM THE MAYOR –

- Thanked Mr. Teepen for raising his concerns to Council.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson introduced Howard Fink Township Manager of Northfield who came to observe the goal setting meeting.

Howard Fink, Northfield Township Manager, thanked Council for the opportunity to observe the process.

Council Member Murdock requested a short recess.

Mayor Edmonds called a recess for two minutes

XIII. CLOSED SESSION –

- Executive Session to consider the purchase or lease of real property up to the time an option to purchase or lease the real property is obtained. OMA 15.268, Section 8(d).

On a roll call, the vote to adjourn to Closed Session was as follows:

Council Member N. Brown	No	Council Member Robb	Yes
Council Member Murdock	Yes	Mayor Edmonds	No
Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson	Yes	Council Member Vogt	Yes
Council Member A. Brown	No		

VOTE:

YES: 4 NO: 3 (A. Brown, N. Brown, Edmonds) ABSENT: 0 VOTE: Failed

The meeting remained in Open Session

Council Member Murdock stated this item was supposed to be in Closed Session, however, not enough votes were obtained to adjourn to Closed Session so the discussion will occur in Open Session. Mr. Murdock stated Mayor Edmonds has a conflict of interest in regards to the purchase of property precluding others from looking into it.

City Attorney Barr stated if the issue is going to be discussed in Open Session the property must be identified.

Council Member Murdock stated the property is 16 S. Washington. Mr. Murdock stated the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority Chair Kevin Hill was here to speak about it but has since left.

Mr. Barr stated the audience was asked to leave because Council was entering Closed Session. Mr. Barr suggested addressing the matter at a future meeting, or holding a special meeting.

Council Member Murdock stated he would deal with the matter in a different way.

Mayor Edmonds stated nothing related to this property has come before Council since she has been Mayor.

Council Member Murdock responded when Mayor Edmonds was the Chair of the DDA there was discussion to purchase of this property.

Mayor Edmonds stated the issue never made it out of the Committee.

Council Member Murdock stated it does not matter if the issue never made it out of Committee. It was discussed while Mayor Edmonds was present and she should have recused herself and failed to do so. There are other individuals on the DDA who want to revisit the possibility of purchasing the property which was placed on the market. Mr. Murdock added he asked the City to make some inquiries and found the property wasn't for sale and the owner would let the City know if it were placed on the market. Mr. Murdock stated he wanted to give the YDDA time to decide if they wanted to move forward with the purchase. Mr. Murdock stated Mayor Edmonds is following two masters.

Mayor Edmonds stated she forwarded communications from YDDA Director Tim Colbeck which included all the materials from the YDDA regarding this property produced at Committee. Mayor Edmonds stated a result of that information the Committee decided to not move on the property.

Council Member Murdock stated the Committee never took a vote. Mr. Murdock stated other members of the YDDA have different opinions and some of the data in the material provided by Director Colbeck have changed. Mr. Murdock stated he wants to allow the YDDA time to explore if purchasing the property is now beneficial. Mr. Murdock stated he understands Mayor Edmonds does not want the YDDA to purchase the property and the Mayor has manipulated things very well.

Mayor Edmonds stated nothing she has been involved with regarding YDDA pertains to this issue. Mayor Edmonds stated she has been openly pursuing this project for two years.

Mr. Barr stated there are two issues here; one is the DDA and the other is the City. Mr. Barr stated he was not aware that the DDA was going to be a part of the Closed Session, or he would not have had the individuals representing the DDA leave. There are three things that can be done; the City can vote tonight to purchase the property, Council could bring it up at a future meeting either an Open Session, or hold a Closed Session and invite the DDA.

Council Member Murdock stated his intention is to allow the DDA time to reconsider the issue. Mr. Murdock stated the item is on the Agenda for the next Committee meeting Mr. Murdock stated he would like Council to help to provide the DDA time to examine if they wish to purchase the property.

Council Member A. Brown stated after having Discussion with Council Member Murdock she pulled the minutes from DDA meetings around a year ago and there was no mention of the property. Ms. Brown stated she understands that it was an issue being addressed at the Committee level, and it decided not to proceed with the project.

Mayor Edmonds stated the committee decided not to take the matter to the full Board and any actions taken through the Board come through committee.

Council Member A. Brown stated the City is not in a position financially to purchase the property.

Mr. Barr stated he is unsure if the City has the ability to purchase the property, but Council has never expressed interest in purchasing the property.

Council Member A. Brown stated this item has been on the table for two years or more but Mr. Murdock has said that the property was not for sale.

Council Member Murdock stated the property was not on the market but inquiries were being made.

Council Member A. Brown stated inquiries were made and there was no response.

Council Member Murdock said correct, there was not a specific response, until recently. Mr. Murdock stated, as relayed to him from City Manager Lange, if the City were interested the property owner would accept an offer, but the matter would need to go before City Council. Mr. Murdock added there was not time to bring it before Council at the February 3rd meeting and so it was placed on tonight's agenda.

