

Friday – February 7, 2014 - 9:00 a.m.
U.S. Cellular Center

Retreat

Present: Mayor Esther E. Manheimer, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Marc W. Hunt; Councilman Cecil Bothwell; Councilman Jan B. Davis; Councilman Christopher A. Pelly; Councilman Gordon D. Smith; Councilwoman Gwen C. Wisler; City Manager Gary W. Jackson; Interim City Attorney Martha Walker-McGlohon; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Absent: None

Mayor Manheimer convened the meeting and introduced Mr. Greg Walker Wilson, who would be facilitating the retreat.

City Manager Jackson highlighted the 2013 accomplishments; and Assistant City Manager Cathy Ball provided Council with the 2013-14 Strategic Plan update.

While Mr. Walker reviewed with Council the pre-retreat interview summary responses on the various topics, City Council asked various questions: (1) most proud of; (2) City's greatest strengths to be sure to preserve and leverage in 2014; (3) how do strengths fit with residents' expectations; (4) how can the City best meet the needs of residents/stakeholders; (5) what are the opportunities given external forces; (6) top opportunities to focus on; (7) what should City be most passionate about; (8) given strengths & opportunities, what direction should City go in; (9) what strategic initiatives does Council want to focus on (projects, programs, etc.); (10) resources needed; and (11) three-five indicators to demonstrate.

City Council then invited the public to join them in breakout sessions to discuss the 2013-14 Strategic Operating Plan. Following the breakout sessions, presentations were given from each breakout group, after which City Council discussed their priorities and goals for 2014-15, mainly with the information from the breakout sessions.

Using the considerable discussion by Council, along with the information from the breakout sessions, staff attempted to begin wordsmithing Council's goals and action items; however, ultimately it was the consensus of Council to have City staff wordsmith their priorities and goals and provide them to Council for review at an upcoming worksession for finalization and at a formal meeting for adoption.

At 3:53 p.m., Mayor Manheimer recessed the retreat until 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 8, 2014, at the U.S. Cellular Center.

Saturday – February 8, 2014 - 9:00 a.m.
U.S. Cellular Center

Continuation of Retreat

Present: Mayor Esther E. Manheimer, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Marc W. Hunt; Councilman Cecil Bothwell; Councilman Jan B. Davis; Councilman Christopher A. Pelly; Councilman Gordon D. Smith; Councilwoman Gwen C. Wisler; City Manager Gary W. Jackson; Interim City Attorney Martha Walker-McGlohon; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Absent: None

Mr. Paul Myers, Executive Director of the N.C. League of Municipalities, reviewed with Council a PowerPoint for "Positioning your City for Legislative Success." He stressed the importance of City/County/legislative relationships, regional collaboration, and ways to implement the legislative agenda.

Mr. Jack Cozort, the City's legal representative, said that he is looking at how Asheville can develop a comprehensive legislative approach and agenda. He said that he would come back to Council in approximately one month with next steps.

There was discussion on Asheville's perception in Raleigh and ways that Asheville needs to change that perception, which in part is to communicate and demonstrate how Asheville is being proactive and doing good things.

City Manager Jackson explained the strategy for improving the City's communication and public engagement, while Director of Communication and Public Engagement Dawa Hitch explained the following three areas that have potential to improve the City's image and improve the effectiveness of the City's interactions with residents and stakeholders (1) continuing to grow and improve a diverse communication portfolio; (2) encourage a culture of engagement in the organization; and (3) effectively manage engagement in the community. Council provided good information in ways our board and commission members can help spread the good work of the City, along with suggestions for the City's electronic newsletter and the possibility of major committee meetings being posted to U-Tube.

City Manager Jackson, along with Mayor Manheimer, reviewed with Council the new City Council Governance Committee, reminding them that there is a need to explore implications of policy alternatives and the policy development process in the areas of strategic planning, intergovernmental relationships, legislative agendas, and public engagement. The Governance Committee will serve in an advisory capacity to the Council as a whole. Mayor Manheimer (Chair), Vice-Mayor Hunt and Councilman Smith were previously appointed to the Governance Committee. Ms. Hitch, Interim Deputy City Manager Mike Morgan and he will staff the new Committee. The idea is for Council to prioritize ideas, delegate them to the Governance Committee and then, with staff, develop an action plan for the new Committee. This Committee will function as any other City Council Committee and if any recommendations are needed, they will be forwarded to the full Council. It was noted that the functions of the Governance Committee will be revised in six months.

At 11:45 a.m., Mayor Manheimer adjourned the meeting.