

CITY OF DENTON CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

August 26, 2017

After determining that a quorum was present, the City Council of the City of Denton, Texas convened in a Planning Session on Saturday, August 26, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the University of North Texas, University Union in the Foundation Board Room #401, 1155 Union Circle, Denton, Texas.

PRESENT: Council Member Hudspeth, Council Member Briggs, Council Member Duff, Council Member Ryan, Council Member Gregory, Mayor Pro Tem Bagheri, and Mayor Watts.

ABSENT: None.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

- A. ID 17-1136 Discuss and give direction concerning accomplishments and goals as they relate to City services and infrastructure, streets, parks, finances, budget, planning, zoning and development, environmental issues, technology, public utilities, taxes, engineering, economic development, codes enforcement, transportation, purchasing, management, intergovernmental relations, boards, commissions and committees, meetings, and, without limitation, any and all operations of the City of Denton city government.

Mayor Watts stated that he saw this as a tool to help the Council function more as a team and help them work together to make good decisions.

City Manager Hileman stated that they were partners and staff hoped to gain some understanding from the Council and the direction they wanted to take on different topics.

Hileman introduced Rick Robinson, with the Ramsee Consulting Group, who would facilitate the meeting.

Council Members talked through their expectations of each other for the retreat.

Robinson stated that from the meetings he had with the Council, the biggest challenges included managing growth, infrastructure issues, and relationships with Council/staff/citizens/and businesses. The most urgent/important issue was relationships and trust between Council Members and staff.

Robinson stated that the DiSC Behavioral Preference Assessment was a tool used for discussion of people's behavioral differences. All DiSC styles and priorities were equally valuable. We were all a blend of all four styles. A person's work, management and leadership styles were also influenced by other factors such as life experiences, education, and maturity. Gaining a better understanding of one's self was the first step to becoming more effective when working with others. Learning about the DiSC styles of other people a person works or lives with could help them understand their priorities and how they differ from their own. A person could improve the quality of their workplace, place of worship, home or other locations by using DiSC to build more effective relationships.

Robinson reviewed what DiSC stood for and what the letters meant.

D – Dominance / This person placed emphasis on accomplishing results, the bottom line, confidence. Behaviors of this person included - saw the big picture, could be blunt, accepted challenges, and got straight to the point.

I – Influence / This person placed emphasis on influencing or persuading others, openness, relationships. Behaviors of this person included - showed enthusiasm, was optimistic, liked to collaborate and disliked being ignored.

S – Steadiness / This person placed emphasis on cooperation, sincerity, dependability. Behaviors of this person included - didn't like to be rushed, calm manner, calm approach, and supportive actions.

C – Conscientiousness / This person placed emphasis on quality and accuracy, expertise, competency. Behaviors of this person included – enjoyed independence, objective reasoning, wanted the details, and feared being wrong.

He said the platinum rule was to treat people the way they want to be treated.

Council Members completed exercises with the meeting facilitator that were designed to help them better understand and communicate with one another.

Robinson stated there were five levels of dysfunction – absence of trust (fear of vulnerability), fear of conflict (artificial harmony), lack of commitment (ambiguity), avoidance of accountability (low standards) and inattention to results (status and ego).

Robinson asked each Council Member to write down a statement of their idea of the role of the Council and then to work together in teams to create a shared statement of the role of the Council. The combined statement for the role of the Council was to establish policies, with empathy and transparency, that were in the best, long-term interest of the city of Denton based on shared community values and to balance the needs of all citizens and other stakeholders while being good stewards of public resources.

Robinson asked each Council Member to write down their idea of rules of engagement for the Council and then to work together in teams to create a shared statement of the rules of engagement of the Council. The shared statement of the draft rules of engagement were at all times, we will be respectful of the Council process, each other, staff, citizens, and other stakeholders. We will seek to clarify and stay focused on the issues, demonstrate civility, encourage and understand differing points of view, and be willing to accept feedback.

Robinson asked each Council Member to write down their expectations of staff. The Council requested that staff -- communicate the whole story (the good, the bad and the ugly); seek clarity and be responsive to council directives; express and exchange ideas with council on a group and individual level; explore and present all viable options; be respectful of our time; faithfully execute the direction of council; and provide expert opinion and advice.

Council Member Hudspeth stated that he did not need the presentation slides read to him. A summary that captured the heart of the topic was adequate.

Robinson asked for 3-5 key objectives that staff should focus on achieving in the next six months.

Council responded with focus on families, long-term cost containment, prioritization of city funds, life expectancy of assets – a report on the infrastructure; 6 engines at DEC instead of 12; short-term transportation improvement projects; improvements to flow of traffic; revisions to the Denton Development Code; permits / inspections.

Robinson reviewed the list of expectations from the executive staff. The Council should be clear, consistent and candid with city staff. Council members should study the backup provided prior to the meetings in order to be prepared and ask questions ahead of time. If Council has questions regarding a presentation/legal advice, call the City Manager's Office or the City Attorney's Office.

City Manager Hileman asked if it was meaningful to Council for staff to give their recommendation on an issue. He asked that Council be hard on the issue and not the person presenting it. Hileman stated that it was important to present the good, the bad, and the ugly and they tried to present that as objectionably as possible. He stated that he had been helping staff work through the fear of being the one to bring bad news to the Council.

General consensus of the Council was that this had been a good investment of their time.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

CHRIS WATTS
MAYOR
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS

JANE RICHARDSON
ASSISTANT CITY SECRETARY
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS