



CITY COUNCIL

Strategic Planning Committee

**Monday, June 3, 2019
5:00 pm
Penn Room**

Strategic planning determines where an organization is going, how it's going to get there and measures success over time. It ensures the most effective use of the organization's limited resources by focusing resources on key priorities. The Council Strategic Planning committee will prioritize, in collaboration with the City's administration, the City's goals, objectives and strategies and determine which initiatives take precedence for implementation, under three main objectives: Finance, Standards of Living and Economic Development

Committee Members: J. Waltman, L. Sihelnik, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, B. Twyman, S. Marmarou, D. Reed, J. Cepeda-Freytiz

Although Council committee meetings are open to the public, public comment is not permitted at Council Committee meetings. However, citizens are encouraged to attend and observe the meetings. Comment from citizens or professionals during the meeting may be solicited on agenda topics via invitation by the Committee Chair. All electronic recording devices must be at the entry door in all meeting rooms and offices, as per Bill No. 27-2012

I. IMA Update

II. Repository Sale Bids – See page 9

452 Schuylkill Avenue Bid received 4-23-19
840 Elm Street Bid received 7-11-18
418 Strong Alley Bid received 4-09-19
513 South 14 ½ Street Bid received 3-11-19
315 Franklin Street Bid received 4-1-19
1422 Muhlenberg Street Bid received 5-15-18

- III. Strategic Planning**
 - a. Update on completion of Housing Strategy**
 - b. Update on preparation of Program to use Sidewalk/Curb Repaid funding**
 - c. Update on preparation of Program to use Blighted Property Remediation funding**
 - d. Update on completion of Parking Study**

- IV. Executive Session re contracts and litigation**
Dana South

Unfinished Topics

Administrative Services

- Unfilled Position Update
 - Managing Director vacancy – 2018-19
 - Solicitor vacancy – 2018-19
 - Property Maintenance Manager vacancy – 2018-19
 - CD Director – allowing the Accounting Manager position to be filled - 2019
 - Elected City Auditor position – 2019
 - Collection of Per Capita Tax – 2017-19
- Replacement of the Commuter Tax post Act 47

Community Development

- Job Description re Public Property Manager & CD Director - 2019
- Comp Plan, Strategic Plan & Housing Strategy – 2016-19
 - Completion timeline requested 3-4-19
- Updated organizational charts – 2016-19
- List of Rooming Houses w/ zoning, date of last PMD inspection, compliance - 2019
- Update on PMD issues raised by Mr. Hefferon - 2019
- 5th & Penn Properties – 2016-19
- Blighted Property Remediation Fund – 2018-19
- Reuse of former site of East Ends – 2016-19
- Reuse of former site of East Reading Pool – 2016-19
- Microloan Program – 2017-19
- Reuse of 5th St Post Office – 2017-19
- Reuse of former Letisse property - 2019

Fire

- EMS \$2 million budget gap - 2019
- Fire Station Construction – 900 blk Penn & 9th & Marion – 2018-19

Police

- Crime Reduction Plan - 2019
- Outsourcing of the crossing guard program – 2018-19

Public Works

- Updated organizational charts - 2017-19
- Reuse of City Park Greenhouse – 2018-19
- City Property Assessment Report – 2017-19
- Bernhart Dam Plan – 2018-19
- Parking Study – 2018-19
- Sidewalk/Alley Replacement program – 2018-19
- Purchase of the Hillside Pool Property – 2018-19

Law

- MERC Updates – quarterly
- Revision of amendments to Charter Board Ordinance and Ethics Code re Solicitor and conflict of interest - 2019
- Updated Parking Authority lease agreement – 2018-19
- Updated Redevelopment Authority lease agreement – 2018-19

- Quarterly Litigation Updates

General

- MERC Updates – quarterly
- Installation of Parking Stalls in the 900 blk of Washington St - 2019
- Use of 9th and Washington lot for off-street parking – no curb cuts -2018-19
- Meeting with the Parking Authority Board 2-19
 - Letter sent 3-6-19 no response
- BAC appointment/reappointment recommendation delays – 2018-19
- Council BAC liaison reports

After meetings with facilitator John Kramer in early 2018, the Mayor and Council developed 4 Strategic Planning priorities for 2018. Note some priorities and initiatives overlap

Priority 1: Neighborhood Development

The following 4 action items were identified as priorities:

1. Develop a housing plan for neighborhoods (also city-wide), including the de-conversion of multi-family units into single family homes.
2. Identify and address the needed public infrastructure in neighborhoods (e.g. parks, public buildings, cameras, sidewalks, street paving).
3. Develop a parking plan.
4. Explore the re-establishment of an Urban Planner position for the city -
ACCOMPLISHED

(1) Under housing plan/de-conversion – assigned to Managing Director 2018:

- Provide an update on the housing strategy with a presentation by Winnie Branton of DCED in late April 2018 - At this time, Council will inquire about the possibilities of land banking and conservatorship being included in the housing strategy
- Provide a report on the non-owner occupied properties in each neighborhood and present de-conversion strategy with incentive recommendations
- Report on Property Maintenance staff's self-assessment and ordinance amendment recommendations, providing for:
 - (a) reduction of fees and increased time between inspections for good landlords, and
 - (b) increased penalties for non-compliant property owners

- Recommendation for the implementation/operation of the \$1M in Blighted Property Remediation funding and the \$400K in curb/sidewalk replacement

(2) Under public infrastructure in neighborhoods – assigned to Managing Director 2018:

- Provide progress report on the expenditure/implementation of the following funds:
 - (a) \$3.5M for paving over 5 years - *ACCOMPLISHED*
 - (b) \$2.5M for parks
 - (c) \$250K for improvements to City property
 - (d) \$1M for blight remediation
- Update on expansion of security camera system
- Update on draft ordinance putting ownership/maintenance of shade trees with the City, instead of property owners
- Identify and address the need for public infrastructure in neighborhoods - release of EMG report on the condition of public facilities to Council

Priority 2 & 3: Community & Economic Development
Community Development

1. Establish the position of Economic Development Manager.
2. Develop a vision for city neighborhoods.
 - RFP for expansion of the security camera system
3. Enhance the engagement of community members in the development of neighborhoods.

