



THE
7½ KEY COMPONENTS
TO EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL
COUNCIL DECISION MAKING



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**THE
7½ *KEY COMPONENTS*¹
TO EFFECTIVE MUNICIPAL
COUNCIL DECISION MAKING**

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RTI International

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¹ The notion of “7½ keys” is adapted from Jack Schultz, *Boomtown USA: The 7½ Keys to Big Success in Small Towns* (Herndon, Virginia: National Association of Industrial and Office Publications, 2004), 191 pp.

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Introduction

The Local Government Initiative (LGI), sponsored by USAID/Bulgaria, conducted the first meeting of the Effective Municipal Decision-Making Demonstration Team (“Demo Team”) on July 1-2, 2004, in Sevlievo, Bulgaria. Representatives from nine municipalities participated and in most cases, the mayor and council president were present. The purpose of the Demo Team is to improve municipal governance, with specific attention to the effectiveness of the municipal decision-making process. The Demo Team focuses particularly on operational procedures and the working relationships between the municipal council and administration. The Demo Team intends to meet periodically to discuss current and best practices, to identify and tailor local and international best-practice examples, to test selected best practices in their respective municipalities, and to share implementation results and discuss progress.

During the July meeting, as a first step to launch activities, the Demo Team’s short-term advisor delivered a presentation on “Effective Municipal Decision Making: Examples of Best Practices and Innovations from the U.S. Experience.” This presentation identified a set of “key components” to effective decision making for municipal leaders, including, but not limited to: teamwork, strategic thinking and planning, clear rules and procedures, community involvement, and collaboration. Ten best practices from U.S. experience were presented.

Through small group discussion as a follow-up to the presentation, the Demo Team identified and agreed upon a list of seven key components of effective municipal decision making in line with the Bulgarian context and current priorities.

The Seven Key Components of Effective Municipal Decision Making

1. Interrelations Between the Mayor/Administration and Municipal Council: Teamwork
2. Clear, Established, and Open Procedures
3. Balance of Responsibilities for Decision and Implementation: Leadership Roles
4. Engaging Citizens in Decisions and Accountability
5. Common Vision, Strategy, and Planning
6. Decision Support: Information; Analysis; and Technical, Administrative, and Legal Support
7. Role of Council Committees

Developed by Effective Municipal Decision-Making Demo Team, July 2004.

In addition to identifying these key components, the Demo Team members worked in municipal teams to select three best practices to apply in their own municipalities. A list is attached as ***Appendix A***.

These seven key components of effective municipal decision making now serve as the basis for this paper, which frames and expands upon these notions as elements integral to good governance for municipal councils and administrations. The author has taken the liberty of adding a “Key Component 7½” on the political dimensions of decision making in terms of both the “public good” and the will to succeed.

Best-practice examples are interspersed throughout this paper and every effort has been made to ensure that examples relate to the practices selected by the Demo Team members. While

the majority of the best practices are from the U.S. context, a number of practices are international.

Furthermore, complementary points focus on elements to consider for further development of the *Model Rules of Organization and Operation of the Municipal Council, the Committees Thereof, and the Interaction with the Municipal Administration*. The “Model Rules” are currently under development and ultimately will guide the effective organization and operation of the municipal council according to the Constitution of Bulgaria, the European Charter of Local Self-Government, and the Local Self-Government and Local Administration Act.

This paper is organized, therefore, around the 7½ Key Components of Effective Municipal Decision Making with (1) complementary best-practice examples and (2) points to consider in further development of the “Model Rules” as related to the topic at hand.

Key Component #1 – Interrelations Between Mayor/Administration and Municipal Council: Teamwork

Interrelations among the mayor, administration, and municipal council are vitally important to the effectiveness of municipal decisions. These parties all have a crucial and distinct role to fulfill in leading local governments.

Among Bulgarian local governments, interrelations between the municipal council and the mayor, and between the municipal council and the administration, are widely discussed as a top priority. In 2003, slightly more than 50% of municipalities surveyed by Alpha Research appeared generally satisfied with mayor-council and administration-council interrelations.² However, nearly 50% saw room for improvement. Of the municipalities surveyed, 47% described the relations between the municipal council and the mayor as “good, though not always”; “tense though working”; or “hostile and do not contribute to the work.” In terms of relations between the municipal council and the municipal administration, 48% noted that “the administration only assists the mayor,” or “the administration helps, but only to an extent.”

In light of these responses, an increasing emphasis is being placed on how to improve interrelations among the mayor, administration, and council; and specifically, on how to encourage these individuals to work together more effectively as a team. This notion of a team or a body can be a contradiction because people who come together in a political realm often are from opposing positions. By combining their input with that of unbiased professionals, they are expected to do the right thing for the citizens of their community. But the concept of what is right for the community is grounded in the values and perspectives each individual brings to the job, which leads to differences and disagreements.

Differences of opinion and position are always going to exist in a democratic municipal context. That difference is to be valued because it means that more than one point of view is represented and, ideally, debated. Through the process of multiple opinions and viewpoints being brought to the table, common ground may be identified, consensus achieved, and a path forward identified that represents what is best for the majority. This is the basis of democratic decision making and ultimately, the majority rules. Along that journey, decision makers who are part of a municipal governing body have a choice: either they work as a team, or they don't. The consequences are great either way. At the core, decision makers must have the will to consider building the skills for working together as a team.

What exactly does it mean to work as a team? At a very basic level, teamwork, in the context of the governing body, is based on *an understanding of how to function effectively together as a group of diverse and usually strong-willed people to act as one*. Developing the skills to work as a team takes time to move through various stages of group formation.

Group dynamics significantly influence the ability of a group to work as a team. Personalities, personal or work styles, political agendas, experience level, education level, expectations and assumptions of and from the public, rules, and forces beyond one's control—all these have a profound impact on the ability of municipal officials to understand and fulfill their roles.

² Alpha Research Ltd., *Sociological Survey on the Work of Municipal Councils* (Sofia, Bulgaria, March 2003).

Working together as one decision-making body is not necessarily a concept that ordinary citizens elected to office learn in the course of their professions or daily life. Nevertheless, this basic concept of working to improve relationships is being placed higher and higher on the priority list worldwide. For example, municipal councils in the United States see the stress, strain, and ill effects of ineffective decisions—in terms of wasted time and wasted taxpayer money. More and more municipal associations in the United States are attending to the business of building skills in the areas of improving relationships, building consensus, resolving conflict, building teams, and making decisions. The idea is to help municipal councils and boards deliver better-quality results.

Best Practice: Training Municipal Councilors Through the Maine Municipal Association Governing Skills Project, which is designed to make the job of governing at the local level easier. The project provides eight hours of skill-building methods and exercises to a municipal council. Each member must participate. The project requires an agreed-upon action plan to meet the goals of the council. A trained facilitator is provided, and the group meets at its convenience. Session topics include working together, building effective relationships, understanding group dynamics, and strengthening the working relationships of councils. Participants report that participation in the project serves as a catalyst for bringing elected officials together and creating a positive foundation for the future.

www.memun.org, Maine Municipal Association; (free) site registration required

Developing a Common Vision and Building a Team

Regardless of the diversity among municipal leaders, there will certainly be some aspects of the work together that can be fully agreed upon. For example, a common vision can be readily framed by asking councilors and staff members what they hope to see achieved in their city in the next five years. Most likely, a common vision will include growth in the local economy, good jobs, more schools, and better roads. By identifying one or two top priorities to work toward that embody the common vision of all members of the governing entity, members can begin to plan together and lay the foundation for a strong and effective team. Topics like economic development and more jobs can catalyze broad interest and participation across a very politically diverse group of councilors. Improving city services and performance should be the concern of all councilors. According to the Alpha Research survey of Bulgarian municipal leaders,³ 86% of respondents wished that the municipal council had a better mechanism for assessing the performance of the administrative divisions of the municipality. With a level of interest that broad, a diverse group can mobilize to tackle a problem by planning and working toward a solution which may result in more efficient municipal operations.

A successful and positive experience working together to solve a problem confronting the community is the single most important aspect of building a strong team. An insightful mayor, administrator, or council president is in a strong position to identify an opportunity for collective problem solving around a common vision. When members have learned to solve problems together, diverse opinions on a municipal council may become easier to accept because council colleagues begin to see the strengths as well as the weaknesses of their

³ Alpha Research Ltd., *Sociological Survey on the Work of Municipal Councils* (Sofia, Bulgaria, March 2003).

counterparts. They begin to identify each other's special talents, networks, or knowledge, and they begin to work as a team—deploying the right inputs and contributions from various members of the team. The relevant point here is to work continuously toward identifying a common vision and purpose for the council.

Setting Ground Rules and a Code of Conduct for Effective Interrelations

Establishing a clear understanding of work relations between the mayor/administration and the council is fundamental to working effectively together and can be the single most important step toward improving interrelations. The purpose of identifying and adopting ground rules and a code of conduct is to help both the municipal council and the administration fulfill their duties in a way that builds confidence in the local government system.

Ground rules generally are less formal than a code of conduct and can be a collection of value statements, expectations, or working habits to be employed.

Best Practice: Ground Rules and Values Statement. Excerpts from Santa Clara, California, City Council Code of Ethics and Values, which emphasize expectations, values, behavior, and attitudes that contribute to effective interrelations.

