

South Portland City Council Goal-Setting Workshop

Highlight Notes

Thursday, February 28, 2019

McKernan Center, Southern Maine Community College

About the Workshop

This workshop provided an opportunity for Council Members to proactively discuss goals and processes among themselves and the City Manager. So that the workshop was fully inclusive, efficient, and highly productive, it was facilitated by Craig Freshley of Good Group Decisions. Craig's primary job was not to offer suggestions for goals or processes, but rather manage a good discussion among Council Members and the City Manager.

Attendance

- Councilor April Caricchio
- Councilor Claude V. Z. Morgan
- Councilor Deqa Dhalac
- Councilor Susan Henderson
- Councilor Kate Lewis
- Councilor Misha Pride
- City Manager Scott Morelli
- Facilitator Craig Freshley

Desired Outcomes

- Shared understanding of progress on existing goals.
- General conclusions about goals for the next year.
- General conclusions about how to improve decorum in public communications at Council meetings.
- Council members get to know each other better and appreciate each other's perspectives.

Planned Agenda

5:30 **Dinner**

6:00 **Opening**

Mayor Claude Mason will open the workshop and briefly explain our objectives. Facilitator Craig Freshley will briefly explain the agenda and a few ground rules.

- 6:10 **2018 Goals Review**
For each of the goals that the Council established for 2018, one at a time, we will hear a brief presentation from the City Manager and then Councilors will discuss. The presentation on each goal will provide the staff perspective on what went well and what didn't. Councilors will then give their own opinions about performance. For those goals largely achieved, we will try to identify the "success factors" that contributed to their achievement. For goals not achieved, we will try to identify why not.
- 7:10 **Break**
- 7:25 **2019 Goals**
We will begin with a presentation by Craig on advance input received from Councilors. Craig will share with us current goals that appear to not be a high priority and Councilors' ideas for new goals. As a group we will discuss and try to come to consensus on the Council's short list of high priority goals for 2019. If time allows, we will name lead responsibilities for each goal and perhaps other details also.
- 8:55 **Decorum and Communication with the Public**
How can the Council encourage high standards of decorum during the public input portions of Council meetings? We will discuss this and related questions and try to come to some conclusions. While we don't want to regulate comments too tightly, we also don't want comments to offend people or stifle other comments. We would like for public comments to carry a tone of respect for fellow community members. How best to achieve this?
- 9:25 **Closing Comments**
Each member of the City Council and the City Manager will have an opportunity to make a brief closing comment, perhaps a reflection about the workshop or perhaps a particular lingering hope or concern.
- 9:30 **Adjourn**

Ground Rules

- What's best for the City as a whole
- Discussion among Councilors and the Town Manager
- Let Craig call on people
- Minimize distractions
- Flexible agenda
- No formal decisions
- Neutral facilitation and report

2018 Goals Review

1. Waterfront Master Plan

- Staff Perspective
 - Future uses
 - Large master plan study
 - CIP is about to be provided to council and will include priorities
 - Climate Modeling and Adaptation
 - Working with Portland
 - Will spell out city-wide what we expect to do
 - Brownfield assurance
 - Not much to do on this right now
 - Evacuation plan
 - Initiated 2 years ago
 - Staff needs guidance on this if you want to carry this one forward
- Council Comments
 - Establishing an Evacuation Plan / Emergency Plan should be a high priority
 - Clarified that the Council has not seen an "Emergency Plan"
 - Clarified that not all Councilors have received the "NIMS Training" (?) from the Fire Chief
 - Next steps
 - The City Manager will provide existing plans to Councilors and the Council will determine if plans need to be changed (with expert input) and/or how to make the public better aware
 - Climate modeling
 - New climate modeling shows even higher sea level rise than previously estimated

- We need to be more aggressive about adaptation
- Hopefully, “One Climate Future” will give us guidance on adaptation
- Question about how often the oil tanks come up for relicensing – Scott will get an answer
- In developing a new Master Plan, we should consider the work of the Open Space Committee and their recommendations about public access, impervious surfaces, and other things

2. Increase diversity

- Staff Perspective
 - Difficult for staff to have an influence on Committees and Boards because we don’t collect demographic information on committee participants and applicants
 - Staff has been working with a diversity consultant to improve our job application process and how we advertise for jobs
 - Staff has done implicit bias awareness training among over 100 staff
 - It’s important that the existing workforce is supportive and understanding
 - More training is planned
 - Fire service training is now being offered at SMCC
 - 3 out of 14 directors are women
 - There is progress to be made
- Council Comments
 - We have made some progress, although there is more work to be done
 - Portland has a full-time position focused on diversity
 - Wonder if we could “share” in the work of that position
 - Concern raised about the lack of women in leadership positions
 - Concern raised about young people getting more involved
 - We need to broaden participation in City committees – so it’s not the “same few people” serving over and over
 - We need to “dig deep”
 - We need to inspire new leaders to serve on committees
 - Perhaps we should consider capping the number of committees that a person can serve on at a time
 - We need to increase the number of people of color serving on committees
 - If we don’t engage more people of color, we are missing out
 - Concern raised about the term “people of color” – we are mindful of ALL under-represented people
 - We also need to attract more young people – perhaps by offering internships

- Pointed out that while we all agree on these things, there has been a poor track record of people volunteering
- We have to dig deep – be more proactive and deliberate about recruitment
- Young people need to know HOW to get involved
- Personal invitations are very effective

3. Make streets and sidewalks functional and safe

4. Improve pedestrian and bike safety

5. Reduce traffic congestion

Staff and Council discussed all three of these goals at the same time

- Staff Perspective
 - Adopted Compete Streets policy
 - Did an inventory and status of all streets and sidewalks
 - Now that the data has been collected, City staff are about to make recommendations for improvements
 - Especially sidewalks
 - Specific projects we have been working on
 - Cottage Road
 - Broadway at Millcreek
 - Cash Corner extension
 - Bike Ped safety
 - Broadway traffic signals
 - New Exit on 295
 - Have been working on Middle School safety – traveling to and from school
 - Have made several improvements along Broadway
 - Smart Corridor project along eastern Broadway
 - Broadway and Sokokis – now qualifies for a new traffic signal
Don't have a reserve for maintaining traffic signals
- Council Comments
 - There is a perception problem in the area that cars are more important than people
 - It's a social justice issue
 - We need to focus on what to do in the short term, before long term changes come about
 - Pedestrian safety around the two existing Middle Schools
 - Broadway Corridor Study solicited public input three years ago and nothing has been done yet
 - City Manager says he will get everyone a copy of the study
 - The problem of people walking in the road needs to be addressed
 - Council has to be more vigilant about shepherding projects through
- Idea for a 2019 Goal
 - Organize the City around potential middle school consolidation

6. Open space plan with diverse stakeholder buy in

- Staff Perspective
 - There is an intention to present the Final Plan in June
- Council Comments
 - Concern that maybe some people were not included in the survey
 - Going forward we need to be diligent about soliciting ALL perspectives in proactive ways
 - When it gets presented, we need to implement it

7. Ensure optimal use and maintenance of city buildings

- Staff Perspective
 - Recently hired the first ever City's facilities manager
 - He is consolidating a maintenance plan, yet also finding long term problems
 - Planning a bond for a new station at Cash Corner
 - There will be money in the next CIP for other fire stations
- Council Comments
 - Great to have a facilities manager
 - We should consider being more deliberate about the future of city property and how it will continue to serve the city as a public service
 - Concern about doing so much exclusive work with Sebago Technics
 - City Manager clarified the current terms of that arrangement

8. Explore how to encourage more housing availability

- Staff Perspective
 - Recently implemented two give-back programs
 - Affordable Housing Committee will be coming forward with recommendations soon
 - Tiny Homes Workshop will be forthcoming
 - Crackdown on short term rentals will help with affordable housing
 - Recent zoning changes will allow for more housing
 - Handling stormwater better has freed up sewer capacity, that will facilitate additional housing
- Council Comments
 - Clarified that all new housing is not required to have a percentage that is affordable
 - All communities in this area are struggling with affordable housing
 - The City is not actually building affordable housing – rather it depends on affordable housing projects “coming forward”

2019 Goals

Summary of Goals

After considerable discussion there was general agreement of the following Goals and Strategies for 2019:

Goals

1. Waterfront Master Plan
2. Public safety and environmental mitigation
3. Increase diversity
4. Improve bike and pedestrian safety
5. Incorporate affordable housing throughout the City
6. Increase sustainability
7. Senior services and aging-in-place
8. Continue with neighborhood master plans

Overall Strategies

- A. More community engagement
- B. More influence with law makers

Goals Details

Refined Goals from 2018

See discussion of 2018 goals for more details on what needs to be addressed going forward.

- 1. Waterfront Master Plan**
 - Considers climate adaptability
 - Considers Open Space Committee Recommendations
- 2. Public safety and environmental mitigation**
 - “Brownfield assurance”
 - Evacuation and emergency planning
 - Environmental & sustainability considerations should be developed and presented for all new projects
- 3. Increase diversity**
 - Proactively recruit for committees and boards

- Improve outreach efforts to young people, and other people typically under represented
- Increase diversity among staff
 - Across pay grades
 - Hire more people of color
- Increase diversity in neighborhoods
- 4. Improve bike and pedestrian safety**
 - Focus on access to our existing schools
 - Plan safe access to new schools and account for impact of centralized new school
 - Quality of sidewalks
 - Ideas for implementation
 - Public campaign for pedestrians and drivers
 - High enforcement rate of traffic violations
 - Long term traffic calming measures with short term plan
 - Increase monitoring of progress
- 5. Expand access to affordable housing throughout the City**
 - Re-imagine how we think of and encourage affordable housing
 - Be more deliberate and not just reactive
 - Re-package it as different than what people traditionally think of as “affordable housing”
 - Educate the community
 - Consider building design
 - Consider requirements – and silent partnering – on all new developments

New Goals for 2019

- 6. Increase sustainability**
 - Food and community gardens
 - Energy use
 - Coordinate with Portland
 - Zoning
 - Green space
 - Educate and engage people in this “emergency”
 - Explore municipal owned electric utility - we could decide where the power comes from
- 7. Senior services and aging in place**
 - Track the implementation of the Senior Steering Implementation Committee
- 8. Continue with neighborhood master plans**
 - Would be a logical next step in the comprehensive planning process
 - To preserve unique character of specific neighborhoods

- Gives neighborhoods a chance to be proactive about their futures
- Caution about “imposing” planning on neighborhoods that don’t otherwise have a “force” driving planning

New Overall Strategies for 2019

A. More community engagement

- For instance - Ask Cable TV to produce PSAs
- Idea: hire or contract marketing capacity

B. More influence with law makers

- Because we are such an economic force
- Federal
 - We should send a delegation to DC quarterly
 - Councilors go to national conferences
- State
 - We should lobby at the state level also

Notes about 2019 Goals and Strategies

- We agree to track progress on these goals and strategies quarterly.
- There was considerable discussion about contingency planning for school consolidation IF it passes.
 - The following considerations were identified:
 - Traffic
 - Pedestrian safety
 - Vacant lot
 - After school activities of students
 - In the end it was decided not to have this as a goal right now.

Decorum and Communication with the Public

The Council had a free-flowing discussion in response to the following question:
How can the Council encourage high standards of decorum during the public input portions of Council meetings?

The Workshop adjourned at 9:42 pm.