



CITY COUNCIL MINUTES *REVISED*
2018 PLANNING SESSION
JANUARY 26-27, 2018

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Debbie Bertlin called the 2018 City Council Planning Session to order at 3:00 pm in the Luther Burbank Room at the Mercer Island Community and Event Center, 8236 SE 24th Street, Mercer Island, WA.

Mayor Debbie Bertlin, Deputy Mayor Salim Nice, and Councilmembers Tom Acker, Bruce Bassett, Wendy Weiker, David Wisenteiner, and Benson Wong were present.

The attached report is hereby incorporated by reference as the minutes of the 2017 City Council Planning Session.

The Council recessed at 6:15 pm on Friday, January 26, 2018 and the meeting resumed at 8:30 am on Saturday, January 27, 2018

ADJOURNMENT

The Planning Session adjourned at 5:15 pm on Saturday, January 27, 2018.

Attest:

Debbie Bertlin, Mayor

Allison Spietz, City Clerk

Mercer Island City Council 2018 Planning Session
Mercer Island Community and Event Center
Friday & Saturday January 26-27, 2018

ATTENDEES

City Council

Debbie Bertlin, Mayor
Salim Nice, Deputy Mayor
Tom Acker, Councilmember
Bruce Bassett, Councilmember
Wendy Welker, Councilmember
David Wisenteiner, Councilmember
Benson Wong, Councilmember

Trainer

Sara Wilson

Facilitator

Marci Wright

City Staff

Julie Underwood, City Manager
Kirsten Taylor, Assistant City Manager
Chip Corder, Finance Director/Assistant City
Manager
Scott Greenberg, Development Services Group
Director
Cindy Goodwin, Youth & Family Services Director
Steve Heitman, Fire Chief
Ed Holmes, Police Chief
Mike Kaser, IT Director
Jason Kintner, Public Works Director
Kari Sand, City Attorney
Kryss Segle, Human Resources Director
Ali Spietz, City Clerk
Paul West, Parks Superintendent

FRIDAY JANUARY 26, 2018

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

The Mayor and City Manager made introductory remarks and introduced the participants. Attendees reviewed proposed **Planning Session Norms** as follows:

- Everyone participates and is engaged
 - Listen with respect
 - Let others finish before you start talking
 - Be attentive to the speaker
 - Disagree agreeably-look for opportunities to agree
- Questions of clarification are encouraged
- Disparaging comments and side conversations are discouraged
- Conflict must be focused on the issues, not on personalities
- Strive for consensus and provide clear direction
- Silence is agreement
- Remember the power of “and” & “if”
 - Practice “yes, and” rather than “yes/no, but”
 - In seeking consensus consider something that you may disagree with and consider “if” something changed how you might be able to move to consensus
 - Put another way, if you cannot live with the direction, you must offer an alternative
- Be productive and have fun!
- Use cell phones only during breaks

Attendees confirmed agreement with the **Planning Session Norms**

GOALS AND ROLES

Council identified their **Goal** as a Councilmember and their **Role** in achieving Goal.

Councilmember Acker

- **Goal:** To help protect the values of the community and prepare for the challenges of the future
- **Role:** To provide leadership, direction, expertise and governance while fostering collaborative partnerships, locally and regionally

Councilmember Bassett

- **Goal:** Keep long term focus, advance sustainability-thinking, advance transportation solutions, be aware of silent majority at all times—not just engaged advocates
- **Role:** "Senior statesman," keeper of history, more advocacy than as Mayor

Mayor Bertlin

- **Goal:** Broaden the number of voices in the dialogue and "get stuff done"
- **Role:** Facilitate and surface diverse perspectives and good governance

Deputy Mayor Nice

- **Goal:** To advocate for Islanders by engaging with my community, improving local government, promoting transparency of government, supporting public safety, protecting our quality of life and excellent schools, seeking mobility solutions, and achieving meaningful opportunities to attain sustainability goals.
- **Role:** To maintain a vested interest in a City Council which is highly engaged and informed on the issues, deliberate and thoughtful in their decision making, disciplined and capable of restraint, compassionate and is focused on positive outcomes that make Mercer Island a better and more attractive place to call home.