Preamble

The proper operation of democratic government requires that decision-makers be independent, impartial, and accountable to the people they serve. The City of Santa Clara has adopted this Code of Ethics & Values to promote and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct in the City's government. All elected and appointed officials, City employees, volunteers, and others who participate in the city's government are required to subscribe to this Code, understand how it applies to their specific responsibilities, and practice its eight core values in their work. Because we seek public confidence in the City's services and public trust of its decision-makers, our decisions and our work must meet the most demanding ethical standards and demonstrate the highest levels of achievement in following this code.

1. As a Representative of the City of Santa Clara, I will be ethical.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I am trustworthy, acting with the utmost integrity and moral courage.
- b. I am truthful, do what I say I will do, and am dependable.
- c. I make impartial decisions, free of bribes, unlawful gifts, narrow political interests, and financial and other personal interests that impair my independence of judgment or action.
- d. I am fair, distributing benefits and burdens according to consistent and equitable criteria.
- e. I extend equal opportunities and due process to all parties in matters under consideration. If I engage in unilateral meetings and discussions, I do so without making voting decisions.
- f. I show respect for persons, confidences, and information designated as "confidential."
- g. I use my title(s) only when conducting official City business, for information purposes, or as an indication of background and expertise, carefully considering whether I am exceeding or appearing to exceed my authority.

2. As a Representative of the City of Santa Clara, I will be professional.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I apply my knowledge and expertise to my assigned activities and to the interpersonal relationships that are part of my job in a consistent, confident, competent, and productive manner.
- b. I approach my job and work-related relationships with a positive attitude.
- c. I keep my professional knowledge and skills current and growing.

3. As a Representative of the City of Santa Clara, I will be service-oriented.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I provide friendly, receptive, courteous service to everyone.
- b. I am attuned to, and care about, the needs and issues of citizens, public officials, and city workers.
- c. In my interactions with constituents, I am interested, engaged, and responsive.

4. As a Representative of the City of Santa Clara, I will be fiscally responsible.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I make decisions after prudent consideration of their financial impact, taking into account the long-term financial needs of the City, especially its financial stability.
- b. I demonstrate concern for the proper use of City assets (e.g., personnel, time, property, equipment, funds) and follow established procedures.
- c. I make good financial decisions that seek to preserve programs and services for City residents.

5. As a Representative of the City of Santa Clara, I will be organized.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I act in an efficient manner, making decisions and recommendations based upon research and facts, taking into consideration short- and long-term goals.
- b. I follow through in a responsible way, keeping others informed, and responding in a timely fashion.
- c. I am respectful of established City processes and guidelines.

6. As a Representative of the City of Santa Clara, I will be communicative.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I convey the City's care for and commitment to its citizens.
- b. I communicate in various ways that I am approachable, open-minded and willing to participate in dialog.
- c. I engage in effective two-way communication, by listening carefully, asking questions, and determining an appropriate response which adds value to conversations.

7. As a Representative of the City of Santa Clara, I will be collaborative.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I act in a cooperative manner with groups and other individuals, working together in a spirit of tolerance and understanding.
- b. I work towards consensus building and gain value from diverse opinions.
- c. I accomplish the goals and responsibilities of my individual position, while respecting my role as a member of a team.
- d. I consider the broader regional and State-wide implications of the City's decisions and issues.

8. As a Representative of the City of Santa Clara, I will be progressive.

In practice, this value looks like:

- a. I exhibit a proactive, innovative approach to setting goals and conducting the City's business.
- b. I display a style that maintains consistent standards, but is also sensitive to the need for compromise, "thinking outside the box," and improving existing paradigms when necessary.
- c. I promote intelligent and thoughtful innovation in order to forward the City's policy agenda and City services.

http://www.ci.santa-clara.ca.us/city_gov/city_gov_ethics_bkg.html

A code of conduct typically is a more complex document that details a comprehensive set of articles as part of a City Charter or Code of Ordinances. Matters can include powers and duties of the mayor, council, and administration; to ethics, conflicts of interest, and gifts; to rules of procedure for conducting meetings.

Best Practice: Adapted from Ashfield (New South Wales, Australia) Municipal Council Code of Conduct, with emphasis on working relationships. The Ashfield municipal council has developed a code of conduct that emphasizes ethical conduct, interrelationships between the municipal council and administration, and handling of breaches of agreed-upon conduct. Of note is the detailed focus on the parameters of the council-administration relationship, and the careful attention to guidance on expectations and boundaries between the two distinct roles filled in the municipal organization. Topics addressed in the document include:

- Purpose and mission
- Conflicts of interest, gifts, and personal gain
- Responsibilities and obligations of councilors and staff members
- Protocol for councilors directing (or refraining from directing) staff
- Use of council and municipal organization resources
- Conduct during council meetings
- Information access, use, and sharing
- Dealings with staff members generally
- Questions to staff members from councilors
- Information and advice provided by staff to councilors
- Dealing with staff members in general, and appropriate relationships
- Handling of complaints about breaches of the code of conduct

http://www.ashfield.nsw.gov.au/pdf_files/code_conduct.pdf

Ground rules or a code of conduct can be developed by creating a small working group of randomly selected councilors or a council committee to work with the administration and draft key elements desired by the group that are specific to each standing municipal council. This document then should be fully vetted and revised as desired by the full council. Any set of ground rules should be reviewed and updated after each election cycle to account for the fact that new members bring new perspectives, goals, and working styles to the governing body. Adoption of ground rules, values statements, or codes of conduct that guide working relationships is a positive step forward for any municipal organization. Once agreement on content is achieved, this document will create a baseline for expectations and will foster a greater sense of accountability among and across the mayor, administration, and municipal council.

Building Dialogue for Strong Interrelations

Effective working relations develop over time and are based on an understanding and appreciation of the history, background, skills, and perspectives of the members of a local governing team. Strengthening of the relations—whether as mayor-council, mayor-administration, or council-administration—takes time, with dialogue and discussion as the focal point. This process can be structured formally or informally. A combination of routine meetings that include an agenda and allow for flexibility, as well as informal discussions, will help to create the framework for ongoing dialogue with colleagues.

Informal relation building is often achieved by development of personal relationships. The council, mayor, and administration may attend social gatherings such as sporting events, dinner together with spouses, family picnics, or a gathering after a meeting for drinks and conversation. Carving out opportunities to spend informal time together is critical because it allows colleagues to develop rapport and to share personal history and interests away from the council table, and away from controversy concerning ongoing decisions.

Formal dialogue sessions should be a part of the formula for working through the many issues of importance to city leaders. Formal dialogue should center on discussions related to the overall functioning of the governing body. This means that discussion on the actual business before the council should be avoided, in favor of discussion on dynamics of relationships or effectiveness of the process side of council affairs. This aspect of tending to a council is often overlooked in light of the vast pressures to develop policy and process the business decisions of the municipality. However, when overall dialogue falls short, either formal or informal, council relationships suffer.

Best Practice: Quarterly “Unfinished Business” Meetings of Mayor, Council, and Administration, Corvallis, Oregon. The Corvallis municipal council holds quarterly work sessions to cover internal operational matters. A review of the 2003 and 2004 quarterly meeting agendas showed some of the regular and typical agenda items covered during these meetings.

Regular agenda items:

- Progress on annual goals and values
- Council relationships using self-evaluation tools (general practices)
- Parked issues from last quarterly meeting
- Councilor discussion (items not identified above or below)

Typical agenda items:

- Council communication
- Public hearing process
- Handling of gifts from visiting dignitaries
- Development of code of conduct

Quarterly “unfinished business” meetings allow the mayor, council, and administration leadership to focus on their performance as a team by ensuring they spend time regularly to address internal process and practice issues. These matters are difficult to handle during regular business meetings of the council.

<http://www.ci.corvallis.or.us>, Mayor and City Council, Agendas

Due to the busy schedules of mayors, councilors, and chief administrators, dialogue building meetings (formal or informal) should be scheduled well in advance and receive as much priority as other business meetings.

Handling and Resolving Conflict; Use of Mediation Services

Conflict is a natural element in the democratic process as opposing viewpoints are represented by elected leaders. Conflict in and of itself is not a bad thing. The inability to handle and resolve conflict effectively, however, does negatively impact the quality of democratic decision making. The use of mediation services to resolve public disputes at the local government level is becoming a common practice in the United States, and many lessons have been learned about use of mediation, in particular as it relates to land-use decisions.

Differences in opinions on how to regulate land use are often at the heart of conflict between elected officials. At the municipal council level, important and high-value land-use decisions pit land developers against neighborhood groups—often leaving the municipal councilor stuck in the middle of the disputing parties. If left unresolved, such disputes can have a very unsatisfactory outcome, including poor decisions that leave the parties in disarray, and long-lasting negative outlooks. In such cases, no one wins.

As land-use pressures increase, conflict-resolution and mediation professionals are called upon for rezoning cases to guide the process toward the best possible result. The purpose is to work with the parties to increase participation in decisions, to evaluate complex public policy impacts, to bridge the gaps between parties—especially in cases where there are perceived or real power imbalances—and to inject a participatory and collaborative approach to problem solving. Land-use conflict-resolution practice offers a very tangible example of how disputes can be positively managed, ultimately for the public good.

Similarly, conflict-resolution and mediation services can be employed to help deal with the contentious issues internally facing municipal leaders. In Bulgaria, 20% of municipalities surveyed in 2003 described relations between the municipal council and the mayor as tense or hostile.⁴ The majority of these municipalities had a population of under 50,000—indicating that the problem is more pronounced in smaller-sized municipalities than in the larger cities.

Strained relationships between the mayor and council are counterproductive and can result in a loss of efficiency to municipal operations, poor decision outcomes, and low productivity on the part of the council and administration. Unresolved conflict can hamper effective public decision making and impact the future direction and municipal operations for many years to come. One must factor in the high cost to the taxpayer as a result: in short, unresolved conflict causes loss of time and money.

Many U.S. municipalities call in an external facilitator or mediation consultant to conduct one or more sessions to improve council relations. Mountain View, California, is one example.

Best Practice: Use of External Consultant in Council Conflict Resolution and Problem Solving, Mountain View, California. Situation: Various departments and the city council were experiencing internal conflicts and lack of teamwork. Process: The consulting team worked in most departments, with the city council, and with various commissions. They provided assessment, ongoing communication groups, mediation, leadership coaching, problem-solving forums, and monitoring. Results: Stability in departments and divisions, leadership enhancement, open lines of communication, and ongoing resolution of issues.

<http://www.ci.mtnview.ca.us>

<http://www.mmanning.com>

An extensive study on council conflict resolution conducted by an advisory committee of the Alberta (Canada) Association of Municipal Districts and Counties⁵ (AAMD&C) indicated that intracouncil conflict is a widespread problem, even though there are clear approaches for assessing and addressing it. The study identified the most common causes of conflict within councils as:

- Vision: Lack of common vision for the municipality
- Planning: Poor or nonexistent land-use planning
- Policy: Unclear policy or inconsistent application of policy
- Decision making: Poor or unclear decision-making process
- Relationships: Poor interpersonal relationships

⁴ Alpha Research Ltd., *Sociological Survey on the Work of Municipal Councils* (Sofia, Bulgaria, March 2003).

⁵ Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, *Final Report of the AAMDC Advisory Committee on Council Conflict Resolution* (Alberta, Canada, November 2000), www.aamdc.com/policy/Publications/Reports/committee_reports.htm.

A set of best practices for minimizing conflict was developed by the advisory committee and offers an excellent starting point for councils in conflict.

Best Practices for Minimizing Council Conflict: Common Causes and Recommendations

Vision

Causes of conflict:

- Lack of vision
- Lack of common perspective among councilors
- One-issue councilors

Recommendations:

- Develop a vision with goals and priorities to serve as framework for later council decisions
- Review vision, goals, and priorities at mandatory council/administration retreat annually

Planning

Causes of conflict:

- Lack of professional planning
- Land-use conflict (differing values and perspective on appropriate land use)
- Lack of experience with the issue

Recommendations:

- Develop long-term master land-use plans
- Assess conflicts in perspectives on appropriate land uses, given community issues (residential, industrial, recreational, transportation, and infrastructure)
- Research how other cities address land use and planning

Policy

Causes of conflict:

- Unclear policy
- Not following set policy
- Not separating policy and administration

Recommendations:

- Clarify roles and responsibilities of council and administration
- Review all policies at start of new terms to make sure they are clear, concise, and relevant
- Establish ground rules for following policy and for making exceptions to following policy

Decision Making

Causes of conflict:

- Lack of effective or clear process
- Lack of needed information
- Poor meeting skills
- Failure to hear each other
- Embarrassment about asking questions
- Lack of respect for decision, the process, or each other
- Unclear motions
- Lack of familiarity with technology
- Lack of time spent on preparation

Recommendations:

- Establish clearly defined decision-making process (i.e., how will decisions be made: clear request for decision report with a recommended course of action coming from the administration, timelines, strategy for when an item is brought back for review and evaluation).
- Administration and council: work together to ensure that the council has the information needed to

make a decision and that the time spent by the council on a decision is consistent with its importance.

- Council: clearly articulate who is the formal spokesperson for a given issue (mayor, administrator, council president). Clarify that when councilors are speaking to the media or publicly, they comment only on their own position and refer questions or comments on others' positions appropriately.
- Municipalities: spend time on professional development for members to learn about technological changes (i.e., the Internet) and are trained to use city information systems.

Relationships

Causes of conflict:

- Lack of respect for each other
- Conflicts of interest
- Unequal workload of council members
- Poor preparation for meetings
- Divisiveness-focused councilors
- Failure to follow policy
- Lack of support or sufficient level of consensus when a decision is made
- Poor communication/listening skills
- Misunderstanding about the role of mayor/council/administration
- Differing philosophies

Recommendations: Relationships are built on mutual trust and respect, which happens once appreciation is gained of each other and issues faced. Responsibility to develop productive relationships is both individual and corporate.

- Participate in training on the role of councilors, mayor, and the administration
- Ensure that work is equally distributed and members are fairly recognized for what they do to contribute
- Ensure that councilors are compensated financially for time
- Err on the side of caution should a potential conflict of interest ever arise
- Spend time getting to know one another, recognizing the history and background each person brings to the job
- Take time to understand the issues and problems in each sector and area of the city
- Formalize agreements to conduct business professionally by developing and signing codes of conduct
- Discuss expectations of each other and hold each other accountable by regular reviews

Adapted from Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, *Final Report of the AAMDC Advisory Committee on Council Conflict Resolution* (Alberta, Canada, November 2000), www.aamdc.com/policy/Publications/Reports/committee_reports.htm.

Characteristics of Effective Municipal Councils

For a municipal council to become a truly effective, an array of best practices must be in place. Elected and appointed leaders' ability to set the stage for everyone to work together effectively is fundamental. In his training on effective governing boards for the U.S. National League of Cities, Carl H. Neu, Jr. outlines 10 habits of highly effective councils. Based on observations over 20 years, Mr. Neu suggests that highly effective governing bodies "are the result of disciplined adherence to a set of fundamental principles and skills."⁶

⁶ Neu & Company and the Center for the Future of Local Governance, *Ten Habits of Highly Effective Governing Bodies* (Lakewood, Colorado, 2002). Training document prepared for a National League of Cities/Leadership Training Institute Seminar, Salt Lake City, Utah, December 4, 2002. See also *The 10 Habits of Highly Effective Councils* (Lakewood, Colorado, 1997); abstract available at <http://carlneu.com/pages/publications.htm>; full paper also can be ordered (free) by e-mail from this website.

Premier among these characteristics is that to build and maintain a high level of teamwork and effectiveness, a municipal council must take the initiative to constantly evaluate performance and make improvements. Self-assessment methodologies and tools can help councils to begin the process. The following self-assessment tool is a best practice. A fuller explanation of other characteristics follows the best-practice description.

Best Practice: Self-Assessment of Municipal Council/Leadership Effectiveness—Evaluating the 10 Highly Effective Characteristics. Process: The mayor/councilors/administrator individually and anonymously complete a self-assessment form. The responses are turned in to an external clerk or consultant to compile the responses. The group then meets to discuss results and determine next steps. An outside facilitator should be engaged to lead the discussion. The municipal director of human resources or personnel usually possesses the skills necessary to perform this role if an outside consultant cannot be located or hired because of financial constraints.

Assessment Tool: Rate the following from 1 (low) to 5 (high)

Characteristic	Rating (1-5)	Reason for Rating	Things to Improve
Strategic thinking and action			
Demonstration of teamwork			
Small group decision making			
Clear roles and relationships			
Council-administration relationships			
Evaluation of policy implementation			
Allocation of time and energy			
Clear rules and procedures			
Understanding of public concerns and municipal performance			
Personal ongoing training			

Tool adapted from Neu & Company and the Center for the Future of Local Governance, *Ten Habits of Highly Effective Governing Bodies* (Lakewood, Colorado, 2002), pp. 47-51. Training document prepared for a National League of Cities/Leadership Training Institute Seminar, Salt Lake City, Utah, December 4, 2002.

Ten Habits of Highly Effective Governing Bodies

1. Think and act strategically

Shape the future of your community through vision and provide your citizens with leadership, sound thinking, and decisive action.

2. Understand and demonstrate the elements of teams and teamwork

Councils by law exist and have authority only when their members convene as a "body" to do business. Therefore, work together as a team and think of yourselves as an interdependent system that is more together than apart. Have a clear sense of purpose and goals. Define clearly what you can each bring to the team in terms of skills and talents. Create an atmosphere of trust and openness. Establish high expectations. Support each other and be accountable to one another.

3. Master small group decision making

Effective small group decisions depend on interpersonal skills, or the ability to interact well with others; task skills, or the knowledge to do the job; and rational skills, or the ability to deal with issues and problems rationally. Find and organize those skills among your council and apply them to make effective decisions.

4. Have clearly defined roles and relationships

Define your roles based on function and performance so you will understand what you are to do and what you are expected to achieve. Definitions of behaviors and practices can be established among the council to better understand how you each expect everyone to conduct their duties. Having a clear understanding at the outset of your work together will serve you well.

5. Honor the council-staff partnership

Council and staff each have different roles to play in terms of policy setting and policy implementation. Council members should focus their energy on establishing vision and goals and then empower their staff to determine the means for setting the implementation process. A critical part of this partnership is an evaluation of the lead administrator based upon clearly defined goals, policies, and established guidelines.

6. Systematically evaluate policy implementation

Effective councils expect periodic feedback on policy results and make amendments as required.

7. Allocate council time and energy appropriately

To achieve peak performance, councils should divide their time into four main categories:

- Goal setting (retreats or advances)
- Exploration and analysis (study sessions)
- Disposition/legislation (regular public meetings)
- Community relations (interactions with constituents and other agencies)

8. Have clear rules and procedures for council meetings

Establish clear rules on how board meetings will be conducted. That means all the way from setting agendas to making endless comments to courteous communication. Your meetings will stay on track and be more professional in the long run.

9. Get a valid assessment of the public's concerns and evaluation of the board's performance

Work hard to survey the public to gather organized information on how they view policies and priorities for the community. Use surveys, focus groups, and questionnaires. Hold public hearings, organize discussion groups, and solicit community input and feedback at every opportunity.

10. Practice continuous personal learning and development as leaders

Council members come onto the job from every walk of life with no prior training to fill the role. Acknowledge what you don't know and make sure you get the adequate training and advice to grow and develop as a council member and as a team.

Key Component #2 – Clear, Established, and Open Procedures

Councils function most effectively when there are clear, established, and open procedures that all members know and use. This allows all parties to better organize their time, prepare for meetings, have equal access to information required for decisions, influence decisions on a level playing field, and track decisions and outcomes in a transparent, secure fashion.

In the United States, most municipalities employ a municipal clerk to manage the procedural aspects of work of the council so that council business is handled in accordance with professionally set standards and guidelines. This position is of vital importance to the functioning of the elected body. Usually, the clerk reports directly to the council as a whole. The duties of a municipal clerk usually involve general management; records management; meeting administration; minute taking; management of the by-laws, codes, and ordinances; custody of the official seal; and execution of legal instruments. The duties can also include financial management or elections depending on the size and demands of a given municipality.

Best Practice: Appointment of City Clerk, Raleigh, North Carolina



Gail G. Smith, City Clerk

Appointed by the city council, the **City Clerk** attends all meetings of the council and its committees and records official actions; acts as custodian of all legal documents pertaining to the city; prepares and publishes city ordinances, resolutions and notices of public hearings, as required by law; assists in preparation of the council agenda; prepares and distributes committee meeting agendas; notifies persons scheduled to appear before city council and committees; codifies the City Code; administers oaths of office; and serves as notary public for the city.

<http://www.raleighnc.gov/portal/server.pt/gateway, Departments, City Clerk>

A municipal clerk is distinct in many ways from a typical “clerk” who files, responds to telephone calls, organizes meetings, and so forth. A municipal clerk must operate in a way that serves the needs of the elected body, and also ensures accountability for public record keeping. As this is a unique profession, with serious ramifications regarding public confidence and trust, emphasis is placed on training and certification for municipal clerks. Certifications ensure that certain standards are met as affairs of the municipality are conducted and that important lessons learned and techniques are shared among members of the profession.

A municipal clerk will aid the council in establishing clear and effective operating procedures. If such a position does not exist in a municipality due to its small size or lack of resources, every effort should be made to ensure these duties are covered by a capable secretary or administrator who can fulfill this role.

Best Practice: Certification Training for Municipal Clerks. U.S. municipalities encourage municipal clerks to participate in training and certifications offered by organizations such as the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC). The IIMC offers certifications for clerks and deputy clerks to enhance professional development and competencies required to serve as an effective municipal clerk. Many state municipal clerk associations also offer conferences and training for clerks to expose them to new and emerging technologies in fields such as electronic records management. The New York State Association of City and Village Clerks works in collaboration with Cornell University to deliver training programs.

<http://www.iimc.com>

http://www.nysclerks.com/prog_award/mci_cornell.html

Organizational and Administrative Procedural Support to Council

At the start of each new term of office, the mayor, council, and administration should work together to determine how their time will be spent and organized. Effective councils split their time evenly among formal meetings, small group committee meetings, work sessions, and retreats.

In the United States, city councils typically meet for formal meetings between two and four times a month, depending on the level of business. Meetings are held at the same time and day each week or month (i.e., 6:30 pm each Tuesday of the month, or 2:00 pm the second and fourth Wednesday of each month). Work sessions can be held routinely once a month or as needed on special topics to cover technical information or extended discussion. Committees usually meet once per month on a routine schedule and operate as decentralized decision-making units that make recommendations to the full council. Retreats are usually held annually to set major policy goals for the year (covered in more detail under Key Component #5).

Best Practice: Meeting and Calendar Management by Town Clerk, Cary, North Carolina. At the start of each calendar year, the town clerk establishes the meeting schedule for the entire year and presents the schedule for adoption. In addition to each council meeting, the annual calendar includes subcommittee, board, and commission meetings. Changes to the calendar are rare and when made, involve full council concurrence. Additionally, the clerk keeps the calendar of the mayor and council members in electronic form and updates it regularly when meetings related to council business are scheduled with citizens, or with various other interested parties. The clerk sends weekly reminder messages to the council so that all members have information on each council member's meeting schedule. This process helps council members to organize their schedules and reduces the possibility of overloading any of the various types of meetings into one period of time. This helps the council to operate in an efficient and transparent fashion. Additionally, the town clerk provides administrative support to the mayor and council members by handling correspondence and providing information needed from town archives.

<http://www.townofcary.org/agendind.htm>

Rules of Procedure

Meetings of the council, whether regular, special, emergency, or work session, are held to conduct the business of the city. Effective councils set and follow clearly defined rules of procedure. The goal is to conduct meetings in an orderly, respectful, disciplined, and productive manner. Without such guidelines, council meetings may deviate to discussions that are not relevant to the decision on the table, for example, and become inefficient and

frustrating to those participating in the decision as well as to those attending who have a stake in the outcome of the decision.

In the United States, many municipal councils use Robert's Rules of Order, or a modified version of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (RONR). In general, large councils tend to be more formal in the application of rules of order, and smaller boards tend to be less formal.

The first order of business for a new council should be to adopt rules. U.S. municipal associations at the state level frequently publish suggestions based on the statutory authority in a given state for rules of procedures for municipal councils. In South Carolina, state law provides for councils to determine their own rules and order of business and to keep minutes, which are public records.⁷ The South Carolina Municipal Association publishes sample rules of order for consideration by councils.

Best Practice: Sample Rules of Procedure for North Carolina and South Carolina Municipalities

Ordinance for Adopting Rules of Order for Council Meetings where law requires council to determine its own rules and order of business.

Section 1. Quorum and Rules of Order

- A majority of council members constitutes a quorum. The mayor or mayor *pro tempore* shall preside.
- All proceedings shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 10th Edition. The city attorney shall act as parliamentarian. Questions of order shall be decided by the mayor.

Section 2. Agenda

- The city clerk or chief administrative officer shall prepare a proposed agenda for each meeting. A copy of all ordinances or relevant documents shall be attached to the proposed agenda and provided to each councilor in an agenda packet. The agenda packet shall be available to each councilor and be available for public inspection.
- Matters to be considered by council at a regular or special meeting shall be placed on a written agenda publicly posted by the clerk at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. The deadline for agenda item requests is ____ (days) in advance of the meeting. Matters not on the agenda may be considered upon request of a member unless two members object.
- Council may designate a part of the agenda as the "consent agenda." Items may be placed on consent if they are judged to be routine or not controversial. Any member may remove an item from the consent agenda for discussion and revision prior to adoption at the beginning of the meeting. All items shall be voted on and adopted by a single motion.

Section 3. Meetings of Council

- Regular meetings of the council shall be held at ____ a.m./p.m. on ____ in each month unless changed by a majority vote of members.
- Special meetings may be held on the call of the mayor or a majority of council members.
- All regular and special meetings shall be open to the public.
- Emergency meetings may be called only because of generally unexpected circumstances that require immediate consideration and may be called by the mayor or majority of council members.

Section 4. Executive Sessions (often referred to as closed sessions)

- By majority vote, the council may hold an executive session, which allows the council to receive confidential or sensitive information.
- Minutes of closed sessions shall be taken and made available to the public once it is determined

⁷ South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 5, Chapter 7, Section 250(b). Available from <http://www.scstatehouse.net/code/t05c007.htm>.

the subject of discussion is no longer sensitive or confidential.

- The substance of a matter discussed in executive session may not be disclosed to another person or made public.

Section 5. Voting Requirements

- All actions of council shall be by majority vote.
- Each member must vote unless excused by the remaining members. A member wishing to be excused from voting may be excused on matters related to his or her own financial interest or official conduct. Failure to vote without being excused shall be recorded as an affirmative vote.
- No proxy, mail, telephonic, electronic, or absentee vote may be cast.

Section 6. Procedural Motions

- A motion may be made orally or in writing; however, any member may request it be made in writing.
- A motion to reconsider must be made by a member who voted with the majority, and it must be made at the same or next succeeding meeting.
- A substitute motion may be made only for purposes of restating and clarifying a pending motion and amendments; it may not be used to introduce a new or alternative proposal.

Section 7. Minutes of Meetings

- The clerk shall keep minutes of all public meetings, which shall be part of the public record.
- At each regular meeting, the minutes of the previous meeting must be presented for approval.
- Minutes will not constitute the official record until approved by the council.
- A member of the council may place a written position in the minutes not later than the next regular meeting.
- Minutes must record all motions and actions taken by the council, including a record on how each member voted.
- Minutes from closed sessions may be held from public inspection as long as necessary to avoid interference with the purpose of the closed session.

Section 8. Appearance of Citizens

- Any citizen may speak at a regular meeting on matters pertaining to municipal services and operation.
- Each citizen must register with the clerk and state name and address.
- Each person may speak at the designated time and may be limited to ____ (2 to 5 minutes).

Additional Common Sections Found in a Rules of Procedure

- Attorney or parliamentarian duties for meetings of the council
- Clerk duties for meetings of council
- Public hearings
- Ordinances required
- Board and commission appointments
- Introduction of resolutions
- Amendments to rules of procedure
- Reference to utilization of Robert's Rules of Order

Excerpts or adaptations from *How to Conduct Effective Meetings* (Columbia, SC: Municipal Association of South Carolina, undated), <http://www.masc.sc/Resources/conductingmeetingshndbk.pdf>; and Fleming Bell II, *Suggested Rules of Procedure* (Chapel Hill, NC: Institute of Government, University of North Carolina, 3rd ed., 2000), ISBN 1-56011-367-7, <http://www.iog.unc.edu/products.asp?page=bysubject,BoardsMeetingsandProcedures>.

Agendas: Setting Agenda Order, Consent Agenda, Committee Reports, and Action Agendas

Setting Agenda Order

The setting of agendas deserves particular attention because the lack of clarity in agenda setting can lead to serious malfeasance and distrust. It is critically important that each agenda

be established and managed with strict adherence to the adopted rules of the council. It is usually the responsibility of the municipal clerk to set the agenda, and a deadline for placing items on the agenda is typical. Careful agenda management leads to confidence in the work of the council and in the governing body and municipal organization. See the first part of **Appendix B** for an example agenda from the Town of Cary, North Carolina.

Best Practice: Consistent Agenda Format. Most U.S. municipal councils establish an order of business for their agendas that includes:

1. Ceremonial openings, recognitions, or honors
2. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting
3. Consent agenda approval
4. Reports of standing committees
5. Reports of select committees or projects
6. Public hearings
7. Public comments
8. Unfinished business
9. New business

Source: J. Robison

Consent Agenda

To increase efficiency in conduct of the meeting, many U.S. councils utilize a “consent agenda.” These are items which are deemed to be routine and not controversial. A key criterion for addition to a consent agenda is that it has been unanimously approved by the review committee putting the item forward. Any member may remove an item from the consent agenda for discussion and revision prior to adoption at the beginning of the meeting. All items are voted on and adopted by a single motion, with out discussion. See either part of Appendix B for a sample consent agenda.

Committee Reports

Most U.S. councils have multiple council committee or citizen board reports. With unanimous recommendations of the committee or board, agenda items may be placed on a committee consent agenda. Items which are controversial, are of great importance, or need full council discussion are placed within a committee report for discussion purposes. See **Appendix C** for a sample committee report to the full council.

Action Agenda

An action agenda is an abbreviated form of the minutes of the meeting. It shows the action taken on any specific item on the agenda. This provides citizens with a very brief record of the outcome of an action. See the second part of Appendix B for a sample post-meeting action agenda.

Recordkeeping Standards

Maintaining and managing the records of a municipality is an important consideration and one of the duties of the municipal clerk. The primary purpose of keeping records is to ensure that the operations of today are safeguarded and documented for use in the future. Decisions are

frequently referred to years and even decades later. Of greatest importance to the ongoing work of the council is the recording of and preparation of minutes of meetings. Standards for council minutes generally are established around the notion that minutes are to be “full and accurate,” and serve as a legal record of council actions and as a matter of public record. Minutes are never official until they are approved by the full council. **Appendix D** contains a portion of the minutes for the same council meeting whose agendas appear in Appendix B.

Best Practice: Tips and Techniques for Taking Minutes of Council and Committee Meetings

- Record action taken and not what was said, unless specifically requested to be entered into the official record.
- Record citizen comments close to verbatim.
- Record council comments verbatim only if requested for the record.
- Format the subject line in boldface type.
- Record references to reports, agreements, ordinances.
- Summarize comments made by presenters of reports.
- Summarize council comments.
- Record all motions made, and seconds.
- Mention opposing opinions.
- Do not quote one council member’s opinion unless you can quote them all.

Adapted from guidelines of the Virginia Municipal Clerks Association, <http://www.vmca.com/forms/Roundtable.htm>⁸

Minutes are the most frequently requested and reviewed records of a municipal council; however, they comprise just a small fraction of documentation that constitutes the public record. State laws throughout the United States require municipalities to perform various recordkeeping duties, and practice varies widely. The City of Seattle has an extensive set of records and offers a best practice on organizational format for municipal records.

Best Practice: Records of the Seattle City Clerk, Legislative Department, City of Seattle, Washington, 2003. The following table of contents is for the records held by the Seattle City Clerk’s Office. It is a guide to the current records managed by the city clerk, including historical records still in active administrative use by the city. The Seattle Municipal Archives, a program of the City Clerk’s Office, maintains historical records which complement those of the Clerk’s Office, including records of all city departments and agencies. The Archives collection is described in a separate publication, *A Guide to the Archives of the City of Seattle*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	Bond Files
City Charter	Campaign Disclosure Reports
Ordinances	Claim Files
Council Bills	Consultant Contract Files
Resolutions	Deed and Easement Files
Comptroller Files/Clerk Files	Domestic Partnership Registration Files
City Council Minutes	Local Improvement District Files
Seattle Municipal Code	Public Works Contracts

Records of the City Clerk’s Office: <http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~public/recs4.htm>

Archives: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/cityarchives/Tools/refindexestest.html>

⁸ This resource from the Virginia Municipal Clerks Association was removed from the cited location shortly after this document was prepared. An alternate reference on this topic is *For the Record: A Handbook for Clerks, Virginia Local Governing Bodies, Boards, and Authorities* (Richmond: Virginia Municipal Clerks Association, Virginia Municipal League, and the Weldon Cooper Center, April 2000), 103 pages. Can be ordered online from sss.coopercenter.org/publications, VA Government, Handbooks.

Web-Based Information Systems for Council Business and Public Records

A massive amount of documentation is typically generated for each council meeting as well as for ongoing reporting purposes. The trend in the United States, especially since about 2000, has been to transition to use of online information systems. Most towns and cities have moved from use of paper agenda packets to electronic information online for council business meetings. Increasingly, information and decision records are kept online on a municipal website so that all records are public information and easily accessible by council, administration, and citizens alike, with everyone receiving access to the information simultaneously. While electronic information systems will not always meet every need, they do accomplish many goals related to establishing clear, open, and transparent operating systems for both councilors and citizens.

Transitioning to an online information system does require an investment in computers and technology services to support the system. The municipality of Venice, Florida, purchased laptop computers for each council member, a scanner, and software, and network support.

Best Practice: Transitioning Council Agendas from Paper to Electronic Media

The City of Venice, Florida, has embarked on a new venture with electronic agenda packets. A trial run of a council meeting, utilizing paperwork from a previous council meeting, was held with everyone using the laptops, assisted by the Information Services and City Clerk staff. This worked well.

The agenda packets, including all backup materials, are scanned and indexed in the order of the agenda, with the title of each agenda item for easy access. The packets are accessible through Adobe Acrobat PDF files, which allow users to make notations as needed directly on the agenda item. The notations of individual council members can be saved to that council member's laptop and are not accessible to other members or staff. However, these notes are still public records.

The laptop itself is password-protected by the council member. Users can easily and quickly toggle between the list of agenda items and the documents for a smooth transition during the meeting. The agenda packets are also networked on the system server so every employee with computer access can view the entire packet.

Costs: \$37,500 for laptops, \$4,000 for scanner, and minimal costs for software and wiring in council chamber. Other costs vary depending on the city's networking and dial-up capabilities.

Using the electronic agenda has eliminated the need for staff to copy 15 sets of all agenda items, saving staff time and copying expenses, which is estimated at \$7,000 per year.

City Desk, newsletter of the Florida Association of City Clerks, September 2001, p. 5. Available at <http://www.municode.com/facc/citydesk/092001.pdf>.

Online information systems are also becoming more widely utilized as components of municipal websites. Common uses related to council business include: posting of public notices of meetings, agendas, minutes, audiotape recordings, and webcast video replay. Once a system is designed and running, great efficiencies can be achieved in handling and processing information for use by the council, administration and citizens. In Berkeley, California, information is available on the city website regarding meetings, agendas, and minutes. Additionally, current information is available regarding video broadcast of council meetings that allows viewers to watch live or through an archived video via the Internet.

Best Practice: Online Electronic Agenda, Minutes, Summary, and Video, City of Berkeley, California

2004 City Council Meetings					
Month	Date	Meeting	eAgenda*	eSummary*	Video
October	10/12/04	Regular	eAgenda		Live Webcast** 7:00 p.m.
	10/12/04	Special Work Session	eAgenda		Live Webcast** 5:00 p.m.
	10/12/04	Special Closed	Agenda		--
	10/05/04	Regular	eAgenda	eSummary	Video (1 hr, 54 min)
	10/04/04	Special Closed	Revised Agenda	Minutes	--
September	09/28/04	Special	eAgenda	eSummary	Video (4 hr, 43 min)
	09/21/04	Regular	eAgenda	eSummary	Video (3 hr, 12 min)

* "eAgenda" and "eSummary" indicate an electronic document.

<http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/citycouncil/agendaindex.htm>

Another best practice for public records and notices using a website is from Cary, North Carolina. Meeting schedules are posted on the official town website, and therefore citizens have access to information on the type and location of all public meetings.

Best Practice: Online Calendar of Public Meetings Provides Public Notice, Town of Cary, North Carolina

Town of Cary Calendar

OCTOBER 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

SELECT MONTH AND YEAR :

October 2004 Go

[list months events](#) - [show entire month](#)

OR SEARCH FOR :

Go

Friday, October 01, 2004

Town Council Work Session to Review the Legal Department Operations and Discuss Procedures for Filling the Upcoming Town Attorney Vacancy
9 a.m. - 120 Wilkinson Avenue,
2nd floor conference room

Utility Board Meeting
3 p.m. - 120 Wilkinson Avenue,
2nd floor conference room.

<http://www.townofcary.org/councilcalendar/events.cgi>

In summary, having clear, established, and open procedures is one of the key components of effective decision making for municipal councils. Clear procedures help councilors to respond efficiently and effectively to requests from citizens for information and services, and to prepare for decisions before them. One of the most valuable aspects of clear and open procedures is that information flow becomes more predictable and accessible to each councilor at the same time. This is critical because when information flows only to part of the council and not to others, the stage becomes set for ineffective decision making. It may take some investments in either technology and staff resources to improve procedural aspects of the council's work, but the experience in the United States shows that the payoff in improved decision making is worth the cost.

Key Component #3 – Balance of Responsibilities for Decision and Implementation: Leadership Roles

Strong and productive relationships between a mayor/administration and municipal council are vital to well-functioning municipal governments. The relationships are interdependent and at times overlap, yet there are clear distinctions as to role. The best relations are those where the different parties understand and respect of the role of the other.

Municipal Organizations: Role of Policy Maker and Operations

A basic distinction rests between the elected official and the appointed official. The mayor and council are elected by the people to represent their best interests through policy setting and broad direction of the municipality. Appointed administrative officials are professionals who implement the policy of the mayor and council and oversee the day-to-day affairs of the municipality.

Definition of Basic Roles in Mayor/Administration – Municipal Council System

- **Role and responsibilities of the mayor:** In a mayor/administration – municipal council system, the mayor is elected. The mayor acts as chief executive and is responsible for oversight of the administration and day-to-day affairs of the municipality. Decisions are management and implementation oriented.
- **Role and responsibilities of the municipal council:** Municipal councilors are responsible for formulating goals and policies that reflect the preferences of the community. Councils set strategic direction and monitor progress and performance of policy implementation. Decisions are oriented toward vision and strategy.

In U.S. cities with executive mayors, the municipal council sets policy to be implemented by the mayor and his or her administration. In order to work effectively, the mayor must work closely with the council on developing new policy initiatives, and providing feedback on implementation and performance.

A major challenge in discussing roles of elected officials relates to the fact that an executive mayor and a policy-focused municipal council will always have some overlap in their roles. Research conducted in the United States on municipal elected officials—whether mayor or council members—shows that they must balance two important and primary roles⁹:

- (1) *Representation* of citizens' immediate interests in dealing with pressing problems they may have with the municipal government, and specifically:
 - Respond to constituent concerns and problems
 - Facilitate flow of information between the city and citizens
 - Intervene with city staff on behalf of citizens' complaints

⁹ James H. Svara, "LTI Seminar: Balancing Governance and Representation on City Councils," National League of Cities Leadership Training Institute handout, prepared for the National League of Cities' Congressional Cities Conference, Washington, DC, March 2003. More information and a complete report are available: *Two Decades of Continuity and Change in American City Councils* (Washington, DC: National League of Cities, 2003), <http://www.nlc.org/content/Files/RMPcitycouncilrpt.pdf>.

- Express the preferences of citizens in deliberations and decision making
- (2) *Governance* of the community by providing leadership, judgment, and vision for the long-term direction, and specifically:
- Create a vision for the city
 - Establish policy and goals
 - Set objectives and priorities
 - Review and approve the budget
 - Oversee effectiveness in service delivery
 - Monitor performance.

The reality is that both an executive mayor and a policy-oriented council will be called upon by citizens and constituency groups to fulfill both of these roles from time to time. A highly effective mayor and council will discuss how they view their roles and responsibilities at the outset of the term and bring clear definition to the roles of each party.

Role and Responsibilities of Administrative Staff

Professional city administrators have an important role to play in terms of bringing effective leadership to the city's internal organization. Based on policy-setting agendas of the mayor and/or council, the professional administrator must be able to provide clear direction, vision, and high standards for the organization. The administrator must set the culture and clearly communicate mission values and expectations. The primary responsibilities include:

- Assess and analyze trends and conditions that affect the needs of the community
- Advance the policy goals of the council
- Provide unbiased information that is complete and presents alternatives
- Faithfully translate policies into programs and services
- Provide information needed for the council to assess programs and services
- Maintain high standards and efficiency in public resource use
- Support the council in appraisal of performance of the organization.¹⁰

Relations Between the Mayor/Administration and the Council

The ability of councilors to adequately balance their roles of representation and governance comes with a keen understanding of individual and community interests, a good sense of judgment in fulfilling the role, and "on-the-job" experience. However, councilors' success is due in large part to the professional staff providing the framework and infrastructure for a well-functioning local government.

In the council-manager form of government, leadership is shared or cooperative, and tends to be regarded as more fluid and harmonious in fulfillment of varied duties. With a strong mayor, or executive mayor, there is a hierarchical relationship between the elected leader and the staff with authority for operations vested in the hands of the mayor and all department heads responsible to the mayor.

¹⁰ Svava, "Balancing Governance and Representation on City Councils."

Recommending New Policy: Role of Initiator, Council, and Administration

Initiating new policies for consideration by the city council is usually at the prerogative of the individual members. Councils have various approaches for bringing forward recommended policies.

At the municipal council level, proposed legislation is often in the form of a bill or an ordinance. Legislation usually originates in one of two ways:

- council members propose the legislation as part of a policy shift or new initiative and request that it be introduced to the body as a whole for consideration; or
- city management staff propose legislation in response to requirements to update the city codes, or to address problems that have been identified in implementation of city codes.

The bill is then introduced into the council decision-making process and is generally referred to an appropriate committee. One or more public committee hearings may be publicized and held on the proposed legislation. After public testimony and committee debate the legislation or ordinance may be amended. In most states in the United States, there are strict legal requirements on holding public hearings prior to adoption of local laws in order to give the public notice and an opportunity to comment.

Once comments from public hearings and amendments have been integrated, the committee votes on the final version of the bill. If passed in committee, the bill is sent to the full council for more debate and a final vote.

If the majority of the council votes in favor, it immediately becomes a local law and is entered into the city's charter or administrative code. The time before a new law becomes effective will vary from law to law. The same process applies when amendments to existing legislation are considered.

In some cities, the mayor has the right to disapprove or veto the bill and in this case, he or she must return it to the city clerk with his or her objections to the council at the next scheduled stated meeting. The council may then have 30 days to override the mayoral veto. If the council does pass the bill again by a vote of two-thirds of all council members, it is then considered adopted and becomes a local law. Further, some provisions state that if the mayor does not sign or veto the bill within 30 days after receiving it from the council, it is considered approved.

Recommended Procedures for Introducing New Local Legislation

Mayors and council members are sure to bring forward new ideas to improve how their city functions and to provide new public programs. Whether these new initiatives require adopting a policy statement, or actual legislation in the form of an ordinance, depends on the topic. If a policy statement is all that is required, then the process is simpler and requires only that a statement be crafted, vetted with council members through committee, and then taken up by full council for a vote. If, however, the idea will require new legislation in order to be implemented, then a larger effort is required and should be undertaken to ensure the best possible public decision is made. A mayor or council member should always consult the city attorney and obtain a legal opinion about the appropriate course of action.

In the case of introducing new local legislation, there are some general procedures that are followed in the United States as the path to creating new local laws. While this path may vary from state to state depending on legal requirements, the following provides a good overview of the process a city council goes through prior to adoption of new legislation.¹¹

Step-by-Step Process for Adopting New Local Legislation

1. Consult various national and state municipal associations and gather information on model ordinances, statutory requirements, and examples of other communities' experiences and best practices.
2. Organize a city-wide information campaign to inform the public as to the objective of the new legislation, and involve citizens in the process. Specific measures to be considered to involve the public and ensure they have a voice in the decision-making process might include:
 - Creating a citizen commission or board to be involved in actually crafting the legislation or giving feedback on the proposed legislation.
 - Developing an outreach component and involving citizen commission members, councilors, and city staff by speaking at civic clubs and neighborhood meetings in an effort to share information with the community at large.
 - Developing simple one-page informational sheets or pamphlets and distributing them to the broad public through the media, civic organizations, places of worship, neighborhood newsletters, or other avenues to make sure everyone knows about the proposal and especially is aware if they need to vote on the matter.
 - Conducting a public hearing on the proposal so the public can come before the council and go on record expressing support for or concerns about the legislation (often required by law).
 - Scheduling a date for a referendum as needed. Some legislative changes are legally required to be voted upon by the citizens. In other cases, the council may choose to put the question to the voters, especially for controversial issues that may be best left to the full public. Often times, public referenda are used for making decisions that have significant financial implications, such as acquiring new debt for public infrastructure. Another reason to call for a referendum is when local leaders propose a change in the form of government—for example, from a strong-mayor to a council-manager form of government. These are matters that require or are best left to the voting public to decide. In such cases, the vote should be scheduled well in advance so that the proposal has adequate time to reach the voters, but not so far ahead that people forget to follow through and vote.
3. Prepare a final resolution for full council review and adoption. This occurs only after the council has obtained public input either through a public involvement campaign or

¹¹ Significantly adapted from ICMA and National Civic League joint brief, *How to Adopt Council-Manager Government* (Denver, Colorado; and Washington, DC: ICMA and NCL, 1999). Available at <http://www.icma.org/upload/library/IQ/106147.htm>.

through a referendum vote. The council can then prepare a resolution for full council approval.

