

CITY COUNCIL

July 21, 2001

ROLL CALL - PRESENT:

Alderman Jean-Baptiste	Alderman Engelman
Alderman Wynne	Alderman Rainey
Alderman Bernstein	Alderman Feldman
Alderman Kent	Alderman Newman

A Quorum was present.

ABSENT: Alderman Moran

STAFF PRESENT: Judith Aiello, Maureen Barry, Roger Crum, Mark Franz, Donna Stuckert

PRESIDING: Mayor Lorraine H. Morton

A SPECIAL MEETING of the City Council was called to order by Mayor Morton Saturday, July 21, 2001 at 9:00 a.m. in the Community Meeting Room of the Evanston Public Library for the purpose of conducting a goal-setting workshop.

Mayor Morton made welcoming remarks. City Manager Roger Crum stated that staff welcomed the opportunity to start the next four-year term with one new player; recalled a goal setting workshop held in 1997 and a partial one the following year. As staff works on the budget, it is helpful to know where the Council is coming from and for Council to know where staff is coming from. It was suggested in the Rules Committee, and staff believes it is a good idea, to think about where they will go in the next four years, thus they would concentrate on the future and not the past.

Robert Oberwise, Executive Partners facilitator, said that the workshop was about possibility and priorities; suggested a dialogue out of the heat of battle of operating a city and taking a step back to think about what might be important for the City in the next four years. Many Council members told him there are key issues and he acknowledged it was important to get a handle on them. He noted how an issue is looked at is important because it influences how they deal with it. When they look at challenges constructively they can figure ways to deal with them. While they would not always agree on what the right direction is, it helps when an issue is debated. He said the conversations are ultimately about resources and how resources (financial and people) are used. Their thinking that day would be about how resources are divided and shared. He noted that all want more and it is always a question of doing with what one has. Perhaps resources can be increased. He said this workshop was also about their stewardship role. Citizens have entrusted the Council with the direction the City will take and making sure that the City is in a better place in four years than it is today. How do they want to leave the City four years from now? What do they want people to say about this Council? Ground rules were to be there mentally, wear their big "E" (Evanston) hat and engage in open/honest dialogue. If points are made they don't have to be repeated and silence implies consensus. He saw this as a way to get started on their planning/ budgeting processes and how staff will allocate resources to accomplish certain tasks during the year. The process is structured but with the opportunity to provide the kind of dialogue people need to have. After introductions, the group would do a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) analysis, which is a way of assessing where they are currently. They

would spend some time on long-term thinking and where they will be in four years. Based on that they would develop some priorities/goals.

Mr. Oberwise started by asking the group to look at the strengths of Evanston/municipal government. The group described its people as diverse, intelligent, forward thinking, giving (volunteers), deeply politically involved and interested. Excellent public/private education system – public education deals with all social and economic levels. Northwestern University, Kendall College, National-Louis University, Garrett-Evangelical Theological and Seabury-Western Theological seminaries. Reputation. Location near Chicago and Lake Michigan. Physical beauty of City and its architectural heritage. Two hospitals rated in the upper 100 ranking in the USA. Thriving art community. Tremendous community pride. Restaurant capital of the North Shore. A real and inclusive downtown. Headquarters for international organizations. Religious capital. Excellent transportation. Strong tax base. Good workforce. Strong competent Council. Dedicated top notch City staff. Variety of housing options. Parks and recreational opportunities. Excellent water supply. Passion for problem solving. Tries to be all things to all people.

The group then identified weaknesses here: more needs than money to pay for them; diversity; Northwestern University; urban setting; aging housing stock and infrastructure; space limits; trying to be all things to all people; weak tax base; too much property off the tax rolls; communications and public relations; citizens' high expectations; perception that it is difficult to do business here; high property taxes; tough parking; street paving; lack of diversity among senior City staff; crime, gangs and drugs; lack of programs to prevent youth from falling into crime; homelessness; high concentration of mentally ill; no job training for ex-convicts and a large presence of ex-convicts; losing low- and moderate-income homeowners; large presence of poverty level families; need to update many ordinances; lack of cooperation by Cook County Housing Authority on Section 8 program; lack of cooperation with other taxing bodies; impact of rapid growth on quality of life; borders Chicago with nation's third highest crime rate; discomfort with change; location next to lake; Dutch elm disease; shortage of mid-range jobs; Howard Street; City staff shortages.

Opportunities identified were the lakefront and canal front (North Shore Channel Sanitary District of Chicago); control of Section 8 program; affordable housing for owners/renters and retention of low/moderate income homeowners; enhanced commerce; development of strong partnerships with not-for-profit organizations; employment training for ex-convicts; communication – what the City has to offer; pave all alleys; reconcile the cost of needs with the ability to pay; find other revenue sources; expand the housing market; continue enhancement of parks and recreational programs; work more closely with school districts 65 and 202; redevelop Howard Street to eliminate obsolete structures; continue enhancement of downtown; tap into diverse experiences of community; redirect and assist the lives of youth; determine City's assets and long-term infrastructure needs considering low interest rates and the City's Aaa bond rating; make a diverse city work; planning that takes a large view of all neighborhoods; public input as prepare next year's City budget; examine land use policies.

External threats identified were: location near City of Chicago; unfunded mandates; high expectations; lack of money; aging infrastructure; a downturn in the economy; litigation; lack of attention to youth who are falling through the cracks; crime and property crimes; erosion of civility – disrespect for people and laws; erosion of residents' expectations of the quality of life; poverty; the ability to hire for certain positions (police officers); housing prices; educational system; public perception that Evanston may be too expensive to live in; high taxes; tolerance of achievement gap between minority students and others; high level of tolerance for violence; tolerance of lack of civility of youth; loss of single-family housing replaced by multiple-family housing destruction of neighborhoods; rising incidence of foreclosures due to speculating slumlords; vocal single-interest groups without the broad picture; lack of land for expansion.

Mr. Oberwise commented that the SWOT analysis is a snapshot of where the City is.

The next exercise was to stand in the future with the snapshot of where they are now. Mr. Oberwise explained they would think in terms of 2005 and what they had accomplished. He explained the Disney Corporation's method, which is to divide into three groups: dreamers, realists and skeptics. Dreamers dream about what is possible; realists take the dream and figure out some of the how to accomplish it. The reason for the separation is that new ideas need to germinate and, if exposed to a storm, die. This was to generate ideas without blowing everything out of the water. In the exercise they

would ask 'what will they produce in four years?' Three separate groups would develop statements as to what Evanston would look like in 2005 using categories of residential life, transportation, downtown, economic development, city services, community organizations, governance and leadership.

Group one identified a marina off Calvary Cemetery as a revenue generator and recreational facility; all streets resurfaced and alleys paved; comprehensive program for affordable housing; new Civic Center downtown; all City facilities in good condition; Howard Street renewed; Church/Dodge and Simpson streets revived; balanced budget with 1% property tax increase; new partnerships with large non-profit organizations; fully upgraded street lighting; beautification throughout the community; a performing arts center not operated by the City; noticeable lowering of crime rate; parking available throughout the community; City is more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly; more money to work with; library book collection that matches quality of the library building; M/W/EBE program that results in jobs for Evanston residents; positive attributes of lakefront and trees maintained; Dutch Elm disease eliminated; Council meetings that end the day they start; constructive discussions of community problems; better working relationships with the schools; better understanding by community of the various taxing bodies; non-profit institutions that have a 100% commitment to the community; budget surplus; fully funded liability reserves; complete information in procurement decision-making; positive and coordinated development in Rogers Park area; fully coordinated Lighthouse complex; day care and early childhood programs for every child; public art program; completion of Chicago Avenue streetscape in its most green form; reliable electrical power; completely upgraded park system and Robert Crown Center; community organizations that see the big picture; interactive citizen communications/transactions; improved public transportation; effective binding appearance guidelines for commercial buildings; elimination of slum landlords; youth programs that work; effective land use in west Evanston; thriving business districts; rodent-proof garbage cans; job training for real jobs; integrated housing policies; high level of participation in recycling; City fire stations rebuilt; police/fire headquarters renovation completed; Sherman Plaza redevelopment successfully completed; ADA compliance in all City facilities; redistricting without controversy; no drownings at beaches; traffic safety without speed control devices; both sides of Orrington Avenue revitalized; completion of the long-term sewer project; all viaducts renovated; jet skis eliminated from Lake Michigan and better working relationships between boards/commissions and City Council.

