

City of Bemidji

City Council Work Session

February 9, 2004 - 5:30 p.m.

Present: Lehmann, Erickson, Hellquist, Zachman, Meuers, Johnson
Absent: Downs
Staff: Minke, Sherman, Felix, Eischens, Russell, Mack

Mayor Lehmann called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Review Summary from February 2 planning session on SE Lake Bemidji Shoreland Area

City Manager Minke provided a summary (attached) of the February 2nd discussion on redevelopment of the SE Lake Bemidji area. Councilmembers reviewed the summary and confirmed that it accurately represents what was discussed and represents the Council's vision for the area.

Some discussion followed regarding prioritizing the strategies. It was noted that the Action Plan establishes the priorities by virtue of a time frame.

Review of Bemidji City Council Means

Minke noted that based on some of the discussion at the Council Retreat in January, he thought the Council might be interested in adopting some Council Means Statements as guiding principles. He provided a draft copy of a document outlining Council Policy Role, Maximizing Effectiveness, Council-Mayor Role, Communication, and Performance Accountability. Minke requested Council feedback.

Lehmann suggested that the Council review the document and provide input to the City Manager no later than March 4th for discussion at the March 8th Council work session.

Shoreland Ordinance Amendment

A copy of the DNR's December 24 written response to the City's flexibility request in the proposed Shoreland Ordinance Amendment as it relates to Commercial Planned Unit Development (PUD) density was distributed

City Attorney Felix noted that while the DNR has denied the flexibility request, they do note that it could be approved if the City met two conditions:

1. The City agree to not apply the flexibility alternative throughout the city, but limit it to a specific area meeting a definition of "downtown business district".
2. The requirement that the City provide specific storm water management policy language in the Shoreland Ordinance.

Using a wall map, Felix outlined an area that included the central business district as well as the Georgia Pacific site, and identified it as the historical industrial/commercial core. Dan Thul, DNR Area Hydrologist expressed agreement that if the proposed alternative flexibility guidelines were applied to that area, it would be acceptable. Following discussion, the Council reached consensus and directed the City Attorney to draft language to limit the alternative flexibility guidelines to the historical industrial/commercial core and to incorporate storm water language similar to our existing policy into the ordinance with the idea that there is no minimum lot size.

Organizational Issues

Minke noted that in the next three to five years it is likely that the City will experience a 30 percent turnover in personnel due to retirements. With that in mind, the management staff has been looking at their individual departments – discussing what functions they do well and what functions need to be improved upon. From that discussion, the following organizational shortcomings were identified.

- Human Resource Function: One person who is tasked with the idea of putting direction to our human resource function from orientation of new employees to advertising for jobs, updating job descriptions, pay equity law, etc.

- Community Development Function: What are the Council's expectations? Community expectations? Based on the environmental issue (protect trees and green space - up north/outdoor feel), the City may need to take a more active role in new projects.
- Integration of Technology: Need to move into the 21st Century with things like GIS program, infrastructure management program, document imaging, etc.
- Communication (Internal & External): How we get the job done is as important as doing the job.
- Outdated or Non-Existent Internal Policies: Personnel policy is just one.
- Mission or Vision Statement for the entire organization: Identify purpose and direction - support council policies.
- Unity of Effort: A lot of people in the city doing a lot of good work, but are they all working in the same direction?
- Leadership/management development program for staff: Train supervisors so that they understand how to work with people, how to communicate, how to improve their written communication, etc.
- Succession Planning: A look down the road to begin planning for potential retirements - how jobs can be restructured, etc.

Minke suggested two things that need to be done in 2004:

1. Get someone to look at our organization and make recommendations for changes.
2. Look at compensation and pay equity.

He noted that David Kingsbury, facilitator with BSU Center for Research and Innovation will meet with the management staff during February to determine how he might be able to help us on the organizational side.

With regard to the compensation and pay equity, Minke expressed the need for a system that we can administer – one that will give points for work environment, education, responsibility, number of employees supervised, scope of decision making, etc. Minke expressed frustration with the current system which relies on a consultant tries to match the jobs in our city with a list of job titles and comes up with pay equity points. He felt that the system makes a lot of assumptions, and there is never a perfect job match. He suggested that when we have a system that we can administer, the Council will need to decide what cities are comparable and what percentage of the average is right for our city to pay.

Following discussion, the Council expressed support for Minke to begin working on the nine organizational issues as well as the development of a pay equity system.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley Sherman, City Clerk