Other action items identified but not selected as priorities were to survey local business owners and to identify businesses needed in various neighborhoods.

Economic Development

1. Establish the position of Economic Development Manager
2. Create and implement a blighted property plan and develop shovel ready sites
 - develop program for the use of the \$1M allocated in 2017
 - Determine if the programs will be managed internally or outsourced
3. Enhance customer service by creating a “Red Carpet” process to provide information, incentives and encouragement for businesses and developers.
4. Hold Economic Development Summit

Other action items identified but not selected as priorities included identifying businesses likely to come to Reading, business retention initiatives, develop an overall vision, establish a recruitment team, convene an economic development summit, review and update the city’s toolkit for economic development (grants, loans, technical assistance,

LERTA, RETAP, development process), improve communication with the public, community groups, and economic development organizations, and implement the revised Main Street Program

Priority 4: Financial Management

1. Administrative Capacity:
 - Fill the positions of Director of Administrative Services & Revenue Manager in order to provide the necessary staff capacity, allowing the Managing Director to focus on primary responsibilities. – Last update Sept 2018 – 4th round of interviews with candidates qualified for the position & *Revenue Manager was hired*

2. Cost Analysis:
 - Develop a more in-depth understanding of the city's major expenses, e.g. pension plans, healthcare, etc. and identify potential changes needed in legislation/city policies – *OPEB created.*
 - Prepare a multi-year projection of city operating expenses building on the current Act 47 Plan and the work of the city administration, i.e. 5-year plan.
 - Prepare a multi-year plan for city capital expenditures (5-year plan), incorporating an assessment of city property and new facilities needed to house city vehicles and equipment.

3. Revenue Modeling:
 - Review all sources of city revenue, including the current tax rates, enterprise funds, and cash management policies.
 - Prepare a multi-year template/revenue projection that builds on the Act 47 Plan and the work of the city administration, i.e. 5-year plan.
 - Review the city's current financial relationships with its authorities and potential liability.

4) Financial Management

1. Annualized revenues and expenditures w/ revenue modeling
2. Add financial staff in Accounting – *added Revenue Mgr* – Adm Services Director unfilled
3. Create OPEB Trust to offset medical liabilities - *ACCOMPLISHED*
4. Parking & Water Authority – contributions and liabilities
5. Assessment of all City property, including fleet - **Release of EMG Public Property Assessment Report** – location of facility/property, size, liability to City
6. Work to retain Commuter Tax post Act 47 or cover the \$3M gap in capital funding

Parking Lot Issues Remaining from Budget Discussions

1. Expansion of camera system and creation of rebate program to encourage property owners to purchase systems
2. Legislation to keep the Historic tax credit program
3. State legislation to retain the Commuter Tax after Act 47
4. Craft new Cooperation Agreement with Parking Authority

Public Works

1. Removal of Bernhart's Dam
 - a. Schedule Public Meeting for all affected residents
 - b. Projected costs for retention and removal – for removal add costs for the continued remediation of the park and the reopening of the consent agreement and other improvements to the park property
2. Revisit Bio Solids Tipping Fees
3. Repair of the Pagoda Wall
4. Update Liquid Fuels projects overall, 2019 proposed projects & use of carry-over funds
5. Revisit electrical costs re use of blower at new WWTP

Administrative Services

6. Technology Needs - Hansen Upgrade/replacement
7. Review list of businesses that have BP Licenses and filed BPT returns 2015-18
8. List of new part-time positions created since the Salary Cap requirement
9. Aggregated expense summary
10. Organization Charts for all administrative departments and offices

Law

11. Consider increase in Special Counsel expense

Fire

12. Proposed Fire Stations 9th & Marion & 900 blk of Penn –
 - a. cost estimates and proposed funding options
 - b. Cost of demo for Penn St properties
 - c. Recommendation of Planning Commission

13. Revisit EMS \$2M Budget gap

Other

14. Consider adding narratives to all budget areas outlining action plans for projects and programs funded
15. Aggregated expense summary
16. Capital needs for the Library – Main & Branches
17. Revisit County Contribution to RPL
18. Review Crossing Guard outsourcing agreement

Sale #	Bid Rec'd	Property Location	60-Day Limit	Bid Amount	Delinquency Total	Years Owed
6-0195	04/23/19	452 Schuylkill Avenue	06/23/19	\$500.00	\$26,228.70	'89-'18
11-09636	07/11/18	840 Elm Street	09/11/18	\$500.00	\$5,738.70	'09-'18
13-02155	04/09/19	418 Strong Alley	06/09/19	\$500.00	\$4,652.61	'11-'18
15-16164	03/11/19	513 South 14 ½ Street	05/11/19	\$501.00	\$64,720.08	'13-'18
16-05339	04/01/19	315 Franklin Street	06/01/19	\$500.00	\$2,304.24	'14-'18
16-16446	05/15/18	1422 Muhlenberg Street	07/15/18	\$518.00	\$5,240.97	'14-'18

The School District has approved all of the bids except for the pool property (sale # 15-16164). Waiting for direction from the City. The County will approve any and all bids that are approved by both the School and Municipality.