

City of Ypsilanti
City Council Goal Planning Session
Thursday, December 4, 2003
6:00 P.M.
Haab Building

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Farmer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Haab Building, located at 111 N. Huron Street, Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Present: Mayor Farmer, Council Members LaRue, Nickels, Richardson.

Absent: Mayor Pro-Tem Swanson and Council Members Gawlas and Schulze.

Council Member LaRue offered and Council Member Richardson supported a motion to excuse the absence of Mayor Pro-Tem Swanson and Council Members Gawlas and Schulze. The vote was 4 yes and 3 absent. Unanimous. Council Member Gawlas arrived at 6:01 p.m. and Council Member Schulze arrived at 6:05 p.m.

Mayor Farmer opened the meeting and said the administration wished to add a closed session on litigation to the agenda. Council Members agreed.

From that point on Dr. Joe Ohren of Eastern Michigan University and the Institute for Community and Regional Development conducted the 2004-2005 Goal Setting Session.

His summary and minutes are attached and made a part of these formal minutes.

There were breaks from 7:45 to 7:55 p.m. and again from 8:55 to 9:03 p.m.

Mayor Farmer reconvened the meeting at 9:03 p.m. and there was a vote to go into closed session per Section 8 (e) Litigation. The vote was 6 yes, 1 absent, Swanson. Unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member LaRue supported by Council Member Gawlas moved to adjourn. The vote was 6 yes, 1 absent, Swanson. Unanimous.

Adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Institute for Community and Regional Development

MEMO

December 26, 2003

TO: Mayor and Council-members, Ed Koryzno, City Manager
Participants in the Goal-Setting Workshop, City of Ypsilanti

FROM: Dr. Joe Ohren, ICARD/EMU

RE: Minutes of the December 4 Work Session and Revised Draft Action Plan

I have summarized below the Minutes of our meeting on Thursday evening December 4th for review and reaction by the group. Much of the discussion during the evening focused on the draft Action Plan that had been presented prior to the session, and thus I have incorporated notes into the draft itself for clarity. Following this, I have then reprinted the Draft Action Plan to reflect the priorities that we set during the discussion. You will all want to go over the draft one more time to make sure it reflects our discussion; ultimately, Council will want to adopt the Action Plan at its meeting at the end of January.

Once again I have enjoyed working with the group; I am again reminded at how well each and every one of you has contributed to the success that has city has had in dealing with very difficult challenges. I look forward to continuing to work with you in the New Year.

Ypsilanti City Council Goal Setting Retreat
December 4, 2003

Attendance:

Cheryl Farmer, John Gawlas, Barry LaRue, Bill Nickels, Lois Richardson, Sandra Schulze, Ed Koryzno, Shannon Stumbo Bellers, Harry Hutchinson, Jim Roberts, George Basar, Shari Gregory, Marilou Uy, John Barr, Megan Gibbs, Charles Boulard, Bob Slone

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Motion made and approved to excuse an absent Council member, Swanson.

No members of the public were present and audience participation was waived.

The group devoted the remainder of the evening's discussion to the draft Action Plan that had been circulated in advance of the session. Initial attention was devoted to insuring that the draft reflected the intent articulated at the November 8th session. Minor changes were made in the draft as noted in the boxed text below. Participants then established two broad categories of priorities for the action strategies related to each goal. The intent was to focus attention on those items that were of primary importance, and to identify those items that could be pursued should resources become available. The results of that discussion are reflected in the revised draft Action Plan beginning on page seven.

CITY OF YPSILANTI
DRAFT ACTION PLAN 2004-5
December 4, 2003

Ohren's Note: I have again reported the Action Plan in draft form with the changes we made at the December 4 meeting. Boxed text has been used to clarify and explain the changes that were made. The priorities are reflected in the second clean version of the draft that follows.

Goal One Continue to pursue a variety of strategies to strengthen the financial capacity of the City

Participants inserted the word strengthen in the draft goal statement, an editorial error in the text, and inserted in action strategy 1 the phrase downtown revitalization initiatives to reflect the ongoing commitments in that area of the city as well as in the Water Street area. There was also some discussion about deleting some of the specific development sites listed under strategy one since some are "in play" but the group agreed to retain them until they are developed.