Mayor Edmonds stated that she did not become Mayor until November and she shared openly with the DDA plans to purchase this property and provided a presentation regarding her intention. Mayor Edmonds added the discussion was held at the Committee level which she was not in attendance.

Council Member A. Brown asked City Attorney John Barr what the next steps would be.

Mr. Barr stated Mr. Lange contacted the attorney's office around two months ago to find out what the status of the property was, and see if there was an option to purchase.

Council Member A. Brown asked if the City would be the purchaser.

Mr. Barr responded the purchaser would be an undisclosed principle, in other words the City was not disclosed to the principle. Assistant City Attorney Dan DuChene contacted the bank and in numerous attempts, but received little response. Then a short time ago there was a response that informed Mr. DuChene that there was another interested buyer. Mr. Lange was informed of the situation and Mr. Lange stated at that time the City was not interested in purchasing the property.

Council Member A. Brown asked if that was communicated to the YDDA.

Mr. Barr replied no.

Mr. Lange stated the Attorney's Office does not work for the YDDA.

Mr. Barr stated Council Member Murdock brought up the issue of conflict of interest and Mr. Barr began looking into that matter. Mr. Barr stated he spoke with Mayor Edmonds of the possibility of conflict of interest. At that time Mayor Edmonds informed Mr. Barr she had been pursuing this for the past 15 months and that the YDDA was not interested in the purchase of the property. Mr. Barr stated he then spoke with Council Member Murdock to inform him that Mayor Edmonds had a deal but it has not yet been finalized.

Mayor Edmonds stated negotiations have taken place for the past eight months.

Mr. Barr stated he informed Council Member Murdock that the City has not made an official interest in the property and now that a deal has been reached it may be too late. Mr. Barr said the issue is if the City is interested in purchasing the property and a second issue is if the YDDA is interested in the property. Mr. Barr stated no action needs to be taken from Council other than to provide the Attorney's Office with direction on if the City has interest in purchasing the property.

Council Member Vogt stated his interest is to gain information on the matter and he is not sure that he is comfortable doing so Open Session. Mr. Vogt stated it would have been helpful to have the YDDA Chair Kevin Hill or another representative of the YDDA here to provide information on the subject.

Council Member Murdock stated he can request that Mr. Hill return to address Council.

Council Member Vogt stated that he would accept that, and both sides seem to have worthwhile goals, but he would prefer that the property stay on the tax roll. Mr. Vogt stated he would also like to see the property utilized as much as possible in matters of public interest.

Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson stated neither entity would provide private ownership, the YDDA is a governmental agency and Growing Hope is a non-profit.

Mayor Edmonds stated Growing Hope would not be the owner, it would be owned privately.

Council Member Vogt stated this is part of his question and he was hoping to be provided with more detail, the proposal is that there is a private buyer and Growing Hope would lease from that buyer.

Mayor Edmonds stated that is true, but this is not an issue of what is happening with a piece of private land, the issue is does the City want to purchase this land.

Council Member Vogt responded it is in part because it depends on what the public purpose might be, and whether the City might have an interest in the property. Mr. Vogt stated it does not see that there is much difference in either proposal.

Council Member A. Brown asked if the YDDA has their own attorney why they did not pursue this with their attorney.

Council Member Murdock stated the YDDA Chair Kevin Hill can answer those questions once he arrives.

Mr. Barr stated he feels conflicted that he asked the audience members to leave because Council was adjourning to Closed Session and now that this is in Open Session it looks planned, it might be better off to have these discussions in Closed Session.

Council Member N. Brown, supported by Council Member Vogt motioned to adjourn into Closed Session.

On a roll call, the vote to adjourn to Closed Session was as follows:

Council Member N. Brown	Yes	Council Member Robb	Yes
Council Member Murdock	Yes	Mayor Edmonds	Yes
Mayor Pro-Tem Richardson	Yes	Council Member Vogt	Yes
Council Member A. Brown	Yes		

VOTE:

YES: 7 NO: 0 ABSENT: 0 VOTE: Carried

The meeting adjourned to Closed Session.

Council Member N. Brown motioned, supported by Council Member A. Brown to adjourn Closed Session.

On a voice vote, the motion carried and Closed Session was adjourned.

Open Session Resumed.

Council Member A. Brown stated this situation may illustrate that Council Members sitting on Boards and Commissions may create a problem.

Council Member Vogt stated the Charter Amendment Council Member A. Brown is referencing is not the issue, the issue is whether or not Mayor Edmonds should have been involved in discussions regarding the property with the YDDA. Mr. Vogt stated the conflict arose when Mayor Edmonds ran for office.

Council Member Murdock stated the issue is that Mayor Edmonds, at the time of the discussion of possible purchase, was the Chair of the YDDA.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Vogt motioned, supported by Council Member A. Brown to adjourn the meeting.

On a voice vote, the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 10:31 p.m.