Group two under City services came up with job training with private sector and university; development of Radio Evanston to broadcast City services, enhanced communication; consistent communication between City departments; automated and centralized log-in of citizen complaints with confirmation and resolution; reduced City staff and improved customer service; proactive service delivery - infrastructure. Under governance and leadership, Council meetings that end; improved communication/information to elected officials; more input from lower level staff on service delivery; increase money and staff to Council to do their work; budget system streamlined - policy addressed all year-long with major decisions reached before adoption of budget; entire community involved in setting budget priorities. Under residential life, low to non-existent crime - bored cops; housing opportunities for all income levels; parkways and yards manicured and maintained; no foreclosures or boarded up buildings; vacant lots transformed into affordable housing; manageable traffic flows; cure for Dutch elm disease; greater sense of familiarity/community with neighbors; all parks used by families and children; closer relationships between adults and youth - respect for elders. Under transportation, Green Bay Road and Ridge Avenue gracefully unified; better connectors at public transit for working people; a rail line going west; bike routes; bus system operates seven days a week for senior citizens; streets, alleys and sidewalks repaired or paved; more courteous cab drivers and service; refurbished viaducts and El stations; interior lagoon with marina, restaurants link to canal with toll booth; managed traffic control. In downtown, strong retail base with varied stores that provide for needs of City; family-oriented stores such as toys; family-oriented restaurants; strong entertainment element with residential tie; a brew pub - live music downtown expanded to neighborhoods or linked to neighborhoods; neighborhood festivals (not all downtown); diversify downtown entertainment for families; Under economics, thriving business enclaves; long-term commitment to revitalizing Howard Street and Church/Dodge; raise enough revenue to meet rising needs of community; agreement with non-profit organizations to provide more revenue (regular financial contributions); job training program for youth, ex-convicts, unemployed and placement; support for new businesses incubators and independently owned; community organizations and religious bodies make broader contributions financially and socially; not-for-profits take more ownership for overall well-being of City; reduction in one-issue constituencies; not-for-profits collectively focused with City on major issues and resolutions.

Group three came in with the Section 8 program administered more effectively; Howard Street with new variety of multi-family housing and small service retail from Ridge to Chicago Avenue; a greater variety of housing options in the 5th Ward; all alleys paved and lighted; more street lights for safety throughout community; state-of-the-art parks and community centers; a south Evanston community center; all streets repaved; tax reform for schools; starting on time and shorter Council meetings; well-organized and informed community/citizens groups; communication network; aldermen go high-tech (à la Alderman Rainey); no electrical power outages; a municipal power distribution plant; better commercial sanitation; no rats and semi-annual squirrel slaughter; new/renovated Civic Center; non-profit organizations make payments in lieu of taxes; a Supreme Court decision questions Northwestern University's tax-exempt status; increase in compensation to Council members; a Skokie Swift stop at Mulford and Dodge; a Metra stop at Howard and Chicago; better inter-city transportation - shuttle buses east/west; contributions by non-profit organizations; designated bicycle paths; strong neighborhood business districts; total viaduct reconstruction; a marina and pier off of Calvary Cemetery; water taxis to the Loop; a fourth parking garage west on Davis Street; elimination of Dutch elm disease; no pending litigation; enhanced police presence; combined school districts; a consolidated budget; elimination of Evanston Township government; residents in 60203 zip code pay Evanston taxes; increased sales tax and reduced property taxes; elimination of Ridgeville/Lighthouse Park districts and consolidate parks with City; decrease property taxes by adding to the tax base; increased entry-level jobs; a shelter for year-round farmers' market; meaningful contributions from federal/state/county governments; community development corporation funded by non-profits; unlimited budget resources; performing arts center; bowling alley; a branch Post Office in 5th Ward; extra branch libraries and bookmobile; clerical help for aldermen; comprehensive City services; squirrel-proof trash containers; streets/alleys cleaned daily; free parking downtown; debt-free Capital Improvement Plan.

While there were many similarities it was noted that more money would not solve the City's problems. Evanston needs to be a community that includes everybody and single-issue people need to see the whole picture. There was no suggestion of eliminating City services. Mr. Oberwise observed the way to get the community involved is by talking about dreams. People don't get involved by talking about threats and weaknesses. They need to get other forums, because this is not doable in Council meetings where daily operational needs are dealt with. They identified where the City is and where they would like to see themselves in four years. The final task was to identify the six most important goals to get started or move forward on during the next 12 months.

Priorities for the next 12 months. *Group one* identified marina off of Calvary Cemetery and potential inter-city waterway; economic redevelopment of Howard, Church, Dodge streets; viaduct reconstruction; non-profit institution contribution and involvement, which has begun; stop Dutch elm disease; streets, alleys and lighting strategy commencement. *Group two* came up with comprehensive infrastructure needs strategy (public streets, alleys, sidewalks and facilities); complete downtown projects and transition plan for parking; planning for Howard Street and westside redevelopment and how to finance; long-range budget policy they can live with; housing – maintain quality and diverse housing stock promoting affordability; maintenance of high quality City services and review of citywide land use policies for better utilization of land. *Group three* listed the following with budget implications: redevelopment of Howard/Church/Dodge; Radio Evanston to enhance other communications; crime reduction – more proactive police strategies; improve alternative transportation – bus service seven days a week for seniors, better taxi service, bike routes; centralize a citizen request process system; more aldermanic resources – funds for newsletters; reexamination of land use policies and ordinances. Policies that don't involve the budget were: affordable housing policy with an inclusionary policy for luxury developments; streamline budget policy – community involvement in establishing budget priorities; neighborhood festivals; Dutch elm tree inoculation program; reach agreement for financial participation by non-profit institutions.

Priorities and goals for the next 12 months were identified assuming maintenance of quality basic public services: analysis of waterways – look at waterways as economic opportunities consistent with environment and neighborhood; revise Dutch elm tree disease policy; develop comprehensive infrastructure needs and strategy for accomplishment – public streets/sidewalks/alleys and facilities; complete downtown projects and transition (parking); plan, finance and action for Howard Street and west side; institute long-range budget policy they can live with that is inclusive – community involvement and not-for-profits; housing – maintain quality and diversity of housing stock – promote affordability; review citywide land use for better utilization; Radio Evanston to improve communication; Crime reduction

through more proactive police strategies; improve bus transportation alternatives for elderly, taxi service, bike routes; centralize citizen request process; more aldermanic resources; neighborhood festivals.

Mr. Crum noted the City is spread thin. They have to work on comprehensive infrastructure needs; on downtown redevelopment and parking needs and on Howard Street and the west side of Evanston. On long-range budget policy, they are well into and must have one they can live with. They cannot afford to not look at housing in five years, which would be too late. He stated that citywide land use needs to be reviewed, which will take some time. He would not have a marina at the top of his list, which would require doing some new things. Dealing with Dutch elm disease is already underway. He will ask the public relations coordinator to address Radio Evanston. Crime reduction is something that is worked on daily and more proactive measures could be considered. Bus service would be addressed. Centralized citizen complaint process is something that would have to be worked out. More aldermanic resources is before the Rules Committee and needs to be defined. Mr. Crum thought it was a good list.

Alderman Rainey noted they don't talk about the lakefront as an economic resource, but as an amenity. She thought it is treated passively; suggested they need to look at the lake and how could it be more productive economically for the City, thus she would broaden the marina goal. Alderman Wynne noted the lake belongs to all and is a community resource; pointed out it is not in a commercial district and people live near it. They have to recognize that the lake must be kept in harmony with what is nearby. She noted the beaches generate revenue for the City now and suggested that the lake is being exhausted. Alderman Engelman stated, whether this was a goal or not, this issue will come to the Human Services Committee soon. The Lighthouse Park District has received a grant to renovate a building, which will mean an Ecology Center program will be out of that building. The Chamber of Commerce wants the Lighthouse Park District to open up the lighthouse for tour groups. The purpose of renovating the building is to accommodate more tour groups. There are safety issues with taking people up into the lighthouse, so they need a holding area. The question is where will the buses be parked that bring these tour groups.

Mr. Oberwise stated all information would come back to Council members. Staff will bring the rest of staff into this conversation and "wordsmith" the goals and recommended some thinking about keeping on track.

Alderman Feldman suggested after the City Manager and staff looks at this, they develop a plan for either research or funding, depending on what it is and when they can expect some change. Alderman Newman wanted to know who would handle some of the issues. Mr. Crum stated that staff would go through the list and note where the item is going. Alderman Jean-Baptiste suggested they come together in six weeks to two months to look at each item and where they are going, resources available and projections. Alderman Rainey asked that when the staff reports, they attach the last goal-setting session report.

The Mayor and aldermen thanked Mr. Oberwise for doing a good job.

There being no further business to come before Council, Mayor Morton asked for a motion to adjourn. The Council so moved at 2:08 p.m.

Mary P. Morris,
City Clerk