

**HIGH POINT CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING (RETREAT)
MARCH 22, 2016 – 8:00 A.M.
HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY**

MINUTES

Present:

Mayor Bill Bencini; Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Golden (Ward 1); and Council Members Latimer Alexander (At-Large); Chris Williams (Ward 2); Alyce Hill (Ward 3); Jay Wagner (Ward 4); and Jason Ewing (Ward 6) (arrived at 10:06 a.m.)

Absent:

Council Members Cynthia Davis (At-Large) and Jim Davis (Ward 5)

Note: Council Member C. Davis was present at the meeting, but left before the meeting was called to order.

Staff Present:

Greg Demko, City Manager; Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager; Jeron Hollis, Communications & Public Engagement Director; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

Also Present:

Meridith Elliott Powell, Facilitator- Award Winning Author, Keynote speaker, and business strategist

Tony Collins (citizen/Southside)

Felicia Jones (citizen/member of the Human Relations Commission)

Marlene Sanford, TREBIC

Judy Stalder, TREBIC

Lee Ann Clark, TREBIC

Sims Hinds, Dilworth Advisors

Mayor Bencini called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

City Manager Greg Demko mentioned that during the past ten weeks, staff has been presenting Council with a lot of pieces of information to digest and use as a part of the strategic planning process. The goal for today's City Council Retreat is to build a strategic plan to guide the city for many more years to provide a framework as to how the city will move forward to help focus goals, resources and direct staff to make meaningful impact on improving the community.

He commended Council on the exceptional pre-work that was done on the SWOT Analysis and Environmental Scan and noted this would be the basis of today's discussions. He then introduced and welcomed Meridith Elliott Powell, who is Gold Master Certified in Strategic Planning. He explained that by the end of the day, Council's efforts, decisions will result in accountability to the community and to each other.

Ms. Powell emphasized that strategic planning is the most important work that Council will do. She noted there would be some hard decisions that Council would need to make that would benefit the community. She asked those present to share what they felt were the most positive things happening in the city today and one thing that each one would like to see come out of today's strategic planning session.

Mayor Bencini

- Encouraged about the level of engagement in the community (trying to get High Point moving in a more positive direction, aimed towards revitalization)

Assistant City Manager Randy Hemann

- Excited about the attitude of service and accountability in staff

Deputy City Manager Randy McCaslin

- On a local level, ideas going to have to remake old parts of the city (new and exciting and will present a challenge to the city over the next 10-20 years)

Council Member Wagner

- Excited by the level of engagement and cooperation that has developed in business and economic development community in High Point
- Exciting that Greensboro, High Point and the County are coming together to work on economic development

City Manager Greg Demko

- Most exciting piece is part of the culture as an organization and the changes working with a service oriented culture versus a rules oriented culture
- Proud of the partnerships and attitudes that are being built in the community and rebuilding of trust between the government and local business community and citizens

Council Member Alexander

- Fight about the most trivial things, while ignoring the huge things
- Important as a body of leaders to begin to prioritize the important things

Mayor Pro Tem Golden

- Excited about putting some actions to words (encouraging)

Council Member Williams

- Difficult to get people to listen to the important issues because they can't get past their own needs, but there are brand new agencies doing work to help them to meet those needs and to become self-sustainable

Council Member Hill

- Positive that there's a much more proactive attitude among leadership, both Council, Mayor, staff and community in general
- Must move forward and take action- more willingness to do this

City Attorney JoAnne Carlyle

- Have heard the same things repeated throughout the years, but there has never been a focus to make them happen (distractions cause them to get lost- the small things that don't seem to really mean a whole lot and the small things that can't be agreed on)
- Positive that there is more engagement with community organizations and the city coming into alignment

Eric Olmedo (Budget & Performance Manager)

- Happy that conversations and dialogue is taking place between staff and Council
- Council has been receiving a lot more information from staff than in the past and this will help to make the tough policy decisions going through the next decade

Jeron Hollis (Public Engagement & Communications Director)

- At the end of the day, it comes down to execution of the ideas to make the city better
- Opportunity to bring new staff in with the ideas, goals, and values that will come out of sessions such as these

Ms. Powell quickly reviewed the ground rules, encouraged involvement and stressed the importance of getting Council's ideas, thoughts and opinions. She noted that SILENCE would be construed as AGREEMENT. She informed Council that most of the time today would be sharing ideas, etc.... in group sessions.

She then shared the aspects of the Systems Thinking Strategic Plan and pointed out the things contained in the purple box are outside of High Point's control (decisions that the Federal government made). These things can impact positively or negatively what High Point does in order to be successful (60-70% of what can impact success is outside of the city's control). She encouraged Council to take a look at the External Environmental Scan on a quarterly basis.

Ms. Powell explained the SWOT Analysis is the current state (what is strong or weak about the city). The Red box is the desired state (where the city desires to be, vision, mission, values, and long-term goals) and will be the guiding principles going forward. She emphasized that moving from the current state to desired state would require Council to focus on three goals. She stressed that focus is extremely important in this economy.

She then reviewed the SWOT Analysis (STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS).

Council Member Alexander pointed out several of the items listed seem to be diametrically opposed such as “economically affordable” in the STRENGTHS box and “high taxes” in the THREATS box. Mayor Bencini questioned the absence of schools/education in the SWOT Analysis. She asked Council to think about the WEAKNESSES and how these can be moved to STRENGTHS and to identify the true opportunities that need to come to fruition. She also stressed the importance of being mindful about the items listed in the THREATS box and to keep in mind that many of these Council has no control over.

Social media was identified as one of the negatives on the list, while a positive was the political will of Council to change things to make life easier for the public and business community.

Ms. Powell reviewed the city’s Vision & Mission Statement and values. There was one recommended change to the Mission Statement (to change “bringing together” to “empowering.”)

She then reviewed some of the KEY SUCCESS MEASURES and explained this ensures everyone sees the vision.

At this time, everyone was assigned to one of the three groups. The exercise was to brainstorm and share some KEY SUCCESS MEASURES, which were identified as follow:

- Entrepreneurial culture
- Growth of small business
- Vibrant downtown
- Increase of office rental space
- New construction and remodels
- Increased tax base
- Go from instigator to facilitator of growth
- Citizens feel safe and empowered to direct their family’s life and future
- Meeting basic needs
- Creating a place where home and business owners are able to make investments without fear of losing their investment
- Increase tax base
- Less balkanized communities
- Year round destination city
- More construction cranes
- Increase tax values
- Decrease substandard housing
- Increased entertainment downtown
- Increase in young people
- Increased education levels of residents
- High performing schools
- No food deserts
- Strong retail presence

Long-Term (LT) Goals were identified as follows:

1. Increase the population of active, engaged, entrepreneurial and working millennials living in High Point by 25%
2. 100% proactive enforcement of codes
3. Create a downtown catalyst project that produces:
 - ✓ 500 private sector jobs
 - ✓ 15-20 new restaurants and shops
 - ✓ 250 additional residential housing units
 - ✓ A centralized gathering place

Short-term (ST) Goals corresponding to the LT Goals were identified as follows:

LT Goal:

Increase the population of active, engaged, and entrepreneurial millennials living in High Point by 25%

ST Goal:

Create a process that will determine both the current number of active, engaged, and entrepreneurial High Point has, and develop a needs assessment on what we have to do to both attract more and retain them

LT Goal:

100% proactive enforcement of codes

ST Goal:

Achieve 1:1 Ratio of residential complaints to proactive staff action

LT Goal:

Create a downtown catalyst project that produces:

- ✓ 500 private sector jobs
- ✓ 15-20 new restaurants and shops
- ✓ 250 additional residential housing units
- ✓ A centralized gathering place

ST Goal:

Receive Sports and Entertainment Facility report; accept and approve; determine ownership and financing; and direct implementation

Action Plans identified to achieve these ST and LT Goals were as follows:

Goal: **Achieve 1:1 Ratio of residential complaints to proactive staff action**

Time Frame: Start now- April 27, 2017

Actions:

- Fill vacant code enforcement positions
- Provide training
- Develop and implement a system to calculate ratio of complaint driven vs. city initiated calls
- Develop and implement a communication strategy to both educate the public and invite their participation

Measurement:

- Positions filled
- Training complete
- Compare number of driven calls vs. city initiated

Accountability:

- More calls
- Fewer code violations
- Reduced Urban Blight

Team Members:

Code Enforcement, staff, attorneys, Council, purchasing office, city manager

Goal: **Receive Sports and Entertainment Facility Report; accept and approve; determine financing; direct implementation**

Time Frame: May 2016 – December 2016

Actions:

- Approve report and gain Council buy-in
- Define needed partners to support- public and private
- Create communication and education plan to gain support
- Develop a funding strategy- public and private
- Assign a city staff person to support project

Measurement:

- Staff person on board
- Funding strategy
- Communications strategy

Accountability:

- Council publically supports
- Funding secured
- Public support

Team Members:

Senior staff- Randy Hemann; Mayor and Council; Chamber; EDC; CVB; Technical Support staff

Goal: Create a process that will determine both the current # of active, engaged and entrepreneurial millennials we have; then develop and implement a need assessment to understand how to grow and retain them.

