



*"Building A Stronger Community  
TOGETHER"*

DATE: January 6, 2012  
TO: Retreat Participants  
FROM: Dave O'Leary  
SUBJECT: Retreat Report

The City held its 1<sup>st</sup> retreat for 2012 on Friday January 6, 2012 in the fire station meeting room. Participants included all members of the City Executive Management Team and all three members of the City Commission. Chief Tim McKern from Mason County Fire District No. 5 attended the first part of the meeting, and Assistant Fire Chief Mike Patty from the same organization attended for the entire meeting. City Administrator, Dave O'Leary facilitated the meeting.

The agenda included these sections:

1. Introduction
2. Strategic Planning
3. Economic Development
4. Streets
5. Boards and Commissions
6. Hot / Timely Topics

## **Introduction**

Dave went over the ground rules saying that when we brainstormed various subjects, that all ideas should be considered.

## **Strategic Planning**

Dave said that the existing Strategic Plan would expire at the end of 2012. The idea behind this section would be to develop a new plan. Dave asked whether meeting attendees believed that we should start a new plan. Everyone agreed that we should. He also asked whether the 6 year timeframe was appropriate.

There was considerable discussion, but participants ultimately agreed that since 6 years matched up with our capital planning processes, it was a good timeline.

Dave suggested that no decisions be made at this meeting. Rather the idea would be to get started on the comp plan renewal process.

Dave then said that classic strategic plans are typically made up of 1) Mission, 2) Vision, 3) Values, and 4) Objectives. Dave suggested that Values were the most important because they underlie everything else. Dave also said that Leadership could be defined around two behaviors: 1) Shining the light and 2) Showing the way. "Shining the light" was a metaphor for the Vision. "Showing the way" was a metaphor for the Values. In other words, it would make no sense to set a goal that achieved a valued end, if we used methods that were contrary to those same values.

For purposes establishing a set of values to consider, Dave asked attendees to complete the following sentence, "We believe in..." Participants responded as follows:

- Protecting the public health and safety
- Open and transparent government
- Serving the citizens of Shelton, legally
- Fiscal responsibility
- Being respectful
- Meeting the needs of our employees
- Doing the right thing
- Common sense
- Sense of humor
- Environmental stewardship
- Adequate infrastructure
- Balance between policy and practicality
- Economic development - prosperity
- Creativity
- Stability
- Sustainability
- Pride in the City
- Open mindedness
- Leave the world better than you find it
- Representing all the citizens

For purposes establishing a set of visions to consider, Dave asked attendees to complete the following sentence, "The City is/has..." Participants responded as follows:

- A place that feels safe
- Sustainable economic development opportunities
- Well maintained infrastructure
- Financial stability
- Diverse employment opportunities
- Opportunities for young people to stay here
- Improved perceptions of the City government
- Enhanced environment
- Improved retention of sales tax in the City
- An environment where people can achieve their dreams

## **Economic Development**

### **Customer Service Strategies – Permit Center**

Dave said that this issue had been raised in the last retreat. He thought it might be considered a continuation of a process to improve service, or at least perceptions of service, in the program.

Dave asked participants to identify problems they perceived in the center. Responses were as follows:

- Match gift to the job
- Interpersonal skills
- Onerous policies
- Wide range of responsibilities
- Erroneous perceptions
- The right of way process

A lengthy discussion followed. In summary, participants did not reach consensus on the above list. Dave suggested that it might be good to identify facts associated with the service, which could help clarify perceptions. Once the facts were identified, it would probably be easier to make decisions.

Dave asked participants to identify a set of possible solutions. Responses were as follows:

- Identify the problem
- Review our policies and regulations
- Conduct an exit survey of people getting building permits
- Survey builders / architects / businesses

- Open better communications with builders and others

Dave said that he would work with Steve to follow up on the above list and report back to the Commission.

### **General Strategies**

Dave said the Economic Development Plan should be made a part of the Comprehensive Plan, and also be folded into the Strategic Plan.

Dave proposed that a viable economic development plan needed to focus on community strengths, and find ways to overcome its weaknesses. Dave proposed conditions that benefited economic development:

- Only City in Mason County
- 20 miles from State Capitol
- Founding industry still thriving – timber
- Aquaculture
- Nickname – Christmastown, USA
- State Patrol Academy
- Washington Corrections Center
- Population
  - 9,000
  - UGA 11,250
  - Daytime – 20,000?
- Regional Airport
- Easy access to I-5 (25 min)
- Fiber optic network
- Progressive elected officials
- Supportive political environment
- Strong work ethic
- Numerous local events drawing regional participation
- Natural environment
- Residents that work in Thurston County
- John's Prairie Water Line
- Satellite Sewer Plant, and Regional Sewer and Reclaimed Water System
- New Sewer Capacity in original system
- Parks system
- Low real estate costs

Dave proposed conditions that are barriers to economic development:

- Occasionally Confrontational Politics
- Limited development opportunities on privately held land
- Low income community
- Recession
- Out of date policies – limited capacity to do policy work

- Streets
- Unfunded mandates
- New normal – expectations <> capacity
- Aging population (This could actually be a benefit)
- Cynicism, Apathy, Disengagement
- Resistance to change
- Crime rate
- Graffiti

Acknowledging these strengths and weaknesses, Dave proposed that we needed to set priorities on the kind of businesses we should work to attract. The group proposed the following list:

- Car business
- Extreme sports
- Historic preservation
- Waterfront
- Timber, wood product businesses
- Aviation
- Aquaculture
- Food
- Senior retirement

### **Shelton Hills**

Steve Goins reported on Shelton Hills, focusing on remaining challenges, including the interchange, legal processes and Goose Lake. Discussion followed.

### **Boards and Commissions**

The Commissioners determined which board and commissions each Commissioner would attend on behalf of the City.

### **Lunch Break**

Participants broke for lunch from Noon until 1:00 PM.

### **Section VI - Hot / Timely Topics**

Participants discussed the following subjects

- Street Lights
- City Government Coordination Manual
- Video Court Hearings / Televised Commission Meetings
- Public Safety Building (Fire Station) Lettering