Councilmember Wisenteiner

- **Goal:** Enhance Mercer Island as a place to live (more fun), lend skillset to the challenges we are facing, create/continue our ability to stay independent
- **Role:** Person who adds perspective of "why do we do it this way?", fiscal responsibility, greater representation of Islanders

Councilmember Weiker

- **Goal:** Quality of life -- schools/parks and infrastructure/utility board, #Girl power
- **Role:** Get others to listen and act

Councilmember Wong

- **Goal:** Effective listener of community issues and concerns and effective change agent for the benefit of Island residents
- **Role:** Go to community group meetings to gather opinions, listen to Councilmembers/staff, be prepared for meetings

TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE

Trainer Wilson shared the Strength Deployment Inventory (SDI) model and Council's results with Council and staff. The SDI results provide a vivid way of seeing oneself and others from the perspective of motives under two conditions – when things are going well and in conflict. The resulting discussion was directed towards ways that staff could most effectively provide information and decision points to Council and ways that Council could work most effectively together.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 2018

2017 ACCOMPLISHMENTS REVIEW

Attendees shared and reviewed some of the City's accomplishments in 2017 (it was noted that the full list of accomplishments were included in the Planning Session packet), including:

- Adopted Residential Development Standards including tree replacement/protection ordinance and noise ordinance
- Reached Settlement Agreement with Sound Transit
- Hired City Manager Underwood (and she stayed!)
- Held 47 Council Meetings (the norm is 24)
- Developed new Community Communication Tools (e.g. Held first Telephone Town Hall)
- Completed a great parks project (e.g. Island Crest Way Turf project)
- Resolved Freeman Avenue liability issue
- Issued record number of building permits
- Restored funding for open space
- Improved citizen engagement re: Sound Transit
- Record Thrift Shop sales of \$1.6 million
- Received 23rd clean annual audit in a row by State of Washington
- Refinanced 2009 LTGO Bonds related to Sewer Lake Line and South Mercer Playfields—saved \$586,000
- No major utility failures; handled emergency repairs quickly and efficiently
- Staff successfully provided high levels of analysis/work for both emerging and planned workload
- Successful collective bargaining negotiations
- Mercer Island Police Department—new community engagement outreach efforts
- Kicked off Public Works Asset Management System
- Kicked off Financial Challenges Community Advisory Group (CAG)
- YFS Giving from the Heart Breakfast a big success
- Amended City Council Rules of Procedure (1st time in ten years)

Council and staff acknowledged that this valuable work was accomplished during a very busy 2017 with unusually trying circumstances. The efforts and results of 2017 have set up the City for a successful 2018.

2017-2018 CITY GOALS AND WORK PLAN

Council first reviewed the 2017-2018 City Goals and Work Plan to determine which goals were completed and which should be retained and/or revised as follows:

Goal 1—Preserve I-90 Access and Mobility and prepare for Light Rail

Goal 2—Maintain the City's Residential Character

Goal 3—Enhance Communications and Opportunities for Community Engagement

Goal 4—Maintain Quality of Life Services by Addressing the City's Financial Challenges

Goal 5—Strengthen and Realign City Manager Role and City Council-Staff Relations

Goal 6—Address Outdated City Codes and Practices

After discussion, the Council concluded that Goals 2, 3 and 5 had been completed, and that Goals 1, 4 and 6 should be retained/revised. In addition, the City Manager notes that she would have staff incorporate Goal 3 within each goal going forward.

Council then went through an exercise to provide their ideas for goals or action items they would like the City to focus on in 2018 and 2019. The bulleted statements listed below are transcriptions of each of the items:

Goal 1—Preserve I-90 Access and Mobility and prepare for Light Rail

- Develop plan to wisely allocate settlement money
- Consider new Mobility Board or Commission
- Prioritize first/last mile solutions/pilot studies/long term methods using Sound Transit settlement money and Metro partnerships
- Conduct periodic survey of car licenses at Mercer Island Park & Ride (% of Mercer Island residents versus % of off-Island)
- Single occupancy vehicle and high occupancy vehicle access and mobility
- Dedicated Mercer Island commuter parking
- Involve community in identifying uses for Sound Transit funds
- Build to the future versus today
- Increase intra & off-island mobility options

Goal 4—Maintain Quality of Life Services by Addressing the City’s Financial Challenges

- Stand-alone YFS Levy to sustainably fund department
- Expand Thrift Shop to increase revenue & make YFS more self-sustaining
- Expand Thrift Shop/reorganize
- Stand-alone YFS operating levy
- Address City’s financial challenges
- Money challenges
 - CAG
 - Levy Ballot prep
 - Campaign
 - Explain consequences of fail
- Create dedicated communications position
- Full time communications position

Goal 6—Address Outdated City Codes and Practices

- Keep CAO & sewer
- Focus on backlog of compliance issues—franchises, critical areas
- Protection of parks and increase public amenities (PROS Plan)
- IT security & upgrades
- Increase technology driven solutions
- Sign code update
- Social host update (marijuana)
- Better open space & parks engagement/public advisory board?
- Website rebuild
- Revisit advisory boards & commissions and task forces

In addition to retaining/revising these three goals, the Council also discussed ideas for adding new goals. After considering many ideas, Council asked staff to prepare draft goals in the following subject areas (bulleted statements listed below are transcriptions of each of the items):

Sustainability

- Sustainability Framework
 - Environment
 - Diversity
 - Financial
 - Etc.
- Beyond just environment—include a comprehensive planning overlay/tool (e.g. STAR)
- Adopt a framework, create a climate action plan, challenge Mercer Island School District
- Provide information concerning what a STAR community framework would cost
- Advance inclusivity within culture/community

Arts

- Define, develop community arts & culture strategy (staff to formulate this as a goal statement)
- Engage public on the arts & MICA

Infrastructure

- Address aging infrastructure and plan for future need
- Alternative mobility strategies on Island
 - Bike/pedestrian infrastructure
- Adopt complete streets and improve bike facilities
- Address critical infrastructure
 - Utilities
 - City facilities
 - Parks
 - Etc.
- Bike/pedestrian improvements
- Enhanced mobility opportunities (bike, pedestrian)
- Increase City utility maintenance & operations; bandwidth and timeframe

Emergency Management/Public Safety

- Enhance emergency preparedness through additional volunteers, resourcing and training
- Ensure adequate public safety preventative and response provisions are in place to protect citizens, visitors and commuters
- Public well-being and safety
 - Emergency preparation
 - Drones
 - Fire hazards (fireworks)
 - Active shooter/bomb threat
 - Etc.
- Enhanced emergency preparation/response volunteer program
- Public Safety—both preventative and response—ensure adequate emergency response and communicate importance to citizens
- *Note: this proposed goal will be discussed at an upcoming February work session and Council will use that information to determine whether to retain this as a 2018-2019 Goal*

The Council also considered the following goal ideas, but did not advance them for further consideration (as a goal) at this time:

- DSG performance audit
 - May be considered in the budget process
- City organization chart review
 - Council is comfortable with City Manager proceeding on this however she sees fit
- Consider LEAN process
 - Suggestion for City Manager
- Town Center/Economic Development
 - Not currently sufficiently defined/developed to pursue as goal
 - Councilmembers Acker and Wong volunteered to work on this item to better define the problem to solve.

Staff agreed to use the above information to develop a draft 2018-2019 Goals and Work Plan including each identified goal and to bring the draft back to Council for discussion and approval.

EMERGING ISSUES FOR 2018-2019 BIENNIUM BUDGET

Staff reviewed emerging issues that were included in the Planning Session packet regarding:

- Human Resources
 - Federal and State laws and mandates will significantly impact the City's overall compensation and benefits, driving up costs
- Human Services
 - Increase in number of requests for services/ presentation of higher needs by clients
 - Seniors have emerging needs to age in place in the community
 - Youth well-being, including elevated anxiety observed in school children, especially in elementary schools

- Utility and Parks Infrastructure
 - Water Utility: significant capital projects identified in the 2015 Water System Plan to be constructed between 2015 and 2020
 - Sewer Utility: updated 2018 General Sewer Plan will address the aging sewer system
 - Street Fund: TIP funding remains a challenge, balanced through programming and phasing of construction projects
 - Parks: capital reinvestment needs are expected to grow due to deteriorating infrastructure
- Financial
 - Service level reductions if an operating levy lid lift is placed on the November 2018 ballot and fails
 - Preliminary 2019-2020 budget will be balanced assuming service level reductions are required
 - There are financial tools to bridge the gap and provide a considered transition as needed
 - Exploring alternative service delivery models for library services, fire/EMS, marine patrol; 12-18-month time frame to fully investigate, does not help to bridge the gap in 2019
- Development Services Group
 - Public frustration regarding ministerial permits where staff have very little discretion to require applicant modifications outside of adopted code requirements

The following issues were noted:

- It's new information that all existing city infrastructure was initially installed in the same short time frame (1960's, 70's and 80's). It is significant that it is now all aging out at the same time. Will keep this issue in mind as staff work on Infrastructure Goal. Staff noted they will be talking more with Council as information is gathered
- Concerns about workload issues—what is the best way to handle new workload demands, should new goals fit within existing demands, and how does this allow workload to remain reasonable and doable?
- What are current challenges to recruitment/retention of employees?
- Concerning permit comments—can we more clearly communicate what type of comment/input we are soliciting?
- Council was concerned about unintended consequences at the time of passing the Residential Code ordinance—Council would like staff to report back
- Suggest DSG try to fix the notice issue themselves before bringing it back to Council

2019-2020 BUDGET & SCHEDULE

Staff reviewed the information provided in the Planning Session packet regarding the schedule for the 2019-2020 Biennial Budget process and adoption.

GOOD GOVERNANCE—ONE TEAM

Council and staff discussed the following items in relation to good governance and a “one team” mentality:

- Council-Staff Communications Guidelines
- City Council Rules of Procedure
- Boards & Commissions Appointment Process, Council Liaison Appointment Process, Council Subcommittees

The following comments were noted regarding the proposed Council-Staff Communications Guidelines and the proposed amendments to the City Council Rules of Procedure:

- Council communication—City Manager prefers that any communication to appropriate Director will be cc'd to City Manager—even on issues prior to service on Council & “resident type” issues. Council should be aware that even if Councilmember does not cc City Manager, that staff will do so on any reply
- Councilmembers can be comfortable telling a citizen that a request is being forwarded to appropriate staff member who will respond
- If a citizen request is received by an individual Councilmember email, staff will not see it—so be sure to forward to appropriate staff
- These guidelines can be a helpful tool for Council to work with citizens
- The guideline “Respect the will of the ‘full’ City Council” replaces the “one-hour rule” from the Rules of Procedure. Staff will determine if a request from a Councilmember “reaches a certain degree” in terms of workload or policy when reviewing whether it's reasonable for staff to take the issue on
- Avoid posting/responding on someone else's NextDoor post—there is no backup of this record by the City

- Council requested simple language for Council to use to explain why can't respond to another's post on Next Door
- Follow up with Sound Cities Association about social media policy
- Council does not want staff to feel obligated to respond to nonemergency messages in off hours—staff will revise rule to reflect this
- Should social media language be moved to Council Rules of Procedure?
- Councilmember Absences—Council prefers the status quo in approving absences
- Staff will report back to Council on the costs of videoing all Council meeting types and Planning Commission and Design Commission meetings and possibly provide information on the demand for video for each type
- Staff will tweak language concerning proclamations and eliminate the prescribed list (which will be included in the Planning Schedule).
- Staff will revise the Agenda Preparation language

The Council gave the following direction regarding the Boards & Commissions Appointment Process, Council Liaison Appointment Process, and Council Subcommittees discussion:

- A Council ad hoc committee was created to review and recommend a new process for appointing Design Commission, Planning Commission, and Utility Board members (Councilmembers Acker, Weiker, and Wong).
- Requested a comprehensive review of the City's advisory boards and commissions to determine if any should be added, refreshed, or discontinued.
- Agreed that the Mayor should consult with the Deputy Mayor when making Council liaison appointments
- Sunset the Public Safety Subcommittee, put the Parks & Recreation Council Subcommittee on hiatus until a larger discussion of all boards and commissions is had; and maintain the Sustainability Committee.
- Propose language in the Rules of Procedure regarding Council committees

Staff will work on revisions to these processes and bring back to the Council for consideration.

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Councilmembers nominated citizens for the 2017 Citizen of the Year award. Following discussion of the nominees, the Council made their selection for 2017. The nominee will be honored at an upcoming 2018 Council meeting.