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ZELS LOBBYING SEMINAR OUTLINE

March 31, 2004

By Alan Beals

Introduction

Why Lobbying?

To express a point of view
To influence (governmental) policy
To help construct the laws and regulations by which people, groups or
organizations will be governed

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What is Lobbying?

Sales, persuasion
Selling information and ideas

Marketing is critical
Marketing is “the ability to convince a decision-maker to do something he would
not otherwise do or, conversely, not to do something he would otherwise do.”

Lobbyists change people’s way of acting and consequently, the shape of final
decisions.

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Essentials of Lobbying

Substantive knowledge of the issues
An understanding of the decision-making and reform processes

Effective advocacy techniques

So, What is lobbying?

- A process aimed at bringing about changes in an institutional or governmental policy and behavior
 - A process in which various organizations or persons can be involved
 - An open and public process
 - A process which requires proposals for changes and not just criticism
 - A process where a group of citizens use their right to change their society by changing the institutions controlling society
 - A fundamental process in all truly democratic societies.
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Developing the Message

What should be heard?

How Should the Message be Formulated?

- The message should have an appropriate title
 - It should demonstrate and state the goal of the lobbying campaign
 - It should be streamlined for the target audiences
 - It should be brief and clear
 - It should contain all the arguments in support of your position
 - It should contain an appeal in defense of what is just and fair from the perspective of the target audience
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Discussion-

Describe in two words the current ZELS message for decentralization

Illustration

WHY DECENTRALIZE PLANNING AND THE BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS?

- 1 Bring a distinctly local function back to the control of the people
2. Place a focus on accountability
3. Encourage citizen participation and transparency
4. Promote and expedite sound local economic development. The current system is a huge barrier to private sector investment
5. The time for issuing permits will be faster
6. The function is purely local and should be easy to transfer
7. The transfer is not a significant revenue loss to central government
8. There are relatively few employees involved in current administration (estimated at 200-300 in regional offices)
9. The current regional offices are either in or close to city halls. Therefore, it would be easy to absorb

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The Policy Context

- The Problem (Issue)
- General Principles (Necessary Tools)
- Specific Recommendations

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ILLUSTRATION (Communal Services)

Outline of a policy framework for a joint ZELS-MAKKOM position

In every organized society there are several basic needs that have to be met to assure the fundamental health and safety of the citizens.

First and foremost is the provision for clean, safe and potable water. Without water there is no life. In most nations the provision of water supply and distribution is a responsibility of local municipalities. That is the current case in Macedonia.

However, Macedonia is unlike the systems in other nations in that the ability of local

municipalities and their public communal enterprises is severely over regulated by the central government. The array of conflicting laws and regulations at the central level make the current systems unwieldy, inefficient, costly to operate, wasteful and inequitable. The local burdens are uneven and unfair. Citizens fail to pay their water bills, (less than 50 % of the water bills are paid). Even governmental entities fail to pay their water bills. The system is in chaos and doomed to failure without fundamental change.

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The remedy is to decentralize **FULL** responsibility for the administration of water supply to the municipalities of Macedonia. In order to properly conduct efficient and professional administration of communal water systems, the following responsibilities are necessary as a minimum set of municipal authorities.:

- The ability to establish rates and budgets for the provision of water supply
- The ability to hire and fire personnel and establish working conditions and benefits
- Municipalities should not have the VAT applied to water bills of the citizens
- The ability to collect the water bills without artificial barriers
- The ability to promptly collect water bills from other governmental agencies
- The reimbursement from central government of any classes of people exempted from local water bills.
- The ability to incur reasonable debt for capital and water system improvements
- The ability to have a fair legal process to redress needs.

Specific decentralization legislation should include the following points.....(List the consensus positions developed in the workshop)...

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Understanding the Decision-making Process

If Legislative

What is the legislative process?

Who can introduce a measure?

Where are the points of intervention?

Committee hearings - presentations

Parliamentary readings – amendments from the floor

Understanding the Decision-making Process

If Administrative

Use of ZELS MOU

Who has the responsibility for the “first draft”

Ministry clearance

Prime Minister

Steering Committee (Clearing House)

Parliament introduction (see above)

Analyze Your Strengths

Who are the supporters?

Those who support the policy or behavior

The powers or actors who desire to change this policy or behavior

The actors who are in a position to influence this policy or behavior

The factors which influence the main actors

The decision-making process or the agenda

Who else can help?

Which other groups or organizations deal with the issue in question, (including those who would not be natural allies)

What are the advantages and disadvantages in forming a coalition with each one of them

Would you be able to work together?

Would you be able to enlist them as allies over the issue?

Other audiences: Who else?

Who else would possibly benefit from your efforts?

Who will possibly lose? What are the probable arguments of the opposition?

What are the counter arguments?

