

Friday – February 17 - 9:00 a.m.  
UNC-Asheville - Overlook Hall

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.

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 assist City Council in reaffirming its vision and priorities and to develop roles and operating guidelines that maximize its success as an elected body.

Ms. St. Clair reviewed the roles of Council members and the facilitator.

Council had a brief climate setting which included their family of origin, a person from their early life that had the most impact on who they are today, an event from their early life that had the most impact on who they are today, what they liked to do in their spare time, and one way they would like to contribute leadership to Council.

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

She shared the characteristics of an effective vision that Council used last year to craft their 2036 Vision - vivid, unique, challenging, clarity, focused and shared. Last year, Council thought about what they wanted to keep and what they wanted to change. Then they sorted them into vision themes with a list of priorities which turned into goals and individual action plans.

Council reviewed and reaffirmed their Vision statement to provide intent and inspiration for the role and direction of City Council. They then identified many successes in moving toward the Council's vision over the past year, some being, but are not limited to: revision of the use of force policy; overwhelming support for the bond program; moving ahead on planning for Comprehensive Plan; working on form-based code; 29 neighborhoods did the Plan on a Page; moving ahead on hiring an Equity Inclusion Manager; new investments in transit; regarding zoning, created new and improved opportunities for people to weigh in on development - first in subdivisions, then for downtown; Energy Innovation Task Force was created and is moving forward solidly in partnership with the County, Duke Energy and other stakeholders; won the water lawsuit; big jump in funding for affordable housing due to approval of bonds; made first agreement to transition City-owned land to affordable housing with private partner; unanimously created many task forces to addresses difficult issues; used Land Use Incentive Grant to advance affordable housing; created our partnership with NCDOT to improve the I-26 Connector; improved communications with the community, including new website; becoming more of an open data city; implemented Ban the Box; started asking about renter/homeownership on board & commission applications to make sure we were getting diversity; started construction of River Arts District Transportation Improvement Project; co-funded the African American Heritage Commission's visioning process for deciding how to honor contributions of the African American community; funded a disparity study; secured funding for other multi-modal improvements (outside of bonds/other sources), including \$4 Million for Craven Street bridge; adopted new 5-Year plan on homelessness, aimed at ending veteran homelessness by the end of this year as its highest priority; retained Southern Conference Basketball; unanimously passed resolutions on several social/civil rights issues; committed funding for the reconstruction of Lee Walker Heights;

have done a lot of technology - parking technology, the Asheville App, Open City Hall, SimpliCity; partnership with Arboretum on Holiday Downtown Lighting Display; open streets and walkable Wall Street; busking regulations that everyone loves is pleased with; 3% growth in private investment; more businesses in Asheville (predominantly in the City's Innovation District, and especially in the South Slope, Downtown, River where infrastructure is targeted; managing the substation placement process to minimize impacts on neighborhoods and have adequate power for the downtown area; partnerships with Buncombe County and others (African American Heritage Commission, Equity, Family Justice Center, Energy Innovation Task Force, second phase of composting study, and potential for affordable housing and transit, etc.); advanced greenways; Transit Department worked with N.C. Dept. of Transportation on analyzing pedestrian safety issues; provided funding to Festival of Neighborhoods; approved improvements to Pritchard Park; still working on major projects/major works partnership with TDA, including \$20 Million proposal for Central Business District and South Slope improvements; In Real Life Program now has a permanent line item; and participated in planning and co-funded universal access to Pre-K.

After reviewing the successes over the past year, Council and management staff each listed out their observations of those accomplishments.

Council reviewed the three-year primary goals to assess the status and reaffirm intent. They identified them as completed, continue or eliminate and agreed not to add new priorities.

Ms. St. Clair then assisted City Council in clarifying roles and establishing operating guidelines that will maximize its success as an elected body. Council broke out into two groups to discuss two areas each - Council decision-making effectiveness; Council's ability to facilitate staff productivity/use resources effectively; Council cohesive/Ability to work together; and Council ability to us boards/commissions/committees effectively. The following were the draft results of the discussion, with Ms. St. Clair to tweak the guidelines for Council approval:

### **Council Cohesion/Working Together**

1. Mayor's monthly meetings - mix up composition regularly
2. Use more worksessions for bigger issues
3. Upcoming agenda items at end of each agenda, discuss process, timing

### **Boards/Commissions/Committees/Liaisons/Task Forces**

1. Maintain (neutral) interested citizenry list from boards & commission process for appointment (consideration) to Task Forces
2. Simultaneous process for review of complex issues by multiple boards & commissions; specific agenda item and timeline for each board & commission so they each see the same proposal
3. Annual assessment/review of boards & commission by Boards & Commission Committee (checking to make sure some boards/commissions are making good policy, if they are within their role, etc.)
4. Re-evaluation of the effectiveness of Council liaisons. Should we keep and if so, better define roles. Need to define liaison role and make sure the applicable board/commission members committee know of Council's liaison role.

### **Council decision making**

1. Council will delegate to the City Manager and Mayor review all items on agenda to make sure it has gone through the appropriate committee/commission if needed.
2. Council will ask Boards & Commission Committee to identify a systematic process (template) for for gaining community input/engagement for special advisory task forces (i.e., outlining the task and timeline, what are the expectations, parameters on decision-making process; whether a Council liaison should be appointed, etc.)
3. Boards & Commissions Committee will be responsible for evaluating community engagement process and roles with special issues. Evaluate issues that don't fall into regular decision-making structure - task forces.

**Staff productivity:**

1. Council will send questions to City Manager and copy his assistant.
2. Council will ask for updates or status of committees and commissions issues from committee chairs or council liaisons (or other knowledgeable resources)
3. Council will indicate their expectations regarding a response (such as fyi, may be worth looking into, etc.) when they send e-mails to the City Manager.
4. Council will direct emerging issues to appropriate council committee, and if none, then refer to Governance Committee
5. Stronger leadership role by Council/liaison/commission chair & staff guidance with boards and commission committees and their scope of work
6. If one member of Council is requesting information-gathering on emerging issues that exceeds a certain amount of staff time that it should receive four nods before staff proceeds with obtaining that information.

Council instructed the City Clerk to add tentative upcoming agenda items on each agenda.

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 report to City Manager and his assistant, including the operating guidelines; (2) City Manager will share report with Council and ask for comments; (3) City Manager will then realign any changes in priorities with staff and communicate any relevant notes; (4) Strategic Operating Plan will be revised to reflect any changes and will be sent out again; (5) staff to send out via social media successes; and (5) Council to approve the operating guidelines at a future Council meeting under New Business.

Mayor Manheimer adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

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City Clerk

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Mayor