

City of Johnston, Iowa Goal Setting Report

January 8, 2009

Mayor:

Paula Dierenfeld

City Council:

Gerd Clabaugh

Rick Tingley

Jim Hibbs

Bob Culbert

Jon Kallen

City Staff:

Jim Sanders, City Administrator

Stephanie Reynolds, Assistant City Administrator



Facilitated by:

Jeff Schott

Institute of Public Affairs

University of Iowa

CITY OF JOHNSTON, IOWA GOAL SETTING SESSION 2009

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CITY OF JOHNSTON, IOWA

GOAL SETTING SESSION

2009

Introduction

The City of Johnston requested the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) to assist the city with goal setting. IPA agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

1. Prepare a questionnaire to identify recent accomplishments, issues/trends/concerns, potential new initiatives/programs/policies and suggestions to improve organizational effectiveness.
2. Conduct a goal-setting session with the elected officials.
3. Preparation of this final report.

Goal Setting Work Session

City Council Members and the Mayor held a work session conducted by the IPA on January 8, 2009. In attendance and participating at this meeting were Mayor Paula Dierenfeld and Council Members Gerd Clabaugh, Bob Culbert, Jim Hibbs, and Jon Kallen.

Also in attendance and participating in this meeting were City Administrator Jim Sanders, Assistant City Administrator Stephanie Reynolds, Finance Director Teresa Rotschafer, Community Development Director David Wilwerding, Police Chief Doug Nichols, Fire Chief Jim Krohse, Library Director Willona Graham Goers, Public Works Director Dave Cubit, Management Analyst Lucas Casey, City Clerk Cyndee Rhames, Senior Planner Aaron Wolfe, and Parks and Recreation Director Ron Ward.

Major Accomplishments

The following were identified as major accomplishments during the past two years:

- Significant new and expanded commercial development – Deere Credit, Pioneer, etc.
- Continued improvements/expansion of parks and trails.
- Effective handling of disaster events – flooding, ice and wind storms.
- Successful collaborative efforts with other governments – Senior Meals, Fire services, flood disaster response, fiber optic, MPO, DART, MWA, etc.
- Responsible management of city resources and revenues.
- Greater use of technology to inform public and receive input – website, emails, improved newsletter distribution, digital recording of Council and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings, E-lert subscribers.
- Reasonably smooth transition under new leadership – mayor and city council.
- Tax abatement district created.
- Establishment of TIF districts and clarification of who/what is eligible.
- Creation of Parks & Recreation Director position.
- Single stream recycling program.
- Merle Hay Road redevelopment initiatives.
- Watershed study for MS4 compliance: Watershed Study/Storm Water Management Plan; Post-construction and Pet Waste ordinances adopted.
- 2009 home show.
- Congregate meal site at Crown Point.
- Community Recreation and Sports Complex planning.
- Completion of NW 70th Avenue/bridge work.
- NW 86th St/Valley Parkway north of NW 70th Ave.
- Continuation of Neighborhood Grant Program.
- Two rain gardens installed at City Hall as demonstration projects.
- Completion of space needs study for city facilities.
- Adoption of policy on developer contributions to roadway improvements.
- Working with the school district to establish the School Resource Officer position.
- The Trestle to Trestle trail.
- Maintaining the property tax rate.
- Bond rating upgraded to AA+ (rating from Standard and Poor's).
- Cooperative fiber optic project with Johnston Community School District (JCSD).
- Expansion of personnel within the police and fire departments.
- Addition of two additional open hours per week at the Library.
- Continued development of Pointe Vista, Adventure Ridge and Lew Clarkson Parks.

Major Accomplishments (continued)

- Establishment of a Park Bond Referendum steering committee and design consultant.
- Community Needs Assessment Survey with JCSD.
- Initial construction of Parks maintenance building and Water and Sewer building.
- Beginning demolition of the Crown Point Pool.
- Completion of FEMA application for reimbursement of expenses related to summer flood incident.
- Implementation of purchasing card policy and revised purchasing policy.
- Implementation of compensation program for non-union employees.
- Revised employee/personnel handbook.
- Successful negotiation of 3-year contracts for collective bargaining units.
- Implementation of a Paid-Time-Off (PTO) policy for all employees.
- Improved solicitor's ordinance.
- Banking RFP completed and new banking services established.
- GASB 45 actuarial study completed.
- Completed a full year after computer conversion.
- Finalized NW 62nd Avenue, Central Basin and NW Beaver Drive sanitary sewer projects.
- Continuing to provide quality services to the public.

Issues, Concerns, Trends and Opportunities

The following were identified as issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that may affect future city services, policies, finances or operations:

- Economic conditions:
 - Economic downturn
 - Declining residential development
 - Falling valuations
 - Job losses
 - Credit crunch
 - Downturn in commercial development
 - Over-production of town homes
 - Impact on city finances and services
- DART participation and funding – appropriate level of service to meet citizens' needs.
- Sports and Rec Complex – referendum, funding, potential opposition.
- Implementation of Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Plan.
- City budget - decreased revenues.
- Panhandlers at MHR and I-80 – also homeless encampments in wooded areas.
- Encourage continued efforts to engage residents in city government.

Issues, Concerns, Trends and Opportunities (continued)

- Continue Johnston's role as a regional leader.
- Future development, specifically housing.
- Efforts to continue commercial growth.
- New issues with renewable fuels and possible impact with local employers.
- Need for expanded city facilities (police/fire/city hall).
- MS4 Compliance – ongoing costs and staff resources.
- Develop a storm water utility and other funding to address storm water quality and drainage projects.
- Reducing the debt service levy to a reasonable level, currently it is the second highest in the metro area.
- Diversifying revenue streams to lesson reliance on property taxes.
- Work with the Department of Transportation to improve our capability to drain flood water from the area along NW Beaver Drive.
- Intergovernmental funding issues, e.g. funding of library services.
- Reduction in hotel/motel tax allotment.
- Ability to continue providing adequate level of service to residents if operating budgets are reduced to offset the increasing debt service levy.
- Increased fuel costs for city operations impacting budget.
- Reduced interest rate will affect interest earnings.
- Water and sewer revenues.
- Need to really prioritize and make logical decisions rather than emotional/feel good decisions.
- Additional recreation programs through Parks and Recreation Department.

On-Going Priorities

The following were identified as on-going priorities for the upcoming 12 – 24 month period:

- Continue to proactively pursue effective partnerships, including service-sharing with other governments.
- Continue efforts and policies to attract and retain staff, include development of employee wellness plan.
- Continue to identify and maintain strategies, methods, practices and policies designed to ensure effective growth management, to include consideration of sustainable design policies.
- Support the implementation of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Development Plan
 - Schedule referendum for Community Recreation and Sports Complex, Crown Point, and Terra Lake projects.
- Continue to connect and extend trails, including development of a long-range trail plan with time lines.
- Continue to provide funding for long-term trail maintenance.
- Continue strategies to improve public information efforts.
- Promote economic development in Johnston.
- Develop annexation agreements with Granger, Grimes, and Ankeny.
- Implement Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Plan.
- MS4 compliance and funding.
- Develop Storm Water Management Plan and present funding alternatives to City Council.
- Fiber optic network (in conjunction with Johnston Community School District).
- Develop utility and infrastructure master plans for areas lacking service.
- Management of Beaver Creek Natural Area – development of comprehensive management plan.
- Adopt policies to address Emerald Ash borer.
- Conduct water rate study.
- Continue to maintain quality services to growing community.

Priority Projects, Programs, Policies and Initiatives

The participants reviewed potential projects, programs, policies and initiatives for consideration and selected the following as priorities for the upcoming 12 – 24 month period (listed in priority order):

- 1 Update comprehensive plan
- 2 (Tie) Identify and implement sustainable “green community” initiatives
- 2 (Tie) Rittger’s Oaks/Johnston Commons Storm Water Improvements

A complete list of all programs and initiatives considered by the Mayor and City Council members is attached as **Exhibit A**.

Capital Project Priorities

The participants reviewed capital projects not previously determined as on-going or priority projects. They then prioritized these projects in the following order (groupings reflect equal priority):

Augustine Trail

Identify location and begin planning for new City Hall
Public Safety Building
NW 70th Ave west of NW 86th St
NW 62nd Ave west of NW 100th St

Infrastructure on east side of Merle Hay Road
Trail – Interurban to NW 49th St
Develop on-going Capital Equipment Replacement Fund

Update city computer infrastructure
Pioneer Parkway Trail
Storm siren in NW area

Completion of major sidewalks
Adventure Ridge Park improvements – restrooms
City Hall HVAC replacement

Organizational Effectiveness

The Mayor and City Council reviewed a variety of ideas relating to improving organizational effectiveness to accomplish the selected goals and priorities. After review and discussion, the Mayor and City Council selected the following steps to improve organizational effectiveness:

- Continue to host city department open houses for residents.
- Hold joint meetings with adjacent communities and school district.
- Continue council sub-committee structure to meet on departmental issues.
- E-mail tentative council agendas to mayor/council members on Tuesdays.
- Establish dedicated e-mail accounts for Mayor/Council.
- Develop volunteer opportunities.
- Hold joint meetings between City Council and Boards and Commissions.

Note: The agenda for the Goal Setting Session and the Preliminary Questionnaire are attached to this report as **Exhibits B** and **C** respectively.

Final Comments

It was a pleasure to assist the City of Johnston with this goal setting process. I was extremely impressed with the level of cooperation and positive attitudes of the elected officials and city staff.

It is important to note that the prioritization of projects and initiatives is not “cast in stone.” They can be modified as new circumstances may occur.

It is recommended that city staff prepare an “action plan” for accomplishing the planning goals. The action plan would define the steps that would be needed to accomplish each goal, identify who is responsible for implementation, and establish a timeline for accomplishment. The action plan should then be presented to the Mayor and City Council for review and approval. It is also recommended that staff review with the Mayor and City Council the status of implementing the goals on a quarterly basis.

Jeff Schott
Institute of Public Affairs
University of Iowa
January 9, 2009

Exhibit A

City of Johnston
Goal Setting Session – 2009

SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES OR PROGRAMS CONSIDERED

- Identify and implement sustainable “green community” community initiatives.
- Pedestrian friendly “projects” – placement of bike racks.
- Focused effort to increase bus ridership.
- Rittger’s Oaks/Johnston Commons Storm Water Improvements.
- Conduct water and sewer rate survey and adjust rates accordingly.
- Establish stormwater utility.
- Update comprehensive plan.
- Fund a Capital Equipment Replacement Plan.
- Promote commercial growth either through rezoning or annexation, to increase city revenues.
- Implement fee schedules for all city services based upon actual cost vs. what is charged in neighboring communities.
- Accept online payment for utility bills, building rentals and other city charges.
- City should work with JEDCO to attract another hotel to Johnston.
- Develop Public Arts Master Plan.
- Pioneer Parkway Trail.
- Create more health and recreation program opportunities through the Parks and Recreation Department.

Exhibit B

AGENDA

**CITY OF JOHNSTON
GOAL SETTING SESSION - 2009**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2009
4:00 PM – 8:00 PM
City Hall Council Chambers**

1. Introductions and Opening Comments
 - a. Name, Tenure, and Background
2. General Overview of the Meeting and the Goal Setting Process
 - a. The Ground Rules for this session
3. Progress Report and Update –2008 Goal Setting Report
4. Review Recent City Accomplishments (2007-08)
5. Review Issues, Concerns, Opportunities, and Trends
6. Identify On-Going Priorities
7. Programs, Policies, Projects and Initiatives
 - a. Review Results of Questionnaire
 - b. Explanations, clarifications, revisions, deletions, additions of Programs, Policies, Projects, and Initiatives
 - c. Ranking of Priorities
8. Capital Improvements Program Priorities
 - a. Review Results of Questionnaire
 - b. Explanations, clarifications, revisions, deletions, additions of Projects
 - c. Ranking of Priorities
9. Organizational Effectiveness
 1. Review Results of Questionnaire
10. IPA Report to the Mayor and City Council – 2009 Goal Setting Process
 - a. Development of Action Plan
 - b. Importance of Quarterly Updates
11. Questions, comments, and suggestions
12. Adjourn

Exhibit C

**CITY OF JOHNSTON
GOAL SETTING SESSION – 2009
QUESTIONNAIRE**

INTRODUCTION

The City of Johnston’s Goal Setting Session will be held on Thursday January 8, 2009, at City Hall. The purpose of the session will be to identify and prioritize the City’s overall goals and objectives for the next two years.

In order to prepare for this session, you are requested to identify key issues and potential objectives that will be reviewed and discussed at the session. Please complete all sections of this questionnaire. If you need additional space, please feel free to attach additional page(s).

Major Accomplishments

Please list the major city accomplishments over the past two years. These accomplishments could be as large as a street project or as simple as a newly adopted city policy. The items do not need to be in any particular order.

Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities

Please list specific issues, concerns, trends and opportunities that affect future city services, policies, finances or operations (for example, loss of population, major new economic development success, employer or resolving a policy question). You do not need to identify potential solutions to your concerns.

Significant Initiatives or Programs

Please list any initiatives, programs or policies that you think the City should consider in the next two years (for example, downtown revitalization, updating employee job descriptions, adopting a policy on open burning, conducting an annexation study, reviewing water and sewer rates, etc.)

Capital Projects

Please list the capital projects or equipment purchases that you think the City should consider over the next two years. These capital projects could include such things as street construction, public works equipment, public safety equipment, etc. If you have an estimate on the cost of such projects, please note it. Please list only those projects with a total cost of \$10,000 or more.

Organizational Effectiveness

Please list several things that the Mayor/City Council and/or staff could do in the future to improve organizational effectiveness, decision-making process, teamwork and the ability to accomplish the City's stated goals and objectives.

RETURN OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Please return this questionnaire to Stephanie Reynolds by **Monday, December 22, 2008.**