

Excerpt of October 17, 2016 work session regarding Policy 21M discussion

Agenda Item 14.1 – Annual Strategic Planning Session

Silverboard – Mayor and Council you have a policy, Policy M, which requires you to meet in strategic planning and it has session or sessions – it is singular or plural, the purpose of those meetings is to review the five year financial forecast and update as necessary your mission values and vision statements for the city. It references the five year strategic plan from which you will work as a basis for the annual City manager's City Attorney's objectives and the budget process for the next fiscal year. We have for the last couple of years brought you this agenda item in October because of the portion of the policy that references the plan being the basis for the annual objectives. When we brought you this item last October, in advance of the City Manager and City Attorney evaluations, you essentially referred us to a pre-budget timeframe for April. At the April 11, 2016 meeting when we had all of the updated financial statements and the forecast, as well as any pre-budget conversations that you wish to have relative to the priorities reflected on your strategic direction. We have only made one change to the strategic direction, since you saw this diagram in April and that is a catch Vice Mayor Jonson made - we have reinstated citizens survey under Fostering Community Engagement as a priority because you had directed us to conduct those intermittently every two years for citizen satisfaction measurement. We have reentered that bullet. Otherwise, there has been no other change to version you had in front of you in April - other than the change you made that day related to the historical preservation of certain records related to our historical committee (Clearwater Historical Society). The only other change you would see given - we will be changing the dates reflected in the title of the diagram to say strategic direction 2017 -2022, so that's what you would see in the budget book being published. Our question really for you is - not only do you any changes you wish to make to your strategic objectives but the policy almost anticipates us bringing this to you twice a year and we are not really sure that is productive. When we come in the Fall we don't have the financial statements yet – we just ended the fiscal year. As a pre-budget exercise it is much more useful for us and our recommendation will be, at least for purpose of the policy, that we bring those portions in the Spring, rather than trying to couple it with the fiscal year just beginning and the manager's review. This is a work session only item – so it's really guidance.

Mayor – let's decide first – are we comfortable with not having another meeting specifically to discuss strategic planning and do that as part of the April discussions that we have? And if so, do we need to change the policy to say that we would have this upon majority vote of the council – or something like that?

Silverboard – Mayor, I would ask that you not specify a month. It happened to be April this year. In previous years, it has been early as February. So, we generally use Spring.

Mayor – okay. So do you all need to come back with a new policy along those guidelines that you would want us to vote on?

Silverboard – yes, I think it would be appropriate. If you are going to split it, that would be very helpful to us.

Mayor – Yea.

Vice Mayor –so the way it is written now, it says prior to the annual budget process. So, that to me could be February, March, April - I don't think you want to take it later than that because the budget is pretty far along by May.

Silverboard – we finalize the city manager's recommended budget for purpose of transmitting to council as of July 1st - is when you see it. For us, there is still a lot of work going on in May – depends when get actuarial evaluations – for example in the pension plan -it also might be depend on when we have conversations with health care provider , which are usually later in the summer.

Caudell – that's why you don't want the policy to state a specific date.

Silverboard – not just a specific month. Still strange to say Spring in Florida – it always feels like spring. We do mean up to that point the manager transmits his recommended budget to you because we can make changes as late as June.

Mayor – late June is considered Summer.

Silverboard – not sure what you call it – first half of the calendar year.

Vice Mayor – I'm okay with that. The question I have when will we identify the city manager's objectives. And when I say objectives I'm thinking more along the lines of this is a specific task and with ah date of the expected delivery and I'm thinking of these being those high level objectives that we really want to get accomplished in the coming fiscal year and not just sometime within the next five years. When do we do that? That's what I thought we were going to be doing today. If we do that as part of our strategic planning then it really ties in to the budget because we can say and we can provide in the budget - here's the resources to do these highest level most important things for our citizens. We can do that in April or March , or whenever we do that but we've got the to do item what are those objectives for the fiscal year we are in right now.

Horne – to my way of thinking, that's when you identify those things – is that timeframe – those to do items you are talking about. And if you recall Council, in a previous conversation that I had, and the Vice Mayor and I have had this conversation – this (Strategic Direction Diagram) has been the roadmap - but what I mention when we had this conversation is that there are times when council will highlight some specific things that they want to see accomplished that have absolutely nothing to do with this (Strategic Direction Diagram). And so, what I am hearing you say now, Vice Mayor, you said those high level things we want to make sure the manager accomplishes - well, it does not necessarily mean it's gonna be items here (Strategic Direction Diagram) – it's going to be what you all determine some very important things. Am I hearing you correct – that what you are talking about may not necessarily be reflected in this strategic roadmap but it can be some other project or some other thing that popped up that you all think

is that important and you want to make sure the manager gets done in the following fiscal year. Is that what I'm hearing you say?