4. Implement the new legislation by providing direction to the city staff.

Best Practice: Guidance to North Carolina Municipal Officials on Methods for Introduction of New Policy or Legislation. Policy or legislation may be initiated, proposed, and introduced by any member of council. An ordinance or policy may also be introduced by any member of council. Proposals shall be forwarded to the city/town attorney for legal review and approval as to format. The attorney shall also provide any assistance necessary to prepare a policy statement or ordinance according to proper form. The attorney shall send the statement/ordinance to the clerk for public inspection and comment before it is introduced for a vote by the council as a whole.

Fleming Bell II, *Suggested Rules of Procedure* (Chapel Hill, NC: Institute of Government, University of North Carolina, 3rd ed., 2000), ISBN 1-56011-367-7, <http://www.iog.unc.edu/products.asp?page=bysubject>, Boards Meetings and Procedures.

Council Involvement in Day-to-Day Operations and Decisions

The role of the mayor/administration or the professional city manager is to handle all daily management matters that occur. Effective councils adopt operating guidelines such that they refer citizens to the administration to respond to technical questions.

However, councilors are drawn into day-to-day operations and decisions on a rather frequent basis when there are problems to be resolved due to constituent complaints or concerns. In this case, U.S. best practice generally discourages council involvement in day-to-day operations and decisions of the municipal organization. A general exception in the U.S. context relates to handling of citizen complaints or emergencies where councilors often act as representative, intermediary, or mediator in resolving urgent matters or disputes. It is important for the councilor to know when to pull back from the operational aspects of a problem or decision and place resolution in the hands of the professional staff. Indeed, at times, citizens need an advocate at city hall to push their interests when bureaucracies resist. If this is the situation, councilors should always be respectful of professional staff and abstain from public criticism, as this can be demoralizing and counterproductive to resolving the citizen concern.

Likewise, it is important for councilors to recognize their role as policy makers and NOT operations implementers when it comes to the finer details of planning. It may be tempting to try to mandate the layout of a park facility, but these matters are always best left to professional parks and recreation managers; similarly, planning of wastewater management facilities is best left to professional engineers. The table below illustrates the differences between these two functions.

Policy Decision	Operations Decision
Allocate funds to build a park	Identify a location and design the park to fit council policy to equitably distribute parks so that each region of the city includes a park
Determine that increased wastewater services are required in order for the municipality to attract economic development	Analyze and forecast the projected capacity requirements based on council policy to attract new industry to the city

Effective decisions occur when the council understands its role to set and oversee policy and the administration understands its role to manage the day-to-day aspects of implementation.

Policy Direction from Council to Administration

Clear policy direction from council to staff is often described as the single most important measure of council/administration effectiveness.¹² This is best accomplished by conducting annual retreats, regular work sessions, and routine meetings between councils and administration to ensure clarity. Continuous communication is always essential.

Evaluating Policy and Performance Evaluation of Administrative Units and Municipal Services

Setting new policies or legislation is an important function of a municipal council. However there are two equally important aspects of policy making that are often overlooked. The first is evaluation of policy after a period of implementation, and the second is performance monitoring and evaluation of administrative units and municipal services. Improving city services and performance should be the concern of all councilors. In Bulgaria, as stated previously, a survey of Bulgarian municipal leaders¹³ showed that 86% of respondents wished that the municipal council had a better mechanism for assessing the performance of the administrative divisions of the municipality.

In the United States, policy and performance evaluation are not always consistent. However, there are best practices to draw upon. In many cases, the budget review cycle is the most logical place to thoroughly examine what is working well and what should be improved. In Cary, North Carolina, each municipal department is responsible for monitoring key performance indicators throughout the year that are presented to the town council during the budget cycle in planning for the next fiscal year's budget. This process helps the council to evaluate how well the policies are being implemented in each department, and what additional inputs are needed. Additionally, it gives the council an annual opportunity to review operational performance measures to ensure that administration efforts are being directed toward council priorities. See **Appendix E** for performance measurement samples on the Town Clerk Division and the Fire Department.

¹² Kurt Bressner, "Voices from City Hall: Results of Two National Surveys of our Profession," *Public Management*, Vol. 81, December 1999.

¹³ Alpha Research Ltd., *Sociological Survey on the Work of Municipal Councils* (Sofia, Bulgaria, March 2003).

Best Practice: Performance Evaluation of Administrative Departments in Cary, North Carolina.
Reviewed annually during preparation of the budget.

Performance Monitoring Format for Fire Department

Program Description

- Provide emergency response to control fires
- Provide technical rescue services
- Respond to over 4,600 calls annually for emergency fire, rescue and medical care
- Enforce fire codes
- Ensure compliance for safety regulations and standards

Fiscal Year 2002 Accomplishments

- Received accreditation by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International
- Reorganized to improve rescue services
- Implemented first phase of traffic signal improvement program in responding to emergencies

Key Performance Objectives

- Respond to 90% of emergency calls within five minutes
- Comply 100% with State Fire Code Inspection Schedule
- Review all building and site plans within 3 days of request receipt
- Achieve 85% of all employees rated above standard in job knowledge
- Contact 20% of town's residents about fire safety

Performance Measures (multiyear data presented)

- % of emergency calls responded to within 5 minutes
- % of inspection schedule compliance
- % of plans reviewed within 3 days
- % of employees rated proficient in job knowledge

<http://www.townofcary.org/depts/budget/fy2005/approved/aob/budgetfy05aob.htm>, General Fund, Narrative & Expenditures by Department/Division, Fire

Key Component #4 – Engaging Citizens in Decisions and Accountability

Engaging citizens in the affairs of the municipality is an excellent way to ensure that community needs are being considered and addressed in policy and operations. U.S. local governments use many different techniques to involve citizens.

Advisory Boards and Commissions

Most U.S. towns and cities utilize a standing committee structure whereby citizens volunteer time to serve as advisors on matters such as the budget, economic development, youth, senior citizens, public transit, or parks and recreation. Additionally, some communities create citizen advisory councils by geographic district. Another option is to create ad hoc committees on an as-needed basis to address current problems. Once the problems are resolved, the committee disbands.

There are also many avenues for obtaining citizen input on decisions before the council. Among the most common are neighborhood meetings for land-use changes, public hearings, referenda, opinion surveys on service levels and quality, web-based surveys on vision for future, and focus groups to test ideas and potential citizen response.

Most U.S. municipalities use some of the following practices for citizen engagement:

- Citizen-led advisory boards and commissions, by topic
- Citizen advisory councils, by district or ward
- Neighborhood land-use planning
- Public hearings
- Referenda on bond borrowing for infrastructure
- Opinion surveys on city services
- Focus groups to test ideas
- Citizen volunteers assisting police
- Handicap parking monitors (to ensure only people with valid permits use parking spots designated for citizens with disabilities)
- Neighborhood Watch Program to help prevent crime
- Public transit board

All citizen groups should have a clear mandate, a chairperson, expected results, and a mechanism for reporting to the council or delivering their work to the public. Citizen advisory bodies should follow all requirements for holding meetings in public places and also should have operating procedures in place such as the recording of names of attendees, minutes, and actions taken.

Recruiting citizens to serve should be done in a very orderly fashion and involve an application process. Citizens should be advised of any qualifications or requirements for service, and the judging criteria that will be applied for selection. ***Appendices F and G*** contain sample information about boards and commissions for the Town of Cary, North Carolina.

Best Practice: Toronto, Ontario, Canada — A Great City Needs Great People. We need you to serve on a City of Toronto Board. Mayor David R. Miller and the Toronto City Council invite and encourage you to contribute to the city. We are seeking citizens to serve on City of Toronto boards. Your different perspectives, skills and expertise, fundraising, sponsorship, volunteerism, and profile will help our boards operate effectively.

Appointments will be on the basis of equal opportunity. To reflect the diverse nature of the city's population in board appointments, women, people with disabilities, aboriginal people, and racial and ethnic minorities are especially encouraged to apply. **How to apply:** You must attend an information session about the board to be eligible to apply. All information sessions will be held at Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West. You cannot be an employee of the city or its agencies, boards, or commissions. All boards have further qualifications, shown in the chart below.

The City of Toronto is in the process of appointing members to these boards for the term ending November 30, 2006.

- Toronto Parking Authority
- Toronto Police Services Board
- Committee of Adjustment
- Property Standards Committee
- Pension and Benefit Funds: Toronto Civic & Fire, Metro, and Metro Police
- Sinking Fund (manages investments)
- Board of Health
- Exhibition Place Board of Governors
- Toronto Atmospheric Fund

<http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/involved>

Economic Development Councils

The local economic situation will always interest the business community, and all facets of the community benefit from strong local economic conditions. U.S. municipalities often involve citizens as advisors on economic policy and economic development.

