

January 30, 2016 Strategic Planning Summit
Approved: February 23, 2016

CITY OF COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL

2016 Strategic Planning Summit

Saturday, 30 January 2016 8:00 a.m. – 3:40 p.m.
Maplewood Golf Club 4050 Maple Valley Highway, Renton

SUMMARY

OF THE COUNCIL'S KEY DISCUSSIONS, DECISIONS, AND AGREEMENTS

Revised 2/10/16

Attending: Mayor Jeff Wagner, Mayor Pro Tem Sean Smith, Councilmembers Joe Cimaomo, Margaret Harto, Mark Lanza, Marlla Mhoon, and Jim Scott; City Manager Regan Bolli; Management Team members Noreen Beaufriere, Richard Hart, Rob Hendrickson, Andy McCurdy, Ethan Newton, Sharon Scott, Karla Slate, Sara Springer, and Don Vondran; facilitator Jim Reid

Guest: Mary Pritchard

MAJOR DISCUSSIONS AND AGREEMENTS OF THE SUMMIT

The City Council's major agreements from its 2016 Summit were:

A. VISION, MISSION, AND GOALS:

1. The Council reaffirmed its vision and mission statements, making no changes to them.
2. Council members reached consensus to retitle the "Youth and Families" goal as "Community."
3. They also agreed to change the language of that goal so that it reads "Provide city services, programs, and facilities that emphasize and meet the needs of Covington's..." They instructed the staff to propose a word for the ending of the sentence that is inclusive, welcoming, and personable ("warm and fuzzy"). Council asked the staff to use a better word than "residents" or "citizens."
4. Councilmembers also agreed that once they have reached consensus on the new goal statement, the vision, mission, and goals should be given to the Commissions with a request that their members react to and, if interested, comment on these items.

B. COMMUNITYWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN:

1. The Council unanimously agreed to develop a communitywide strategic plan to build on the vision, mission, and goals by: a) identifying more specific strategies to achieve the goals (a "road map"); b) identifying and ranking priority actions or projects to advance the goals and strategies; and c) more clearly directing resources to those actions or projects.
2. Councilmembers instructed staff to develop and present a proposed process, including a timeline for producing the initial plan and efficient means for obtaining input from the Commissions and public.

C. BIENNIAL BUDGETING:

1. The Council agreed to initiate a biennial budget process beginning on 1 January 2017. The first biennial budget will be for 2017-'18 and needs to be adopted by resolution no later than June of this year.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY:

1. Councilmembers reached consensus that reducing crime in both commercial areas and neighborhoods depends on partnerships between the City, business owners, and neighbors.
2. They agreed that in working with the community to reduce crime, the emphasis should be on prevention.
3. They also expressed interest in three broad strategies to address crime: a) reach out to and educate business owners and neighbors; b) encourage them to voluntarily take more responsibility for crime prevention; and c) encourage the use of building design features that help prevent such crimes as vandalism, burglaries, and shoplifting.
4. The Council agreed that a priority strategy for increasing neighborhood accountability is to get more block watch groups operating. To achieve this priority, the City will work with neighborhood organizations, including Home Owners' Associations (HOAs). The City may also work with schools to educate administrators, parents, and students about what they can do to help prevent crimes.
 - **NOTE:** Councilmembers Smith and Cimaomo volunteered to represent the City at appearances before HOAs.
5. Councilmembers agreed that partnering with individual business owners and organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce, will be crucial to preventing and reducing crime in commercial areas. For example, the City could work with experts and associations to educate business owners about taking measures within their stores that will prevent shoplifting. Prominently displaying a decal that says "Shoplifters will be Prosecuted" would be one such measure. Another preventative measure might be where and how liquor, grocery, and convenience stores locate and display alcohol.

6. The Council also expressed interest in the use of building design features to prevent and reduce crime. Councilmembers appeared interested in what the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines say about how design can help prevent crime. A couple Councilmembers expressed interest in exploring codifying design rules and regulations in the future.
7. The Council is also interested in increasing the number of people who participate in the City's Volunteers in Police Service (VPS) program.
8. While there was not a consensus of the group, Councilmembers sounded interested in exploring the possibility of establishing a storefront office in the new Lakepointe commercial center after it opens. While the storefront office was suggested to establish the police department's presence in a business area as a means of crime prevention, some Councilmembers mentioned that the storefront office might also host other city staff to answer community questions or provide other City services. Another location was mentioned as a potential City services center—the existing Timberlane clubhouse.
9. Finally, some Councilmembers suggested that the City should lobby to have a King County substance abuse treatment facility placed in the Covington area to help reduce chemical dependency and, in turn, criminal activities.

E. COVINGTON'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY:

1. The Council favors a yearlong celebration that begins with a "soft" opening on 31 August 2016, the 19th anniversary of Covington's incorporation, and ends with a big community celebration on 31 August 2017, the 20th anniversary.
2. Councilmembers directed the management team to develop a proposal, including options and a budget, for how the City should celebrate this anniversary and present it to them in the spring.
3. Councilmembers brainstormed these ideas, but did not try to reach consensus on them: a) develop a new logo and/or tag line, which could be introduced on approximately 1 January 2017; b) invite the Governor of Washington to attend the events of 31 August 2017; c) at each Council meeting during the year, highlight something from Covington's past; d) create a time capsule that would be opened in the future; e) hold the big 20th anniversary party at a new venue, such as the hospital if it has opened by the end of August 2017; f) produce pins, buttons, and patches, buttons to market and commemorate the anniversary; g) involve the Covington Economic Development Council (CEDC) in the commemoration; and h) invite all the past Mayors of the City to an event.

Councilmember Smith suggested that this year's centennial celebration of the National Parks could provide ideas for how Covington should celebrate its anniversary.

F. THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA):

1. Public Works Department Director Don Vondran told the Council that this year or next his department will develop the Transition Plan that is required of local governments for complying with the mandates of the ADA. His staff is currently gathering ideas from other

communities for how to achieve compliance in the most effective and cost-efficient ways.

2. Don said the City is showing progress in moving toward compliance. He also mentioned that while achieving the mandates of the Act may seem daunting, the completion of Capitol Improvement Program (CIP) projects is a key strategy for efficiently complying.

G. HOMELESSNESS:

1. Because the Council recognizes that this issue is a growing problem in South King County, it agreed that the City should "join forces with other cities in the region" to try to reduce homelessness. To that end, the Council directed that this subject be one of the agenda items for the annual Tri-City meeting of elected officials from Covington, Maple Valley, and Black Diamond.
2. Councilmember Marlla Mhoon also suggested her colleagues and some staff may want to attend a meeting on 31 March at which homelessness will be a focus.
3. There is also interest among the Council in engaging the faith community and School District on the issue.

H. TOWN CENTER:

1. The Council reached agreement that it's most immediate priority in 2016 for advancing its vision of Town Center is to acquire the Covington Elementary School property when it becomes available. Ideally, the City would like Panattoni to purchase the entire site; the City would then purchase or lease a portion of the property to develop a new City Hall and public plaza.
2. To achieve this goal in 2016, the Council directed staff to: a) determine if and when the School District will put the property on the market; b) prepare a resolution for the City Council to endorse the bond measure that the School District will place on the ballot; c) obtain Panattoni's confirmation of its interest in and intention to purchase the school property; d) prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Panattoni; and e) organize a Council "listening session" at Kentwood High School, similar to the one the Council hosted at Kentlake High School last year, to learn from students what amenities and offerings they'd like to see in Town Center.
3. The Council also agreed to survey the community in 2016. While the survey would be much broader than Town Center, a few questions about Town Center should be included. Examples of questions could be "What ideas do you have for paying for Town Center?" "What would be an acceptable cost to the public to develop it?"

I. STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS AND VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENTS:

1. The Council agreed with Karla Slate's suggestion to pair a summer concert with a "Volunteer Appreciation Night." Karla was asked to develop a proposal and budget.

2. Council also expressed a preference for combining the “State of the City Address” with the event at which the “Commissioner of the Year” Award is given. This event would most likely be held in January or November.