Time Frame: Now – December 2016

Actions:

- Develop a Millennial Task Force (next 90 days)
- Updated interested citizen list
- Urban AG Task Force
- Chamber participants
- HPU participants
- Establish downtown business/creative incubator (60 days)
 - Recruit groups to help establish incubator
 - Identify locations downtown

Measurement:

- 5 locations within 6 months
- Report of task force to Council and business community quarterly

Accountability:

- Increase in active, engaged millennial population
- Active and full incubator

Team Members:

CPE Department, Council, business community partners

Following the group exercises, Ms. Powell noted that she would summarize the information and send it out in a report. She suggested this needs to be in the forefront at every meeting to see how things are moving along and to measure the progress of reaching these LT and ST goals. Ms. Powell will follow up with Council and staff on a quarterly basis as to the progress. She explained the reason why strategic plans many times end up on a bookshelf is because they are so hard because it takes effort to commit to ideas and it takes courage to do the work. She told Council to expect some roadblocks along the way.

At this time, Ms. Powell suggested Council vote to affirm the LT Strategic Goals.

Council Member Ewing MOVED TO AFFIRM THE THREE (3) LT (LONG-TERM) STRATEGIC GOALS IDENTIFIED BY COUNCIL IN THIS MEETING. Council

Member Wagner made a SECOND to the MOTION, which carried unanimously. (7-0 vote) (Council Members C. Davis and J. Davis were absent)

Following the vote, Mr. Demko expressed appreciation to Council for their time commitment over the past ten weeks and the commitment that was demonstrated today.

During lunch, Sims Hinds provided an update on the

PROPOSED BASEBALL PARK PRESENTATION

Sims Hinds with Dilworth Advisors, and a High Point residence since 2003, provided an update on the proposed ballpark project. He expressed excitement about the opportunity to work on a project in the city in which he lives. He advised that the project started with the creation of a Ballpark Task Force, which was created last July by the Prosperity & Livability Committee to gather information. To assist with the study, they reached out to two first that are professionals in the arena venue of the development business to assist: Odell Associates (one of the oldest architectural firms in the South) and from a financial perspective, they reached out to CSL out of Dallas (the leading firm in the country to help cities figure out what to do with convention centers, amphitheaters, performing arts centers, ballparks, arenas and other performance facilities). Mr. Hinds shared that Odell Associates has been working closely with local architects, Freeman Kennett.

He advised that Phase 1 of the study started in June and was completed in December of 2015. The purpose of Phase 1 was to determine whether or not there was need to go any farther and to determine if the High Point market was large enough to support a venue like this. They looked at the entire Triad market for non-baseball events (such as the Coltrane Jazz Festival, concert series, Christian music festivals, blues festivals, big Triad market-wide events) and believed this would be the market that this type of venue would draw from. From the baseball aspect, they focused on the market they believed would be most likely to attend a venue in High Point (i.e. everything from High Point, Jamestown and south, including a majority of Davidson County, Lexington) and this alludes to a market size of just under 230,000 people. He compared that number to other minor league baseball markets around the country and noted that it represents the top 25% of the size of minor league markets around the country. He also pointed out in looking at the age and income distribution, although the numbers are not great, they were pretty much identical to what Greensboro and Winston Salem have. This shows that this market with those demographics has the people and financial wherewithal to support a venue like this.

He stressed that it was important to note that while baseball is going to be the main tenant in this venue, only 35 dates would be associated with the Hi Toms; the rest of the events would be concerts, youth sports events, high school football, Lacrosse tournaments, soccer tournaments, High Point Market events, etc.... He believed an indoor event space is a missing link and mentioned if the Stadium Club, Ballpark Club is designed properly, it would probably have about 10,000 square feet and it could be used as a great hospitality place year round for the citizens. He pointed out it was evident that High Point currently has no "gathering" place, no place where the community can come together for a big event and suggested this could be an ideal location to hold the annual Dr. King Prayer Breakfast and would provide opportunities to

do some bigger events. He stressed that they are envisioning the proposed stadium to host a variety of purposes and events.

Mr. Hinds then reviewed the findings of Phase 1:

- The High Point market is large enough to support the multi-purpose stadium
- The business community is also large enough to support it

The positive findings of Phase 1 prompted them to move into Phase 2, which contains more of the details. He noted that all of the costs involved in Phase 1 (estimated at \$75,000) and all the costs for Phase 2 have been raised through the private sector and there was no public money involved. He reiterated they have had great support from the local community to make sure they have enough wherewithal to complete the study to see if there is a concept that makes sense that could be brought back to Council for consideration at a later date and to help them determine what that proposal or proposals might be.

He stressed that there has not been a single proposal made to anyone at this point because they wanted to make sure they had all the information in first, which includes all the different revenue streams that might be available and the possible ways and possible partners for participation. He noted that CSL is assisting them with gathering this information and they have looked at other comparable facilities, comparable sized markets around the country to get a more detailed market demand. They are in the process of finalizing what a venue like this might cost.

