

Monday – March 11, 2013 - 9:00 a.m.
U.S. Cellular Center Banquet Hall

City Council Strategic Planning Retreat

Present: Mayor Terry M. Bellamy, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Esther E. Manheimer; Councilman Cecil Bothwell; Councilman Jan B. Davis; Councilman Marc W. Hunt; Councilman Christopher A. Pelly; Councilman Gordon D. Smith; City Manager Gary W. Jackson; City Attorney Robert W. Oast Jr.; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Mayor Bellamy convened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the City Council strategic planning retreat.

After City Manager Jackson explained the purpose of the retreat and asked Council for their issues that needed attention, a brainstorming session followed, with Council outlining at least 45 items.

Deputy City Manager Jeff Richardson, along with Public Information Officer Dawa Hitch, reviewed the findings of a survey monkey was sent out which individual Council members whose comments were summarized to guide the Council's discussion of short and long term priorities.

Executive Executive Director of Finance and Strategic Planning Lauren Bradley reviewed with Council the financial crossroads update, the budget forecast, and budget balancing strategies.

There was considerable general discussion throughout the day on the following goals and action items outlined below, which will be wordsmithed by City staff and prioritized by City Council at their budget worksession on March 12:

TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE: Economic Viability, Environmental Stewardship, Community Development

How? Create chart that shows overlap and examples of objectives (multi-modal, green, sustainable, affordable)

How are we going to get there?

- Citizen engagement and education
- Legislative relationships
- Intergovernmental partnership opportunities – ETJ, MPO,

Goal #1 – Economic Growth & Financial Sustainability: Seek to establish a sustainable financial structure

Invest in infrastructure and services to grow tax base

Action Item: Implement the Economic Development & Community Investment initiative with focus in three key areas (Mixed-use neighborhoods, Downtown, Job Growth)

Mixed Use Neighborhoods:

- RADTIP Implementation
- East of the Riverway Neighborhood Planning
- Riverside Drive Strategic Plan
- WECAN Master Plan Update
- Aston Gateway Redevelopment
- Affordable Housing Partnerships
- Neighborhood reinvestment to balance livability issues that come with density

Downtown Vitality:

- South Slope Redevelopment Analysis
- Business Improvement District
- Downtown Recycling Initiative
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Festival & Special Event Partnerships
- Identify Western Gateway improvements
- Thomas Wolfe renovations
- Pack Place/Art Museum partnership

Job Growth:

- Gap analysis/Partner on 5x5 strategy areas
- Evaluate Land Use Incentive Grant and other incentives
- Development Review restructuring
- UDO Analysis, zoning adjustments and related recommendations
- Support efforts around Arts/Creative Economy
- I-26 partnership

Action Item: Strategically invest the resources we have - CDBG, AHTF, Nature Center Membership Program

Action Item: Comprehensively evaluate incentive and density policies with economic development partners to include Buncombe County, Chamber of Commerce/EDC

Action Item: Support the Safe Routes to School program by applying for funding for one school this year. Staff will reword this

Partner regionally on economic development and community investment

Action Item: Bring economic development and tourism partners together to share goals and information about economic realities, identify needs and opportunities to invest in high priority initiatives that are mutually beneficial (i.e., multi-year plan that funds capital projects that support the entire region and tourism industry)

- Focus on relationships and education
- Find opportunities for collaboration and “win-win”
- Focus on partnering on projects that offer a ROI for all units of government

Action Item: Continue partnerships with local institutions of higher learning.

Continue to implement operational efficiencies (staff implementation)

Action Item: Eliminate programs with low returns or limited usage

Action Item: Explore options to outsource/re-engineer services

Action Item: Ask employees to innovate, seek savings and reward performance by offering competitive compensation and benefits

Enhance diversity in the City as an organization so that the workforce more closely resembles the community, especially in the area of public safety

Goal #2 – Affordable Housing

Goal: Increase the number of affordable housing units (by how much?) within the City limits to encourage density, affordability and access to economic prosperity.

Action Item: Fully fund the Affordable Housing Trust Fund; evaluate criteria to ensure accessibility by a larger developer applicant pool

Action Item: Re-evaluate the sustainability bonus to enhance its application and outcomes

Action Item: Expand commitments to mixed income neighborhoods and consider the formula “housing+transportation” for prioritizing the location of affordable housing.

Action Item: Evaluate the feasibility of a partnership with the City, County, Housing Authority and other partners to pursue redevelopment of public housing with a mixed-use, mixed-income Choice Communities-type project. Develop a feasibility analysis of what might be successful.

Action Item: Invest in a transportation network and housing stock that decreases citizens’ expenses related to commute and fuel.

Support initiatives to end chronic homelessness in Asheville with an emphasis on the Housing First philosophy.

Action Item: City-County Advisory Board is evaluating next steps and recommendations for moving forward.

Address achievement gap in City school system.

Action Item: Track progress made toward City School Strategic Plan; receive annual updates from the school system.

Goal #3 – Safe

Make Asheville one of the safest cities in America based on approved metrics for similarly sized cities

Action Item: Implement strategies to significantly improve public safety in neighborhoods in Asheville with the highest levels of crime.

Action Item: Continue efforts to eliminate drug and gang activity in Asheville

Action Item: Pedestrian safety issues including education, infrastructure and maintenance

Action Item: Continue to support the Asheville Police Department’s internet child abuse program.

Action Item: Addressing impacts of transient homeless population

Action Item: Prostitution in S French Broad area

Action Item: Pursue ordinance for regulating graffiti removal on private property

Goal #4 - Food

Access to healthy, affordable, local food

Action Item: Pursue implementation of Food Action Plan

Adjournment

The retreat adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

City Clerk

Mayor