J. YOUTH CITY COUNCIL:

1. The Council expressed these interests in establishing a Youth City Council: a) cultivate and nurture future leaders; b) expand the City’s connections to the community; c) increase the number of volunteers who help the City achieve its goals; d) obtain community input on key issues facing the City; and e) ensure the work of the Youth Council is meaningful.
2. The Council endorsed the creation of the Youth City Council. Staff will move ahead to establish it after the Council holds its “listening session” at Kentwood High School. This timing is based on the expectation that the listening session will generate greater interest in the Youth Council among the student body of Kentwood. Students from Kentlake High School will also be urged to apply for the Youth City Council, and teacher, particularly civics teachers, will be recruited to serve as adult advisors to minimize City resources to support the Council.

K. CODE ENFORCEMENT:

1. There was consensus among the Council that neighbors and neighborhood organizations must get involved to reduce the incidence of illegal dumping and other code violations. To that end, the City should work with HOAs to help them understand that illegal dumping is a growing problem and affecting the City’s quality of life. Stress to neighbors and HOAs that “We need your eyes on this problem.”
2. The Council also agreed to work closely with the business community to help prevent or reduce illegal dumping and to ensure that commercial areas are attractive and well maintained.
3. Councilmembers suggested that the City monitor trends in illegal dumping after the mandatory garbage collection ordinance becomes law on 1 July 2016. Will the law result in a “spike” in illegal dumping or help control and reduce it?

L. COUNCIL POLICIES AND OPERATIONS:

Mayor Jeff Wagner led the Council through a review of the Covington City Council Rules of Procedure. Attorney Sara Springer answered questions and provided advice and suggestions as the Council proposed changes to the Rules.

Here are the changes that the Council agreed to:

- The Council should rely on a more recent version of Roberts Rules of Order—the 11th Edition. Council should also strive to take training with Anne McFarland’s “Jurassic Parliament” for guidance on the conduct of meetings and parliamentary procedure.
- If a Councilmember is running late or cannot make a meeting, she/he needs to inform the Mayor, City Manager, or City Clerk via email or telephone to constitute an “official” absence.

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- All Councilmembers, not just a select committee, should be involved in the process of appointing the members of the City's Commissions. (Change Section 3. B. Appointment of Advisory Bodies. Page 5)
 - Sara and Sharon Scott will work on language to create a "carve out" that addresses "special" meetings and how to proceed if there is not a quorum.
 - Council agreed that at the next meeting of each Commission, the agenda will include discussion of how the Council and Commissions interact. The purpose of these discussions will be to elicit from Commission members any ideas for improving communications and interactions, including the current monthly report Commission Chairs give at a council meeting.
 - Council also briefly discussed but did not decide on the suggestion that Councilmembers receive the agendas and summaries of all Commission meetings, and any reports. This suggestion was offered with the expectation that the Council would then not hear monthly reports from the Commissions at Council meetings, but would receive such verbal reports less frequently (such as yearly). It was suggested that Councilmembers could sign up on the city's web page to receive Commission agendas and minutes.
- Council also agreed that in the future electronic surveys should be used as the means of conducting exit interviews of Commission members. (Change Section 3. D. Exit Interview. Page 5)
 - Not to be addressed in the Rules of Procedure, but Mayor Wagner said he would like to send a letter of gratitude to Commission members when they step down, and urge them to complete the survey. He would also like the letter to include an offer for departing Commission members to meet with him to discuss their experience serving the City on a Commission.
- Council agreed to ask Sara to propose new and additional language to address the removal of a Commission member "at the request of the other Commission members" or "by the Council's independent action."
- Sara advised the Council that they cannot require people speaking at Council meetings to provide their name and address, but may still ask speakers to provide their name and address. (Change Section 8, B. Identification of Speakers. Page 9)
- Council also asked Sara to research the meanings and implications of the use of the words "residents" and "citizens" (in light of the earlier discussion about rewriting the "Community" [formerly the "Youth and Families"] goal).
- Council agreed to Sara's suggestion to add a "Definitions" section to the Rules of Procedure.
- Council agreed to adopt the City's forthcoming public records policy to apply to the Council and all commissions.
- Councilmembers also authorized Sara to draft a Code of Ethics to be applicable to and to guide the Council and all commissions.