He emphasized the key benefit is not necessarily the venue itself, but the economic impact that could be generated around it. Mr. Hinds advised their goal is to come back to Council with a proposal or a series of proposals that would have firm commitments from developers for this ancillary development. He then shared the success story of the Winston Salem Dash facility and mentioned the different types of development that came in to the area, which has contributed immensely to its success. He advised development continues to be on-going with construction starting next summer on a huge development project that will have two hotels, apartments, condos, office space, restaurants and retail. He pointed out this was pretty much a 70/30 split between the private sector and the public sector and there was some synthetic TIF money involved. He also shared some other success stories of ancillary development in other areas such as NewBridge Bank Park (home of the Greensboro Grasshoppers); Richmond Flying Squirrels; Durham Bulls; Charlotte Knights @ BB&T Park; Augusta Greenjackets. He mentioned that the owner of the Augusta Greenjackets has partnered with the City of North Augusta, South Carolina to create a new urban center along the banks of the Savannah River which will consist of a mixed-use development, and also involved synthetic TIF funding. Although a local resident challenged the ability to use a TIF on this site, the South Carolina Supreme Court rules in favor of the City of North Augusta and the project is currently underway.

Mr. Hinds advised that a survey was sent out two weeks ago as part of the effort to get more detailed information as to how the public feels about a proposed stadium. Some of the questions asked in the survey were:

- Do you go to Hi Toms games?
- What do you like about it?
- Would you go to a new stadium in downtown High Point?

- Would you rather see a game in High Point if a nice ballpark existed?
- Do you go to Grasshoppers/Dash games?

He pointed out in less than a week, the Chamber of Commerce has already received 443 responses, which is really strong. He explained they are getting ready to send the survey out to the Hi Tom ticket buyer patrons to get their reactions and gauge their interest in amenities of a new ballpark, travel patterns and to see if they would be interested in coming to see games in High Point. CSL is using a number of very detailed economic and financial projection tools to provide to Council for consideration when they bring a proposal or proposals.

Mr. Hinds reported that so far, out of the results they have come back with, Odell and CSL are recommending for the size of the market and the current league that the Hi Toms play in, a ballpark that would have 3,000-3,500 fixed seats, plus lawn seating for another 500-1,000; 300-350 people in the club area; 6-8 luxury suites that would pretty much operate year round. He asked Council to also keep in mind that all the infrastructure in a stadium like this would be in place so that if years down the road the Hi Toms ever moved up in classification and other events would come in, everything would be in place to accommodate the change.

Mr. Hinds informed Council that they met with about five local and regional developers to get their opinions on what might be good for High Point. They are currently looking at three sites, although one site does not have the ancillary development opportunities, so the focus will be on the other two sites that do. Interestingly all the developers said they would love to participate in this project. They all agreed that the sites would have the potential for large scale apartment developments to come into downtown High Point, along with bigger, regional and national restaurants and retailers. CSL anticipates release of the final report in about 30 days, which will help provide a detailed calendar of when the developers think things will be geared out to get good projections on tax revenue.

Also included will be a financial and economic impact modeling that will assist them in coming back with some type of proposal or options on a proposal, along with some different funding options. Mr. Hinds suggested it could be a mixture of a lot of different things (i.e. private sector funding, new market tax credits, historical tax credits, etc...). The draft report for Phase 2 will be delivered to the downtown development board by the end of next month.

Following the conclusion of Mr. Hinds' presentation, Council Member Alexander asked how they intend handling the negative comments from those in the community that put no confidence in the research and feel like it will not work no matter what. Mr. Hinds noted this happens in every community and he expects it to be no different in High Point. He encouraged everyone to broaden their perspective and look outside of what they believe their own city's limitations are and to be receptive to the success stories in other cities where projects started as a dream/idea. Most importantly, he advised they would encourage them to be more positive and point out all that High Point does have to offer. He admitted this would be the biggest challenge though.

Mayor Bencini asked about the timing of the comprehensive report and when it would be ready to be presented to the new downtown revitalization organization and the City Council to act on. Mr. Hinds anticipates they would have something ready for a presentation by the middle of May.

of this year. City Manager Demko explained that once the report is presented, they would have to determine the direction and would have to develop that by determining what is truly feasible and basically socialize the ideas to see how politically acceptable they are. He mentioned that he also has had the opportunity to build three different arenas in his career, but never knew Mr. Hinds until coming to High Point. He agreed the biggest piece if this is for the community to believe in High Point, having a vision, being focused on it and making it work.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

William S. Bencini, Jr., Mayor

Attest:

Lisa B. Vierling, MMC
City Clerk