Vice Mayor – I would - if something comes up that gets inserted then I would say it's the responsibility of the council to take out strategic plan and look at it in that light and say okay, this is really more important and not pack the city manager with stuff that you can't accomplish if you say you're doing too much. And by doing this annual objectives you would give the city manager chance to say – Councilmember Jonson, here's my objective for the year and you want me to do this - which one of these other things do you not want me to do – and I should be properly chastised and say - darn, I forgot about that - unless it something that we at any time we could say - a hurricane came through – we will change all these strategies.

Mayor – but don't we do that anyway? Whenever we have a discussion and it talks about money we are spending we frequently ask - in fact earlier today you were asking about the US 19 project, is this an extra task that's falling on staff. Anytime we decide something , staff makes it work for us. I don't think we need to have another meeting just to decide – oh gosh, - we criticized we don't have a five-year plan now we are being criticized we have a five year plan and we want to adjust every year. We do it every year when we have our budget considerations. Not exactly sure there is disagreement. Maybe it's not formalized the way you want it formalized.

Caudell – maybe we should call it strategic guide -because like you said Mayor - we do have the opportunity bring it back up if there is something that needs to be critically addressed – may not fall under this guide but we do have the opportunity to give direction to the city manager and city attorney based on a consensus from us as a council – if we need to do something different than this.

Horne – what the vice mayor is looking for – he wants specific objectives by which he can use to evaluate my performance in the evaluation period. That's what he's looking for and historically these strategic objectives, what we have used as a roadmap for what are my priorities and you all have not necessarily approached my evaluation in that way. This is the contrast between how the vice mayor wants to evaluate me versus how you all have traditionally done, which has been more rooted in your kind of assessment as to how well I have done across the year.

Hamilton – I'm on the electronic site so I don't have a paper to hold up but you look at that and – that's a guide, it is not a hard - as the City Attorney has said before, she's now been here almost 20 years and a new city hall has been on that list all 20 years, so it's not carved in stone, it is a pliable, workable framework that will constantly have tweaks and adjustments made to it based on outside variables – some that are seen and some that are unseen, so I think that to me – in one of the next agenda items – the evaluation of the City Manager – his ability to respond to these unforeseen conditions and influences – that's what I look at. I don't look at it as – there's a lot of gray, it's not all black and white to me. So, I am comfortable with it just the way it is and, you know, adjusting on the fly is what we do and why we're such a great place to live.

Caudell – I think thank goodness we have it, there's many cities, 24 cities in our county, that do not have this level of a strategic direction based on our City Manager and our City Attorney, so I believe, and our staff – they work together with those two to make sure this is the direction that we are headed. It's very organized, I think it's something that...

Mayor – Ms. Silverboard, what other direction do you need from us?

Vice Mayor – I still have a concern here. I don't have any objection to call it a strategic plan and I really think strategic plan is the appropriate term rather than guideline. I don't have any objection to making modifications. What I'm trying to get into the process is what Policy M states which is the five year strategic plan will be the basis for the annual City Manager and City Attorney objectives. So, at some point in time, if we are to follow this policy, we have to come up with a list of annual objectives, and that is what I had been talking to the City Manager about. I had, in doing that, I have gotten a list of potential objectives that we could consider and talk about on Thursday night.

Mayor – Mr. Jonson, you've presented us with your priorities over a year ago – that were your priorities.

Vice Mayor – right

Mayor – We've directed staff to come back with a re-write of Policy M, and so why don't we give them a chance to give us a re-write and see where we stand with that – we can continue this discussion then further and in the meantime we can review what you are handing out to us at this time.

Vice Mayor– that's fine. I just want to be very clear that I believe Policy M says annual City Manager objectives and I'm trying to get us to identify those.

Mayor – But it says annual – based on a five year financial forecast that we get every year, so we do that every year when we look at our budget.

Vice Mayor – I'm perfectly fine with that.

Mayor – Staff will come up with a new Policy M guideline for us – we will decide at how we are going to proceed at that time.