



**City of Newport  
City Council Workshop Meeting Minutes  
July 18, 2013**

**1. ROLL CALL -**

**Council Present** – Tim Geraghty, Tom Ingemann, Bill Sumner, Steven Gallagher, Tracy Rahm

**Council Absent** –

**Staff Present** – Deb Hill, City Administrator; Bruce Hanson, Superintendent of Public Works; Curt Montgomery, Police Chief; Mark Mailand, Fire Chief; Renee Helm, Executive Analyst; Fritz Knaak, City Attorney;

**Staff Absent** - John Stewart, City Engineer

**2. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Executive Analyst Helm presented on this item as outlined in the July 18, 2013 City Council Workshop packet.

The first two items that the Council discussed was first, whether or not the 2011 Strategic Plan should be updated with items from Councilman Rahm's draft, and secondly, whether or not the City should hire a consultant to help establish the strategic plan.

**Councilman Rahm** – Looking at some of the strategic plan examples, especially St. Anthony's, I like that they start at the high level with mission and vision and then flow down from there. That's where I was trying to get to with my draft.

**Executive Analyst Helm** – St. Anthony Village's plan was put together with the help of Springsted Consultants. I believe they held a one-day work session with the Council and staff to develop that. They conduct that work session at the beginning of each year. The second point of discussion is whether the City should hire a consultant such as Springsted to help establish the strategic plan. A consultant would be able to offer expertise on establishing a strategic plan, provide a neutral facilitator, and help expedite the process. Stacy from Ehler's has given Deb a couple names of consultants. Deb and I recommend hiring a consultant to help guide us through this process.

**Councilman Rahm** – My original reason for trying to help influence this was not to throw away the previous Plan but to build on it so that future Councils can take and build on it too. As things are completed we can take them off of the plan and have a sheet outlining what we've all done to show that we've accomplished something. I know it takes time and I was wondering if we, as the Council, see value in having a strategic plan that has more formality to it.

**Executive Analyst Helm** – I think the facilitator would be able to help in creating a really good base plan that we could then build on. With a good base, we wouldn't need to hire a facilitator every couple years when reviewing the plan. They would just help get the process rolling for the future.

**Councilman Rahm** – When I looked at the 2011 Plan, I liked a lot of the items that were in there but I asked questions about where are the goals and objectives, what are some of the initiatives that we are doing, where are going as a community, and I didn't see any of those in the Plan. A good strategic plan shows those items. I know we're a small town and limited on resources but I think that's the reason we should have a good strategic plan.

**Councilman Sumner** – I will come back to some of the original concerns. Let's look at the Community and Economic Development page on the 2011 Plan. Those items are pretty straightforward to me and I think the 2011 Plan has a lot of what the examples have. I would like to add to this if necessary but I'm not seeing what exactly is different from what

we've already done.

**Councilman Rahm** – We do have a difference of opinion there. There are goals in the 2011 Plan but how are we accomplishing them? How do we communicate those to people? I think we're doing them but they aren't in the Plan.

**Councilman Gallagher** – Maybe what we should do is update the 2011 Plan first with what we've done and take a look at that. If it's not really what we want to see or have then we look at a facilitator.

**Councilman Rahm** – That's fine, I was just saying that we have something here and it's a good start but if you look at my draft it says that there are certain trends that are happening and there are certain things we want to align to. My thing is that we need to be smart about it and look at what's happening in our environment to see if we can take advantage of it.

**Councilman Gallagher** – So maybe we wouldn't need a facilitator but a market trade study analysis.

**Executive Analyst Helm** – There was a market trade study done in 2011 for the Red Rock Area. The facilitator could also conduct a SWOT analysis as well.

**Admin. Hill** – I think a facilitator could bring a lot of things together into one document and make it a little more concise.

**Mayor Geraghty** – I think a lot of the information is in ours. You probably want to organize it differently and drill down on action steps and accomplishments.

**Councilman Rahm** – I also want it to be a communication tool and in a format that people can grasp.

**Councilman Sumner** – I would suggest that the Executive Analyst look at the two examples and see if we can add anything from their plans and see what we're lacking.

**Councilman Gallagher** – That's a lot of work for one person, it would take months.

**Admin. Hill** – In all reality, those are Council decisions and that would be putting it on Renee. I think the upfront process needs to come from the Council.

**Councilman Sumner** – What haven't we expressed that we plan to do in the future. We're going to develop, bring people in; treat people well; we're going to maintain the capital functions of the City... I thought we already covered those things.

**Councilman Gallagher** – Do we want to get into infrastructure in the plan and be that specific?

**Councilman Sumner** – Is that the goal of the strategic plan?

**Councilman Rahm** – It doesn't need to be that specific. Here's an example, we want to promote economic development for Newport, how are we going to do that? What's our plan that shows me goals and objectives to do that? If someone asked me, I would want to know what the plan is.

**Councilman Sumner** – You're saying we have nothing in place?

**Councilman Rahm** – No, I'm just asking what our plan is.

**Councilman Gallagher** – Tracy wants to have a document that says what our plan is.

**Councilman Rahm** – I want to be able to communicate that to people and have a document that I can hand to people for them to read.

**Councilman Sumner** – Haven't we approached these consultants for that information? Wouldn't the market study work for the entire City?

**Councilman Rahm** – I have not seen anything.

**Executive Analyst Helm** – There was a market study done in 2011 for the Red Rock area.

**Councilman Gallagher** – Didn't we allocate money in the EDA this last year?

**Mayor Geraghty** – We did but we haven't talked about it yet.

**Councilman Gallagher** – Let's take it one step at a time, do the strategic plan first and that could lead to a market study.

**Councilman Rahm** – Having a well developed plan allows us to take opportunities such as that 30-second commercial deal a couple months ago, and determine whether or not they fit into our plan and objectives.

**Councilman Sumner** – Isn't that what we're supposed to do? Give direction...

**Mayor Geraghty** – We update the Comp Plan every ten years. The piece we're not doing is going out and advertising.

**Councilman Rahm** – The Comp Plan is nice but it's a large document and if I give that to people their eyes would glaze over. Since I've been in this seat, I've been asked what the Council's plan is for economic development.

**Councilman Sumner** – What do they say is lacking when you give them the 2011 Plan?

**Councilman Rahm** – Details. They want more of a vision saying how we're going to attract, how we're going to communicate...

**Councilman Sumner** – I don't see anything earth shattering in these examples. There are thousands of cities in Minnesota and they will have similar items in their plans. I'm looking for unique items. I'm reluctant to spend \$3,000 to have someone come in and say that we need to develop Newport, we already know that. We've asked for people to come in with the purpose of lighting a fire under potential developers and so many things outside besides a document are driving that. People will find us without us going out.

**Councilman Gallagher** – They haven't found us yet.

**Executive Analyst Helm** – The plan is not just about development, it's also about the core city services, Administration, Police, Fire, Public Works...

**Councilman Gallagher** – I think we could copy St. Anthony's and build on that.

**Admin. Hill** – The process is more important than the product and by copying and pasting someone else's product you're not going through that process.

**Mayor Geraghty** – I found it helpful in the past to talk about goals and objectives and we haven't done that in a while.

**Executive Analyst Helm** – I think a neutral facilitator would be able to do that and it would be helpful because you have done it in over two years.

**Councilman Sumner** – I'll come if the rest of you decide to do that. We're still waiting for the development of the transit area.

**Councilman Rahm** – I don't want to wait forever on that though. I think Newport needs other things besides the transit station area.

**Mayor Geraghty** – I think this document is more for the Council, I don't think residents look at it.

**Executive Analyst Helm** – It's for staff as well.

**Councilman Rahm** – Have we done a SWOT analysis of Newport?

**Executive Analyst Helm** – I haven't seen anything.

**Councilman Rahm** – I think that would be a good thing to do.

**Executive Analyst Helm** – I think it's nice to get that outside voice as well so they're not biased towards Newport.

**Mayor Geraghty** – Why don't you talk with Springsted and see what they have to offer.

**Admin. Hill** – We'll talk with the two and see what they have to offer.

**Councilman Rahm** – I put together a group of Newport and external people and conducted a SWOT analysis that I would be happy to show you. It's part of a branding plan.

**Councilman Sumner** – I would like to look at that.

**Councilman Rahm** – I would show it to you as a presentation.

**Councilman Ingemann**- You'll need to understand that that will be from a slanted perspective. I would rather have someone from the outside come and do one and then do a comparison.

**Councilman Rahm** – Some of them had an outside perspective.

**Admin. Hill** – Just to clarify the direction, we'll talk with the two facilitators and bring back a proposal?

**Mayor Geraghty** – Yes.

**Executive Analyst Helm** – Should we wait on the strategic plan until after we hear from the facilitators?

**Councilman Rahm** – Yes.

**Councilman Gallagher** – I would like to see Tracy's SWOT analysis.

**Councilman Sumner** – I would like to see it now as well.

**Councilman Rahm** – I don't have it in a document, it's only in a presentation form.

### 3. ADJOURNMENT

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tim Geraghty, Mayor

Respectfully Submitted,

Renee Helm  
Executive Analyst