- While not intended to be formally incorporated into the Rules of Procedure, the Council briefly discussed limiting the use of cell phones during Council meetings. A general principal that the Council appeared to agree on was that Councilmembers can keep their cell phones on, with the ringer silenced, during meetings in case of a family emergency. If such a call were to come, the Councilmember should step off the dais so as to not give the impression to the audience that she/he is uninterested or is communicating with other Councilmembers about the issues being discussed. In summary, Councilmembers should not be using cell phones during meetings.

MOST SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF 2015

As in past years, the Council and management team cited the most important accomplishments of the previous year. By doing so, they provided the context and foundation for their goals and priorities during 2016-'17. The major accomplishments of 2016 were:

- Purchasing the artwork "Seahorse"
- Funding acquired for transportation and parks from the State Legislature
- Progress toward completion of Lakepointe
- Changes in leadership: Regan is forward-thinking and thinks "outside the box"; Andy and Ethan are welcome additions to the management team
- Comprehensive Plan update
- The banner
- Hiring a new police officer
- Council's participation in the public safety "SET" Team
- Community events were all attractive to the public
- City continues to make progress with a united Council that moves at lightening speed
- Jenkins Creek Park bridge
- Sister City program
- The development code provides incentives for affordable housing
- Town Center development is evolving and emerging. The approval of the Inland Group project was a big step.
- The repair of Wax Road signals our focus on improving the transportation infrastructure, including trails
- Rob joined with other cities on common audit issues
- Our new logo—it's fresh and modern
- The look of the community continues to improve. Our landscape crew plays a huge role in this by replacing trees quickly. And staff has cleaned up graffiti.
- Council has absorbed the defeat of the Transportation Benefit District (TBD)
- Youth athletics
- Our staff is willing to wear different hats and pitch in to get things done
- We're making progress on our goals and things the public cares about to the extent that we can honestly say to the public, "it's in the works!"
- Council demonstrated courage in applying the \$20 tab fee, raising the utility tax, and rescinding the ILA with the Kent School District
- The safety audit was sophisticated and uncovered expensive deficiencies
- In the last two-and-a-half years the City has made incredible progress on parks, recreation, and cultural/arts issues and programs
- CCP maintenance was brought "in house"
- Council places importance on professionalism, and both Councilmembers and staff achieve that standard

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- Sales tax revenues are rising, indicating the retail hub of the community is vibrant
- We had our one millionth visitor to the pool
- PrePAC is underway
- Long-term retention of staff so that our staffing is stable. Our staff is invested in and committed to the community and can demonstrate that its work is producing tangible benefits for the people of Covington
- Breaking ground on the hospital; there is a promise of medical careers coming to the city
- CCP Phase 2 plans
- Structural changes to CEDC and a stronger partnership with the Economic Development Council. In addition, our relationship with the Chamber is greatly improved.
- The new location of Covington Days
- City's partnerships with the State legislators who represent us in Olympia
- The work of our lobbyists in Olympia
- "Listening session" at Kentlake High School was very productive, interesting, and positive
- Interlocal Agreement between Covington, Maple Valley, and Black Diamond
- National Night Out was again a success, and the police officers were particularly impressive
- The quality of applications we receive from residents applying to serve on the Commissions
- People are telling us we are doing a good job; we aren't hearing a lot of complaints. Four Councilmembers running unopposed in November 2015 is an indication we are on the right track. And other cities are telling us we're doing the right things and doing them right.
- Covington has a presence and is exerting influence on regional committees and task forces
- Public attendance at Council meetings is increasing
- Our "branding" of the City is gaining attention. Our legislative agenda, for example, was graphically beautiful and attracted notice. The Comprehensive Plan looks great, too, reflecting our vibrancy and energy.
- Covington is one of only three cities where the sale of pet licenses has increased
- People are waiting to see how the City handles signs

ISSUES ON THE CITY'S HORIZON

Here are issues the Council members cited at the end of the summit that are likely to be on the Council's agenda at some point in the future:

- Sister City relationship
- Climate change, green fleet, plastic bag ban
- Transparency. Example: live streaming of Council meetings
- Applying a lodging tax to Air B&Bs
- Hoop Fest
- Promoting greater public awareness of parks during summer
- Winter (Kids) Fest
- The Council should endorse the proposed 2016 ballot measure in favor of overturning the Supreme Court's "Citizens' United" decision
- The roles of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem