

Friday – January 29, 2016 - 8:45 a.m.  
200 College Street - County Administration Bldg

Retreat

Present: Mayor Esther E. Manheimer, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Gwen C. Wisler; Councilman Cecil Bothwell; Councilman Brian D. Haynes; Councilwoman Julie V. Mayfield; Councilman Gordon D. Smith; Councilman W. Keith Young; City Manager Gary W. Jackson; City Attorney Robin T. Currin; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Absent: None

Mayor Manheimer welcomed everyone to the City Council Annual Retreat.

**RESOLUTION NO. 16-34 - RESOLUTION AMENDING THE 2016 CITY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE TO CANCEL THE FEBRUARY 9, 2016, CITY COUNCIL FORMAL MEETING**

After Mayor Manheimer asked for comments from members of the public and none were received, Councilwoman Mayfield moved for the adoption of Resolution No. 16-34. This motion was seconded by Councilman Young and carried unanimously.

**RESOLUTION BOOK NO. 37 - PAGE 383**

Mayor Manheimer then convened the retreat and introduced Ms. A. Tyler St. Clair, who would be facilitating the retreat. Ms. St. Clair said the purpose of the retreat is to enable City Council to work together to identify a collective vision for the City, shorter term priorities to achieve the vision, along with roles and operating guidelines that will enhance effectiveness among Council members and staff. She then outlined the goals of the retreat, which are (1) increase the understanding and appreciation of fellow Council members in order to enhance the ability of the Council to provide collective leadership for the City; (2) review a model that can assist the Council in providing effective governance and maximize staff efforts in achieving the Council's policy direction; (3) gain and understanding of each individual Council member's perspectives on important leadership issues, assets, needs, and desired change initiatives for the City; (4) develop a collective vision with desired future states that will provide clear, long term policy direction; (5) identify and agree on shorter term Council priorities that will achieve the vision and its desired future states; (6) clarify roles and develop a set of operating guidelines to maximize the effectiveness of working relationships among Council members and Council/staff members; (7) identify specific actions to communicate the Council's vision and priorities to stakeholders and to solidify accountability through staff work planning efforts; and (8) identify next steps for addressing Council's leadership work to include staff follow-up with a comprehensive strategic plan.

Roles for council members include (1) focus on opportunity to create a united Council; (2) seek a clear vision and aligned priorities; (3) listen/hear others to arrive at consensus; (4) recognize that policy making requires choices; (5) synthesize; bring it together; and (6) use time wisely. Council then performed a brief team building/climate setting.

Council reviewed the Local Elected Leadership model which is a model that can assist them in providing effective governance for the City.

Ms. St. Clair explained the characteristics of an effective vision - 20 years out (vivid, unique, challenging, clarity, focused and shared). She asked Council to think about the City of Asheville in the most visionary, ideal, and strategic state that it could be in 20 years from now, keeping a possibility-oriented perspective. A vision brainstorming session was held to identify/discuss individual perspectives on important leadership issues, assets, needs, and desired change initiatives for the City. After considerable discussion and review, eight strategic

target areas were identified as follows: Energy & the Environment; Housing; Transportation; Fiscal Management; Local Economy; Land Use/Development; Equity & Diversity; and Engagement and Collaboration.

For each strategic target area, Council broke into groups to write a desire future paragraph describing the way Asheville will be in 2036. After Council reviewed all paragraphs, Ms. St. Clair said that she would provide Council with the draft 2036 vision plan for the continued review of Council the following day.

Ms. St. Clair briefly reviewed the day's activities and outlined the agenda for the following day.

At 5:10 p.m., Mayor Manheimer recessed the meeting until tomorrow morning at 8:45 a.m. and announced that City Council will gather for dinner later that evening.

Saturday – January 30, 2016 - 8:45 a.m.  
200 College Street - County Administration Bldg

Continuation of Retreat

Present: Mayor Esther E. Manheimer, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Gwen C. Wisler; Councilman Cecil Bothwell; Councilman Brian D. Haynes; Councilwoman Julie V. Mayfield; Councilman Gordon D. Smith; Councilman W. Keith Young; City Manager Gary W. Jackson; City Attorney Robin T. Currin; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Absent: None

Ms. St. Clair reviewed the session that took place yesterday and gave a quick overview of the agenda for today. Council then reviewed the following 2036 draft vision, noting that Vice-Mayor Wisler and Councilwoman Mayfield would make minor tweaks to the vision (gaining consensus of Council), after which it would be placed on the February 23, 2016, agenda for adoption.

"Asheville is a great place to live because we care about people, we invest in our city, and we celebrate our natural and cultural heritage. We have built a city for everyone. Our urban environment and locally-based economy support workers and businesses, families and tourists, and people of all ages. Cultural diversity and social and economic equity are evident in all that we do. Our neighborhoods are strong, participation in civic life is widespread and collaborative partnerships are the foundation of our success.

We are successful because we have a ...

#### EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Asheville is an inclusive and diverse community. We define diversity broadly, including but not limited to all races, ages, sexual orientation, gender identification, socio-economic backgrounds, and cultural beliefs. We believe in creating a fair and balanced society, where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfill their potential and has access to healthy, affordable food. Asheville promotes and supports minority business as a means to strengthening its overall local economy. We use a racial equity lens to review and achieve our city's strategic goals in health, education, housing and economic mobility.

## LAND USE AND PLANNING

Asheville promotes community through thoughtful, resident led planning. The city's diverse citizenry is reflected in its land uses and commerce. Asheville's unique character is preserved in its historic structures, and honored in new development. Innovative planning results in pedestrian oriented development for residents of all ages and abilities, harmonized with an integrated transportation system. Thoroughfares are lined with thriving businesses, mixed with residential and office uses. Neighborhoods are socioeconomically diverse with a range of affordable housing choices. Green spaces, parks, greenways, community gardens, and edible landscapes are abundant throughout the city.

## ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Asheville has earned a reputation as a green leader. The first city in North Carolina to issue green bonds, it has continued to finance infrastructure improvements with innovative green financing tools. Environmentally aware and active Asheville residents swiftly adopted new technology and conservation efforts in response to global climate change. The City is powered by locally generated clean sources of energy and air quality problems have disappeared. Views of surrounding mountains have regained clarity unknown since the late 1800s.

But clean energy is only one facet of this Appalachian gem. Recognized as a Tree City USA for decades, streets, greenways and parks embody an urban forest. Emphasis on local resilience has spurred the use of municipal land for gardening, farming and urban orchards. Known as a food destination city, most restaurants serve locally grown foods.

Thanks to an extremely high-quality water source, nestled amidst towering peaks, Asheville has attracted dozens of clean-energy companies that depend on clean water - from breweries to high tech start-ups to restaurants and food manufacturers. Our modern transportation system has increased options that reduce carbon emissions. Successful waste, recycling and curbside composting programs have greatly reduced the city's landfill needs.

## A HOME FOR EVERYONE

Asheville is a city with abundant housing choices for people at all economic levels and stages of life. Chronic homelessness is a thing of the past and rapid rehousing strategies abound thanks to an effective network of service providers. Housing is affordable not only because of reasonable prices but because of low energy and transportation costs. Innovative and historic housing options, from tiny homes and co-housing to apartments and single-family homes, are available throughout Asheville. Asheville's conventional public housing communities have been transformed into a diverse mix of public, affordable, and market rate homes within vibrant neighborhoods.

## MOVING PEOPLE

Whether you drive a car, take the bus, ride a bike or walk, getting around Asheville is easy. Public transportation is widespread, frequent, and reliable. Sidewalks, greenways, and bike facilities get us where we want to go safely and keep us active and healthy. It is easy to live in Asheville without a car and still enjoy economic, academic, and social success.

## THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMY

Asheville is unique in its locally focused economy. Our local businesses are vibrant. No matter where you are in the city, you see the diversity of customers, employees, and business owners. Our historic buildings are home to funky, eclectic businesses that reflect the character of the city. A creative economy of artists, makers, and innovators is thriving.

We are a city that values its workers, paying living wages and offering benefits that ensure both security and opportunity. Businesses that share those values locate, start, and grow in Asheville. Our economy is diverse, offering a range of career opportunities. Plentiful educational options, workforce development, access to capital, economic incentives, and a culture that values homegrown businesses are what make our economy strong. Our public and private partners have demonstrated unity of purpose. If you do your part, you will find opportunity for success.

## FORWARD TOGETHER/WORKING TOGETHER

Asheville prides itself on building and growing partnerships to achieve our vision. If you live, work or play here, you want to be involved and you have a voice. When you join a citizen board or commission, you are supported by training and empowerment. Our regional and state government partners constructively collaborate with us. Diverse interest groups work together to tackle problems and enhance our community. City government is trusted and transparent. We use the latest technologies and methods to communicate, engage and empower community participants. Neighborhood engagement allows residents the opportunity to express thoughts, visions and concrete plans that build a collective and harmonious community. When you live in Asheville, you belong and are valued.

## STRONG MANAGEMENT

Asheville has an AAA+ bond rating. We use our debt capacity and revenue wisely in order to maintain and improve the City's infrastructure and invest in our public employees. We strive to control our costs and provide the highest possible level of service. Asheville is an employer of choice, taking great care of our employees through a high performing and supportive environment, competitive salaries and benefits. We have a diverse revenue base that enables us to plan far into the future and to benefit from our growth. Our individual and corporate citizens generously invest in our community through partnerships and public/private projects that enrich the quality of life in the city."

Through consensus, Council then worked to identify three-year priorities to achieve the vision, along with discussing expectations regarding the priorities. The following priorities will be reviewed by City staff and develop a staff work plan/organizational strategic plan:

### **Equity and Diversity**

- Institute racial equity toolkit per the Governmental Alliance of Race and Equity (GARE)
  - Consider how the Equitable Development Strategy is integrated with this priority
  - Note that implementation following findings will be needed;
- Review the goals and programming in Parks and Recreation and determine the role that it should play in meeting the needs of citizens and racial equity
- Develop/formalize the partnership with the Asheville City Schools Foundation to support middle school and after school programs that close the achievement gap

- In partnership with others, participate in a community dialogue and potential strategies to honor the history and contributions of the African American community in Asheville, beginning with a community-led effort to install a monument for the African American heritage

### **Land Use and Planning**

- Revisit the Food Action Plan and achieve clarity regarding goals and strategies and timetables
- Revise the Comprehensive Plan
- Implement an effective neighborhood planning process that includes making resources and expertise available to neighborhoods so their input into the Comprehensive Planning process is effective
- Develop a plan for the Haywood Street land use and implement as appropriate
- Adopt new levels of review and design guidelines to protect and preserve downtown

### **Energy & the Environment**

- Implement Zero-Waste Asheville, including effective implementation of a pilot program and change management strategies for Pay as You Throw and use of composting programs
- Meet the goals of the Carbon Reduction Plan
- Implement the Clean Energy Framework and support the partnership with Duke Energy & Buncombe County to reduce energy demand through promotion/implementation of new programs as appropriate

### **A Home for Everyone**

- Continue to work with partners to redevelop Lee Walker Heights
- Implement the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy
  - Explore innovative homes, such as tiny homes and container housing
- Analyze city-owned land and establish a strategy for sale or lease for affordable housing
- Complete redevelopment of the former Parks Maintenance property
- Develop a partnership with Buncombe County to achieve greater levels of affordable housing, to include complementary strategies

### **Moving People**

- Continue to implement the Transit Master Plan
  - Analysis of opportunities to expand transit into the County
- Find additional resources for the management of the transit system
- Implement recommendations of the parking studies as appropriate
- Take appropriate steps to implement the Multimodal Transportation Master Plan
- Complete the appropriate phases of River Arts District Transportation Improvement Plan
- Complete to work toward achieving City goals on I-26

### **Thriving Local Economy**

- Develop and implement Buncombe Community Capital loan program, with an emphasis on minority business
- Research and recommend a portfolio of options/toolbox for small local business support
  - Zoning retention
  - Minority business
  - Economic incentives
  - Communication regarding work opportunity tax credit
- Evaluate the success of past tax economic incentives

## Working Together

- Identify and implement strategies to get more diversity on city boards and commissions
- Develop a strategy to effectively vet policy initiatives through boards and commissions (i.e., clearinghouse, clarification of roles, orientation, charters, reporting)
- Develop an effective training program for boards and commissions
- Develop an effective working relationship with the N.C. Dept. of Transportation so state transportation investments reflect local values and transportation plans
- Identify and expand opportunities for partnerships with Buncombe County, to include energy, transportation, affordable housing, greenway extension, solid waste, parks and recreation facilities and other amenities
- Support the development and implementation of a more effective Council state legislative agenda

## Strong Management

- Identify and evaluate all community agreements including leased properties and develop a system to monitor those agreement
- Examine new revenue streams and make recommendations regarding the viability - Develop a dedicated revenue stream for multimodal infrastructure (i.e., annual municipal vehicle tax)
  - Develop a plan to enhance funding from Tourism Development Authority
  - Leveraging private partnerships
  - Food/Beverage
  - Bond Referendum
- Explore alternatives for post-retirement health insurance benefit for new hires (since 2012)
- Develop a financing program for updating, maintaining and fixing all City-owned property and infrastructure
  - Analysis of deferred maintenance
  - Update infrastructure plans

It was the consensus of Council to move forward with the next steps as outlined by Ms. St. Clair as follows:

1. Ms. St. Clair will send a session report
2. City Manager will distribute the session report
3. Get the 2036 Vision ready to adopt
  - a. Council Subcommittee (Vice-Mayor Wisler and Councilwoman Mayfield) will tweak the vision
  - b. The Council Subcommittee will forward the tweaked vision to the City Clerk, who will then place the revised vision in Council boxes
  - c. Council will review the tweaked vision and send comments to the Council Subcommittee
  - d. 2036 Vision will be placed on the February 23, 2016, agenda for adoption
4. Communicate vision
  - a. Communication and Public Engagement Division will develop a communication plan
  - b. Social media, publications, plan to share at events
5. Staff will take Council's visions and priorities and develop a staff work plan/organizational strategic plan to show:
  - a. A work plan for each priority

- b. Identification of big pieces that may be very expensive with implications for the budget; consideration of how to integrate them into the march budget worksessions
  - c. Identification of current work that fits with priorities
  - d. Action steps with timelines
  - e. How these can be incorporated into core services
6. Staff will come back to Council for endorsement of the priorities
- a. Bring it back as a package
  - b. Schedule discussion of priorities into a March budget worksession
7. Consider a reporting cycle that will keep Council informed
8. Consider revisiting the Vision after every election, with priorities being revisited every year.

Mayor Manheimer adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

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City Clerk

Mayor