Action Strategies

1. Continue to implement the Water Street Project and downtown revitalization initiatives and anticipate and establish priorities for redevelopment projects such as:

Motor Wheel property	Lowell Street Exemplar property
Crown Paper plant	Superior Coatings
Kresge Block	Smith Furniture property
DPW/Farm Bureau Property	City Landfill
Gateway Area	Renaissance Building
DTE Building	West Cross Street area
Downtown and Depot Town Business Districts	Rail Initiative

2. Develop and implement systematic efforts to communicate the needs of the City to, and secure the support of, state and county officials, including such things as:
 - a. Nominate city residents and encourage the appointment of city residents to positions on county boards and commissions
 - b. Systematically communicate and share information with state legislators as well county commissioners from the area, inviting them to meetings periodically to discuss issues and sharing the city's action plan and needs
 - c. Participate with others through the MML and other organizations in statewide education and advocacy efforts on behalf of core cities and older urban areas

3. Aggressively pursue all relevant grant efforts to support development initiatives and maintain city funding to support and strengthen redevelopment efforts

4. Move aggressively to seek appropriate investment in the city, consistent with the vision that has been expressed in the Master Plan, while insuring that development standards are met

5. Continue to
 - a. insure that development expectations are clear and concise;
 - b. offer streamlined review and permitting processes; and
 - c. communicate access and service to prospective and current businesses

6. Appoint a Blue Ribbon Commission to examine city finances and services and to make recommendations to the Mayor and Council and to the community with respect to both service reductions or changes and revenue increases to address the city's budget challenges.

There was a great deal of discussion involving the appointment of and the charge to a Blue Ribbon Committee. The suggested action strategy had emerged at the November 8 session as a means for dealing with the structural challenges facing the city's budget; that is, expenditures are expected to grow faster than revenues over the coming years. It became apparent in the discussion that short-term budget recommendations are also needed to address the budget reductions forthcoming during the current fiscal year as a product of state legislative action. Hence, the group agreed to move forward expeditiously with the creation of a Blue Ribbon Commission, charged with identifying both short-term and long term strategies for addressing the budget challenges facing the city. Dr. Ohren will work with Mr. Koryzno to draft a charge and action plan for the Commission for review by Council in January.

Participants also drafted a new action strategy, noted below as number 7, to address concerns about the loss of property from the tax roll when nonprofit or exempt institutions buy property. Suggestions included requiring a fiscal impact statement akin to the environmental impact statement that developers are required to file in anticipation of a development proposal, and efforts to raise the consciousness of key decision-makers about the impact of such actions on the city's finances. As one specific step it was suggested that a student might be engaged to work with the assessor to identify all exempt properties in the city to alert decision-makers as to where action might be forthcoming.

7. Develop strategies for minimizing the loss of property from the tax roll, including providing information to the public on the consequences of such action and requiring potential buyers to consider the fiscal impact on the city of the loss of tax base.

Goal Two Continue to foster an environment in City government where communication and information is shared and services are provided in an efficient, cost-effective, friendly and timely manner

Action Strategies

1. Continue to implement the plan for strengthening the City's Web Page as an additional vehicle for communication and information sharing; commit the staff and other resources needed to implement the plan and maintain the Page

2. Assemble a "Technology Task Force" to develop a long-range plan for using technology to improve the delivery of city services

3. Emphasize in Council and staff communications with residents and others
 - ≈ a “culture” of openness, a commitment by the City to information sharing and educating residents about the problems and challenges faced and the strategies to be employed to address them, and
 - ≈ a “culture” of “community services” in relationships between the City and residents, neighborhood organizations, and others
4. Pursue technology improvements to equip City personnel to provide services in the most cost-effective fashion possible and insure support for and maintenance of that technology infrastructure over time
5. Develop a set of service standards within each department to guide the delivery of services
6. Continue to address employee fear and uncertainty about budget problems and potential budget reduction strategies
7. Utilize a variety of means to improve media coverage of community issues and to insure that residents are provided sufficient information to understand and address policy issues
8. Consider providing greater flexibility in schedule options and leave policy and improving the salary and benefit package, including a tuition reimbursement program, to improve retention of employees

Goal Three Strengthen neighborhood leadership and organizations and open lines of communications between neighborhood leaders and elected officials and city employees

Action Strategies

1. Work collaboratively with EMU through the COPC program to
 - a. support leadership development for neighborhood leaders,
 - b. facilitate or subsidize neighborhood communication (e.g., newsletters),
 - c. establish new neighborhood organizations, “group” building, as appropriate,
 - d. include the business community in the context of neighborhood development and participation in decision processes
 - e. engage the community in a broad strategic planning process to identify critical issues facing the community and strategies for addressing them

Participants merged action strategy number 2 in the original draft into number one, item e; the broad community planning process referred to in the original language is also part of the COPC initiative and will take place during the 2004 calendar year. The remaining strategies were then renumbered. Minor editorial changes were also made in the next strategy, substituting the word “engage” for “use” in reference to neighborhood organizations, and “networks” for “conduits.” The changes better reflect the effort by city officials to involve citizens and neighborhoods in decision-making and information sharing.

2. Engage neighborhood organizations and city Boards and Commissions systematically as networks for information sharing, disseminating service information and securing feedback as a means of demonstrating the value of organizing
3. Host periodic workshops at the neighborhood level as vehicles for discussing specific issues and generating ideas for resolving problems

Goal Four Continue to pursue a variety of strategies for improving the physical condition of neighborhoods and increasing the rate of home ownership in the community

Action Strategies

Participants agreed to change the action verb “establish” in strategy number 1 to “continue” since the program has already begun to be implemented. The fire department and the planning and development departments were also included in the listing since they play key roles in the housing improvement efforts.

1. Continue a systematic program to enforce standards, coordinating the efforts of the building official, the police and fire departments, the planning and development department, the city attorney’s office and others to improve the physical appearance and condition of neighborhoods across the city
2. Update the master plan and the zoning ordinance over the next two years and consciously and systematically engage residents in the process
 - a. Consider reducing the extent of the community shown for multi-family uses
 - b. Promote homeownership and explore all the tools (e.g., limit the number of unrelated adults, nuisance charges) for encouraging homeownership
 - c. Explore the use of overlay districts, architectural controls, and historic districts as means for improving neighborhoods
3. Systematically study and identify impediments to home ownership and develop a plan for addressing those impediments over the next two to five years
4. Develop and communicate a citywide policy statement on standards and procedures for implementing traffic calming measures in residential neighborhoods.
5. Wherever possible develop partnerships with other governmental units and with other entities to implement strategies to improve the condition of neighborhoods.

Goal Five Continue to address the broad range of infrastructure needs across the City

Action Strategies

1. Continue to implement the street improvement project and project involving the downtown parking lots

Participants agreed to include the phrase “downtown parking lots” in strategy number 1, and suggested that the acronym WATS be spelled out in a later strategy.

2. Establish priorities for maintenance, rehabilitation and construction for city buildings and public parking lots
3. Identify funding sources to finance highest priority infrastructure investments including partnering with the DDA’s to upgrade parking lots
4. Continue to work with Washtenaw Area Transportation Study and YCUA among others on infrastructure improvements
5. Schedule infrastructure improvements or construction over the next three to five years, including replacement of existing and new improvements to the technology infrastructure

Goal Six Continue to strengthen working relationships with the University to address mutual problems and strengthen the community

Action Strategies

1. Continue to utilize student and faculty resources to address community needs and challenges through internships, class projects, independent studies, volunteer programs, etc
2. Include both EMU and City representatives in long range planning efforts conducted by both the University and the City to ensure that the needs/challenges/opportunities of both entities are taken into consideration

Several related strategies in the original draft—items 3, 4, and 6—were combined to reflect the linkages that have been developing between city and university officials. Subsequent strategies were then renumbered. A new strategy was also added, suggesting that at appropriate points the city should recognize the successes of the University.

3. Continue regular meetings between University and city officials to improve communication and joint problem-solving and to explore new ways to work together to address emerging issues and opportunities

4. Monitor the University's implementation of its master plan for the boundary areas where the campus meets the community – especially in those areas where the adjacent land is a residential neighborhood
5. Partner with University officials to pursue and secure resources to implement the goals of the Cross Street study
6. Pursue joint advocacy efforts with University officials to secure mutually beneficial state appropriations and state policies
7. Continue and expand efforts to examine other university communities for examples of town/gown partnerships that have been used successfully to address common issues and challenges
8. Recognize and acknowledge the success of the University when appropriate.

CITY OF YPSILANTI
DRAFT ACTION PLAN 2004-5
December 4, 2003

Ohren's Note: The following draft of the Action Plan reflects the results of the priority setting exercise completed at the December 4 meeting. Participants agreed to create two sets of strategies, one deemed highest priority and a second labeled priority when resources permit. The group recognized that all the action strategies in the Plan are important, but given tight resources, most staff attention will need to be devoted to those in the first category. As you go over the draft, be sure that you feel comfortable in reflecting back on our work together that I have captured the intent of our discussion.

Goal One Continue to pursue a variety of strategies to strengthen the financial capacity of the City

Highest Priority

1. Continue to implement the Water Street Project and downtown revitalization initiatives and anticipate and establish priorities for redevelopment projects such as:

Motor Wheel property	Lowell Street Exemplar property
Crown Paper plant	Superior Coatings
Kresge Block	Smith Furniture property
DPW/Farm Bureau Property	City Landfill
Gateway Area	Renaissance Building
DTE Building	West Cross Street area
Downtown and Depot Town Business Districts	Rail Initiative

2. Appoint a Blue Ribbon Commission to examine city finances and services and to make recommendations to the Mayor and Council and to the community with respect to both service reductions or changes and revenue increases to address the city's budget challenges.