What motivates legislators?

The voting citizens

Former supporters and politicians from the political parties (The people who control votes)

Influential individuals from the community (who also control votes)

Personal friends and acquaintances

Spokespersons of organizations, especially if an MP is interested in a specific organization, issue or cause

Kinds of MP's

Leaders of the cause (champions)

Allies

Netural Watchers

Passive Opponents

Hard Opponents

Action Steps (Use Communal Services Action Steps)

Discussion-

Law on Culture

Facts (Kelmend)

Discussion

What are the issues to be addressed?

What are the remedies?

Lobbying Techniques

HOW TO LOBBY YOUR MP OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

1. Prepare an agenda with the main objectives

- . Define the problem to be discussed. Do not overload with too many questions -stick to no more than two or three.
 - . Decide what you want to achieve with the visit, i.e. a commitment to vote in support of your problem, assuming the leading role on the problem, or you may consider the visit as purely informational.
 - . Set aside time in the beginning of the visit for a general conversation, but make it brief. Remember, this meeting is your chance-
 - . If the visit is a group visit, decide who will start the discussion and table your agenda.
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2. Listen carefully

- . A large part of lobbying activity is listening, looking for symptoms, directing the view of the interlocutor and finding ways to acquire important information.
 - . If the meeting is with a "reticent" man, make him talk by asking him questions.
 - . If you meet an individual, who is appallingly long-winded, wait for a pause to come back to the question.
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3. Prepare yourself, but do not think you should be an expert

- . As with other citizens, most of the elected officials are not experts in a narrow field. Prepare yourself well, but do not deem it necessary to be acquainted with all details of a given problem. Share your personal vision and experience where appropriate. Share your concerns with your friends and other community members-
 - . Decide in advance for yourself when you will accept an answer "I do not know" and suggest tracking the information on the problem.
 - . Be open to counter-arguments, but do not waste too much time on them. Avoid being polemical, avoid confrontational attitude.
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4. Do not stay long

- . If you have heard what you have hoped for, try to end the discussion, say thank you and leave. If you reach a deadlock, express your thanks even if you are disappointed, by declaring so. Leave, and continue the discussion some other time.

5. Remember you went to the meeting to build up interrelations.

- . If the elected official has a positive attitude to your problem, or if he/she had supported your position in the past, express how much you appreciate this support in the course of the visit
 - . In the opposite case, remember the phrase "there are no eternal friends nor eternal enemies." You may receive support by the same person another time on some problem that is important to you. Meanwhile, your visit may prevent this official from being an active opponent. In other words, you may help reduce the tension on the other side.
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6. Follow-up is important

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- . After the visit, send a thank you letter. If during the visit some commitments were made, reiterate them the way you understand them. If other officials had been present, write to them too. They may turn out to be important allies.
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Lobbying Techniques: The Ten Commandments

Commandment I

" Thou shall never forget the essential message. "

Commandment II

" Thou shall build a wide network of support. "

Commandment III

" Thou shall always be accurate, honest and consistent. "

Commandment IV

" Thou shall choose your battles and establish realistic goals. "

Commandment V

"Thou shall strive to have information that is timely and accurate on the position of your opponents and on the progress of related issues"

Commandment VI

"Thou shall always remember that the messenger is as important as the message."

Commandment VII

"Thou shall be more prepared than your opposition."

Commandment VIII

"Thou shall effect the process at the earliest possible decisional juncture."

Commandment IX

"Thou shall never give the politician an easy way out; always be direct and precise in what you ask for."

Commandment X

"Thou shalt not always take from politicians. Find a way to return the favor."

Coalition Building

Advantages

- Improved standing of the group
- Better confidence from ruling politicians, media, public
- Joins resources
 - Membership
 - Financial resources
 - Experts
 - Lobbyists
 - Access

- Influence
- Information

Types of coalitions

Permanent

Temporary

Rules for Building and Maintaining Coalitions

1. Consider your chances well
2. Be aggressive
3. Find activists and make them work
4. Educate the legislators, the public and yourselves
5. Try to take decisions consensually
6. Establish dialogue with your opposition
7. Negotiate
8. Keep an open mind for new ideas
9. Define the time and scope for compromise
10. Maintain your network

Methods of Communication

Source

Can be the organization, ie ZELS

Can be an individual, ie president of ZELS, committee chair, etc.

Someone “ the audience trusts...truthfulness of source enhances perceived value of the information..

The **status**, the **reliability** and the **expertise** of the source make the message more influential

Message

Should be clear, understandable

Should address the audience in appropriate way, provoke interest, appeal to expectations, audience views., etc.

Audience

Should provoke reaction, support, change of the attitudes and behavior

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Media Relations and Public Awareness

Grass roots

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3:00 PM **Adjourn To Meeting of Standing Committee**
 coffee break