

Friday – February 4, 2010 - 10:00 a.m.  
Warren Wilson College  
Gladfelter Building – Canon Lounge

#### City Council Annual Retreat

Present: Mayor Terry M. Bellamy, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Brownie W. Newman; Councilman Cecil Bothwell; Councilman Jan B. Davis; Councilwoman Esther E. Manheimer; Councilman William A. Russell Jr. (left meeting at 1:30 p.m.); 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 annual City Council retreat.

Mayor Bellamy thanked Warren Wilson College for hosting City Council's retreat and introduced Mr. Sandy Pfeiffer, President of Warren Wilson College, who briefly outlined the successful national model of partnership between the City of Asheville and Warren Wilson College.

He welcomed Council to the Warren Wilson College Campus and explained their shared vision of sustainability. He then outlined the many areas of partnership between Warren Wilson College and the City of Asheville.

Mayor Bellamy thanked Councilman Bothwell and Councilman Russell for their assistance on the retreat agenda. She then introduced Mr. Chuck Fink, facilitator, who asked each Council member what outcome they would like to see out of this retreat; how they will measure success of the retreat; and something about themselves that people don't know. He then reviewed the norms of the meeting and had Council do a short exercise regarding the quality of communication.

Discussion surrounded Director of Administrative Services Lauren Bradley's update on the impact of State budget on City of Asheville. Even though a lot is unclear and unknown, she felt we have a manageable process for a continuation budget. Staff will continue to closely watch the State's budget to see how it might impact the community.

It was the consensus of Council to have staff research the steps necessary to enable a voter referendum on sales tax to apply only in the City of Asheville and the timeline.

Discussion occurred through City Attorney Oast's update on the annexation bills and how they would affect our pending annexations. Council was in agreement that we need to educate members of our delegation on the (1) distinction between involuntary and voluntary annexation and encourage them to look at ways to give cities the ability to grow; and (2) need to look for creative ways for the City to grow showing how the City is managing their budget. He also responded to Mayor Bellamy regarding electronic gaming. It was the consensus of Council to support the initiative of the N.C. League of Municipalities' position on annexation.

It was the majority of Council to advise our legislators that City Council is not in favor of a moratorium that stops annexations already in process; but they recognize that the majority supports an anti-annexation bill. They would like the bill to continue to include a provision that they have seen in previous annexation bills that would allow cities to continue to require annexation of development adjacent to the city that makes use of City services, such as water.

Assistant City Manager Jeff Richardson briefly updated Council on the current Strategic Operating Plan. He, and other staff, responded to Council's questions/comments, noting that answers not readily available would be provided to Council.

### **Goals Setting**

There was considerable discussion about the time period for the strategic goals. It was the consensus of Council to review and update the current strategic goals for 2010-11, with staff working immediately on any policy items that have no budgetary impact. However, if there is budgetary impact, it will be wrapped into the next fiscal year budget. Mayor Bellamy explained that after Council identifies their strategic goals, City staff will wordsmith the goals and bring them back to Council at a worksession for their review and then to a formal meeting for adoption. As the budget process for Fiscal Year 2011-12 proceeds, items with big budgetary impacts will go to the Finance Committee and then recommended to Council, possibly in worksession.

Each Council member explained their personal goals, which were then grouped into the following six focus areas: Affordable, Fiscal Responsibility, Green/Sustainable, Safe, Job Growth/Community Development, and Multi-Modal Transportation (which was added as an additional focus area).

#### **Councilman Smith:**

- Look at water rates with an eye toward small business
- Continuing the energy goals set to reduce internal costs
- Maintain commitment to Housing Trust Fund
- Affordable Housing Standing Committee
- Best ways to achieve some master plan goals
- Encourage and facilitate other job creators to connect them with small businesses
- Continue support of incubator program
- Look at food production – how can we support area farmers and area restaurants
- Need for bigger strides in multi-modal transportation
- Track effectiveness of the nuisance court
- Safety for pedestrians on the Hillcrest Pedestrian Bridge
- Add staff and resources to the APD's office for child internet exploitation

#### **Councilman Manheimer:**

- Rewrite of the UDO using a form based method
- Ask the DOT to look at the Merrimon Avenue corridor problem again since they have now adopted the complete streets policy
- Adopt a City of Asheville Complete Streets Policy
- Take action in finding ways to fund sidewalks/bike lanes/greenway projects in a comprehensive manner
- Continue to look at ways to resolve our budget health issues
- Continue to improve our governmental relationships with County Commissioners, state and local delegation, and neighboring municipal communities
- Reinforcement of comprehensive water rates
- Include elements of bike safety

#### **Councilman Davis:**

- Move forward with the Business Improvement District
- Support riverfront redevelopment
- Support Civic Center renovations
- Need for fireworks on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and New Years Eve

**Mayor Bellamy:**

- Make sure that adopted master plans are still a priority
- Foster more employment in our community
- More engagement with the Land-of-Sky
- Review of our enterprise funds
- Seek funding from the Livable Communities Initiative
- Look for ways to fund the Capital Improvement Plan
- Look for ways to leverage our existing dollars for more pedestrian/bike dollars

**Vice-Mayor Newman:**

- Look at proposals on our clean energy commitments
- Need for more multi-modal transportation
- Look for funding for sidewalks and greenways
- Create a new sidewalk crew to focus just on new construction
- Partnership with County on greenways
- Continue to focus on regional issues facing the City – work more with County and state legislators
- Look for more regional sustainability initiatives
- Low income housing tax credit products
- Increase the scale of tax credit projects in Asheville
- Improve air service to the Asheville Regional Airport
- Review High Point model regarding reduction of crime

**Councilman Bothwell:**

- Referendum on public financing of local elections
- Eager to see GIS mapping
- Support UDO rewrite to form based code
- Review selling water to other municipalities
- Look for resources to fund Mountain Bike Skills Park
- Carefully review candidates for Planning & Zoning Commission
- Power Saver Program through the FHA
- Carbon assessment for whole community done by professors and interns at UNC-Asheville or Warren Wilson College
- Public/private partnership for adding solar panels to the Civic Center roof
- Consider a ban for tree-topping
- Review UDO spacing of trees in parking lots to help with heat effect
- Review steep slope law regarding lower elevations
- Reconsider fluoridation in Asheville water
- Advance bicycle and greenway master plans
- Study downtown trolley or circulating trolley in City of Asheville
- Need for more sidewalks
- Consider cost sharing with neighborhoods for more sidewalks
- Impact of increasing of parking fees and lowering deck rates for City residents
- Continue to look at the number of adequate handicapped parking spaces
- Look at Durham's new law which lets police use international id cards for legal id
- Consider 3 Strikes law – City not contracting with companies and contractors who have been found guilty of labor, civil rights, environmental or tax laws

**Councilman Russell** (was not in attendance during this part of the retreat).

Council then reviewed each of the existing goals and objectives which were confirmed, amended or deleted and included, by majority vote, any individual goals.

After reviewing each of Council's personal goals, the following is a list of the new goals and objectives that received majority support of Council, to be folded into the Strategic Operating Plan:

- Affordable Housing Standing Committee
- Review of wholesale and resale water across jurisdictional lines
- Increase engagement with Land-of-Sky on their water study
- Comprehensive review of enterprise funds, community education and transparency
- Analyze Community Improvement District
- Review tree topping policy
- Review requirements of parking lot trees regarding spacing and shade
- Seek to obtain the Livable Communities Grant
- Support "Between the Bridges" initiative
- Maintain momentum and build on partnerships for Civic Center improvements
- Look for partnerships for fireworks on 4<sup>th</sup> of July and New Years Eve
- Support and promote job growth
- Seek resources to enhance Police Department's internet child abuse program
- Monitor High Point's crime model
- Look for resources to fund sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways beyond pay as you go

In addition, the new multi-modal focus area definition was discussed and agreed upon as follows: "Integrate and implement a multi-modal transportation plan including sidewalks, bike paths, signal preemption, transit, greenways, streets, rivers and access to the river, and other system improvements resulting in a funding priority list."

The following list of personal goals, for the new multi-modal focus area, will be narrowed down at a worksession:

- Streets, sidewalks, greenways, river access, etc. Make headway – add new sidewalk crew to double output.
- Look for partnerships for greenway investment.
- Clearly develop long-term Capital Improvement Plan with funding plan. Growth: Take action for funding sidewalk, bike lane, greenway projects beyond pay-go; look for comprehensive strategy.
- Pursue a pedestrian and bike friendly community grant opportunity
  - Leverage existing dollars
- Solve the Merrimon Corridor problem
  - N.C. Dept. of Transportation analysis using Complete Streets Policy
  - Council adoption of Complete Streets policy
- Transit: Make multi-modal its own focus area; advance sidewalks, greenways.
  - Study downtown trolley
  - Evaluate cost-sharing for sidewalk projects
- Consider parking rate increase
  - Lower rate for residents
  - Adequate handicapped spaces
- Multi-modal Transportation for sidewalks, greenways, transit, etc. How can we increase support for this overarching goal?
- G.I.S. mapping of Master Plans.
- Evaluate and affirm goals to ensure alignment with Council and the community.
- Bike safety enhancements
  - Public education

Councilman Bothwell asked that as we try to go paperless that that staff not provide hard copies of PowerPoint presentations.

At the request of Councilman Davis, Mayor Bellamy, liaison to the Asheville School Board, will convey to them the extravagant look of their annual report, with Mayor Bellamy noting that they do have an in house print-shop.

**Economic Outlook**

Economic Development/Civic Center Director Sam Powers and Mr. Ben Teague, Senior Vice President of Economic Development at the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, reviewed with Council the overarching economic outlook for our area.

**Wrap Up**

When Councilman Smith felt this retreat felt rushed, City Manager Jackson said that if a facilitator would have been hired earlier a lot of the preparatory work could have been done in advance. Councilman Smith suggested the next retreat committee be identified sooner to begin work on the next retreat.

Councilman Davis was very pleased with the retreat location; however, since we also have a partnership with UNC-Asheville he suggested that as a location for the next retreat.

**Adjournment**

The retreat adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

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City Clerk

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Mayor