Priority When Resources Permit

3. Develop and implement systematic efforts to communicate the needs of the City to, and secure the support of, state and county officials, including such things as:
 - a. Nominate city residents and encourage the appointment of city residents to positions on county boards and commissions
 - b. Systematically communicate and share information with state legislators as well county commissioners from the area, inviting them to meetings periodically to discuss issues and sharing the city's action plan and needs
 - c. Participate with others through the MML and other organizations in statewide education and advocacy efforts on behalf of core cities and older urban areas

4. Aggressively pursue all relevant grant efforts to support development initiatives and maintain city funding to support and strengthen redevelopment efforts

5. Move aggressively to seek appropriate investment in the city, consistent with the vision that has been expressed in the Master Plan, while insuring that development standards are met
6. Continue to
 - a. insure that development expectations are clear and concise;
 - b. offer streamlined review and permitting processes; and
 - c. communicate access and service to prospective and current businesses
7. Develop strategies for minimizing the loss of property from the tax roll, including providing information to the public on the consequences of such action and requiring potential buyers to consider the fiscal impact on the city of the loss of tax base.

Goal Two Continue to foster an environment in City government where communication and information is shared and services are provided in an efficient, cost-effective, friendly and timely manner

Highest Priority

1. Continue to implement the plan for strengthening the City’s Web Page as an additional vehicle for communication and information sharing; commit the staff and other resources needed to implement the plan and maintain the Page
2. Emphasize in Council and staff communications with residents and others
 - o a “culture” of openness, a commitment by the City to information sharing and educating residents about the problems and challenges faced and the strategies to be employed to address them, and
 - o a “culture” of “community services” in relationships between the City and residents, neighborhood organizations, and others
3. Utilize a variety of means to improve media coverage of community issues and to insure that residents are provided sufficient information to understand and address policy issues

Priority When Resources Permit

4. Assemble a “Technology Task Force” to develop a long-range plan for using technology to improve the delivery of city services
5. Pursue technology improvements to equip City personnel to provide services in the most cost-effective fashion possible and insure support for and maintenance of that technology infrastructure over time
6. Develop a set of service standards within each department to guide the delivery of services
7. Continue to address employee fear and uncertainty about budget problems and potential budget reduction strategies

8. Consider providing greater flexibility in schedule options and leave policy and improving the salary and benefit package, including a tuition reimbursement program, to improve retention of employees

Goal Three Strengthen neighborhood leadership and organizations and open lines of communications between neighborhood leaders and elected officials and city employees

Highest Priority

1. Work collaboratively with EMU through the COPC program to
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 - d. include the business community in the context of neighborhood development and participation in decision processes
 - e. engage the community in a broad strategic planning process to identify critical issues facing the community and strategies for addressing them

Priority When Resources Permit

2. Engage neighborhood organizations and city Boards and Commissions systematically as networks for information sharing, disseminating service information and securing feedback as a means of demonstrating the value of organizing
3. Host periodic workshops at the neighborhood level as vehicles for discussing specific issues and generating ideas for resolving problems

Goal Four Continue to pursue a variety of strategies for improving the physical condition of neighborhoods and increasing the rate of home ownership in the community

Highest Priority

1. Continue a systematic program to enforce standards, coordinating the efforts of the building official, the police and fire departments, the planning and development department, the city attorney’s office and others to improve the physical appearance and condition of neighborhoods across the city
2. Update the master plan and the zoning ordinance over the next two years and consciously and systematically engage residents in the process
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 - b. Promote homeownership and explore all the tools (e.g., limit the number of unrelated adults, nuisance charges) for encouraging homeownership
 - c. Explore the use of overlay districts, architectural controls, and historic districts as means for improving neighborhoods

3. Develop and communicate a citywide policy statement on standards and procedures for implementing traffic calming measures in residential neighborhoods.

Priority When Resources Permit

4. Systematically study and identify impediments to home ownership and develop a plan for addressing those impediments over the next two to five years
5. Wherever possible develop partnerships with other governmental units and with other entities to implement strategies to improve the condition of neighborhoods.

Goal Five Continue to address the broad range of infrastructure needs across the City

Highest Priority

1. Continue to implement the street improvement project and project involving the downtown parking lots
2. Establish priorities for maintenance, rehabilitation and construction for city buildings and public parking lots
3. Continue to work with Washtenaw Area Transportation Study and YCUA among others on infrastructure improvements

Priority When Resources Permit

4. Identify funding sources to finance highest priority infrastructure investments
5. Schedule infrastructure improvements or construction over the next three to five years, including replacement of existing and new improvements to the technology infrastructure

Goal Six Continue to strengthen working relationships with the University to address mutual problems and strengthen the community

Highest Priority

1. Continue to utilize student and faculty resources to address community needs and challenges through internships, class projects, independent studies, volunteer programs, etc
2. Continue regular meetings between University and city officials to improve communication and joint problem-solving and to explore new ways to work together to address emerging issues and opportunities

Priority When Resources Permit

3. Include both EMU and City representatives in long range planning efforts conducted by both the University and the City to ensure that the needs/challenges/opportunities of both entities are taken into consideration
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