Best Practice: Economic Development Commission, Auburn, California. The goal of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) is to enhance the City of Auburn's business environment and economic base while preserving and enhancing the social, natural, and financial resources of our community. The EDC meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, at 4:00 p.m. The meetings are held in the Auburn City Hall, Room 10, 1225 Lincoln Way.

Responsibilities of the commission are to:

- Design and promote an economic development plan based on the needs and views of the businesses and residential community.
- Encourage doing business locally and facilitate job creation.
- Promote the city as a destination point with emphasis on lodging, food, recreation, entertainment, and the arts. For additional information, refer to the Economic Development Commission Request for Funding Application.
- Advise the city council, city manager, and community development director on economic development matters.
- Provide a greater opportunity for citizen participation in the affairs of city government.

<http://www.auburn.ca.gov/cnclmsn/cnclmsn.html#economic>

Youth and Standing Committees

Getting youth involved in local affairs creates a great foundation for development of civic-minded citizens. Many U.S. towns and cities involve youth by creating teen councils to organize youth activities, identify teen representatives for boards and commissions, or designate a teen to be a nonvoting member of the city council.

Best Practice: Mayor's Youth Council, Boston, Massachusetts. The City of Boston, in partnership with Northeastern University and the Boston Bar Association, sponsors the Mayor's Youth Council. Established in the spring of 1994, the Mayor's Youth Council provides Boston young people with an active role in addressing youth issues. These young advocates are volunteer representatives selected to reach out to Boston teens to let them know about existing opportunities and listen to suggestions on what the city can do to improve its youth-oriented efforts.

Members of the citywide Youth Council meet twice a month to participate in team-building trainings, leadership seminars, public speaking workshops, and updates on their respective neighborhood projects. During the summer, the members of the council, all juniors and seniors in high school, research youth programs available in their neighborhoods. Throughout the year, members of the Youth Council meet with local youth organizations to plan activities for the year and to listen to the issues and positive solutions that concern these youth.

Mayor Menino meets with the Youth Council on a regular basis to listen to their concerns and respond to issues they have presented to him at previous meetings. The mayor has also invited Police Commissioner Evans and School Superintendent Payzant to be part of these meetings so they can address issues immediately. The Mayor's Youth Council also sponsors a Fall Youth Forum for young people to bring their ideas and solutions directly to Mayor Menino and other city officials.

<http://www.bostonyouthzone.com/myc/about.asp>



Soliciting and Applying Citizen Opinions and Interests to Inform Decision Making

In order to provide high-quality municipal services, and to understand the goals of the community, it is critical that a municipal council use a variety of tools to gather and interpret citizen opinions. Some U.S. municipalities will conduct a focus group to better understand citizen views on water rates, for example. A focus group can be assembled by randomly selecting taxpayers and requesting an hour of their time to participate in a facilitated discussion where questions explore citizen understanding, attitudes, and goals. This information is then transmitted to decision makers. Citizen surveys are often conducted biennially.

Best Practice: Biennial Citizen Survey, Cary, North Carolina. Every other year, the Town of Cary conducts a professional survey and asks citizens to rate the town government, services, staff, and council performance. Issues such as quality of service, courteousness, time of response, important issues facing the community, and attitudes on property tax rates are examples of information sought. In 2004, 410 citizens were surveyed by telephone for about 18 minutes. Each city department receives a grade from A (high) to F (low) with very detailed results to help understand what is going well and where improvements should be made. Overall, the 2004 average citizen satisfaction score for the town organization as a whole was B+ as compared to a B for 2002.

<http://www.townofcary.org/depts/pio/surveysresearch/surveysoverview.htm>

The following best practice describes an extensive effort to gather citizen opinions to help steer the development of an annual budget. This process can be used to mobilize citizen interest and involve people in local decision making.

Best Practice: Denver, Colorado — Denverites Help Set Priorities at Mayor Listening Sessions.

Mayor John Hickenlooper hosted a series of meetings in March 2004, called “Denver Listens” sessions, to listen to citizen priorities for the 2005 budget. Up to 150 citizens at each session worked together through roundtable discussions and provided suggestions and feedback on how the city could achieve its five goals. Citizens discussed the results they wanted from local government. Over 25 city employees, including many mayoral appointees and the Denver Urban Fellows, volunteered their time to facilitate group discussions and record the public’s feedback.

After vibrant discussions, the group identified potential results ranging from increased recreational opportunities and affordable housing to improved mass transit options. Using interactive touchpad technology, the participants identified and prioritized their top ten desired results. Additionally, each participant provided feedback on the allocation of City funding to each of the priority results.

The understanding of the public’s municipal priorities, gathered from the Denver Listens sessions, was used during the budget-setting process later in the year and will serve as the foundation of the city’s work over the next four years to create new jobs, enhance customer service, make Denver an even better place, improve the work environment for city employees, and ensure that Denver city government lives within its means.

There were a total of seven sessions: five for the community, one for city employees, and one for the mayor’s transition team.

“Denver Listens” Mural



Brief description of mural:

Purpose: To promote input on goals and help identify budget priorities of Fiscal Year 2005
 Mayor, holding star and checklist: Listen, Focus, Discuss
 Items 1-10: Top 10 priorities and associated costs
 Denver Listens timeframe: Begins with start of mayoral term in 2004 ends with implication that priority goals can be achieved by 2007

<http://www.denvergov.org/dephome.asp?depid=1765>

Communicating with Citizens: Mayor and Council Find Creative Ways

Many mayors and council members hold office hours on a regular basis at city hall, so citizens can show up without an appointment or a specific agenda. In Raleigh, North Carolina, the mayor is known to invite citizens to jog on Saturday mornings at a publicized time and location. Such habits can make the elected official very accessible to the public. Under such conditions, elected leaders will frequently hear what is on the citizens' minds. Two best practices for breakfast invitations to join the mayor and council follow.

Best Practice: Have Breakfast with the Mayor and City Council! Westminster, Colorado

The mayor and city council have scheduled a series of public breakfasts throughout 2004. All members of the public are welcome to attend and a light breakfast of coffee, juice, and pastries will be provided. The breakfast consists of an informal question-and-answer session with residents regarding issues of concern to the City of Westminster. There is only one more breakfast scheduled for 2004 at the following location:
October 7 – West View Recreation Center, 10747 W. 108th Ave.

Breakfast begins at 7:30 a.m. Interested parties may RSVP to 303-430-2400, ext. 2016, or e-mail the city manager's office, westycmo@ci.westminster.co.us.

<http://www.ci.westminster.co.us/gov/council/default.htm>

Best Practice: Meet the Mayor for Breakfast, Redmond, Washington



Rosemarie M. Ives is currently in her fourth term as mayor of Redmond. As the city's chief administrative officer, she oversees the day-to-day operations and functions of city government and is responsible for carrying out public policy adopted by the city council. Mayor Ives represents the City of Redmond on a number of committees that address regional issues in the Puget Sound region, particularly those affecting Eastside cities. Some of the issues being addressed include transportation, growth management, public safety, environmental protection, and water resources.

A strong supporter of open government and citizen involvement, Mayor Ives invites citizens to call or e-mail her office with questions or comments about city services or issues facing Redmond. They are also invited to join her for informal conversation and discussion of issues at a monthly no-host breakfast generally held at 8 a.m. on the fourth Friday at the Family Pancake House on Redmond Way. Reservations are not required, but citizens are encouraged to confirm her schedule by checking the Mayor's Breakfast announcement on this site or by calling 425-556-2101.

<http://www.ci.redmond.wa.us/insidecityhall/mayorsoffice/mayor.asp>

Public Hearings and Public Notices

Most state laws in the United States require strict adherence to public hearings and public notices for all meetings held by the municipal council or any advisory committee. The following notice from Atlanta, Georgia, is a best-practice example of the type of information that a public notice should contain and the timing for releasing the public notice.

Best Practice: Atlanta, Georgia — Public Notice on Bonds Released to Public Over 3 Weeks in Advance of Meeting

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO THE RESIDENTS AND VOTERS OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA AND THE OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

NOTICE is hereby given that at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, September 20, 2004, a public meeting of the council of the City of Atlanta (the “Council”) will be held in the Council Chambers on the Second Floor of City Hall, Atlanta, Georgia, at which time there will be considered and determined by the Council the question of whether or not general obligation bonds shall be authorized for issuance by the City of Atlanta (the “City”) in the following amounts for each of the following purposes:

MUNICIPAL BUILDING BONDS in the principal amount of \$4,000,000 for the purpose of providing funds to pay the cost of acquiring a site or sites and constructing and equipping thereon new municipal buildings and related facilities. **SCHOOL BONDS** in the principal amount of \$4,000,000 for the purpose of providing funds to pay the cost of renovating, improving, adding to, and equipping existing school buildings and facilities.

It is proposed that an ordinance authorizing the issuance of bonds for each of the above purposes will be considered and acted upon by the Council at such public meeting in accordance with the procedures set forth in two special amendments to the Constitution of the State of Georgia which were ratified at the General Election held on November 5, 1968, and duly proclaimed by the Governor of the State of Georgia on December 13, 1968 (1968 Ga. Laws Pages 1582 to 1584, inclusive, and 1968 Ga. Laws Pages 1586 to 1587, inclusive), and any person having an interest in the proposed authorization of such bonds for any of the above purposes may attend such public meeting and make known his or her view or views with respect to the proposed ordinance which will authorize the issuance of such bonds.



Rhonda Dauphin Johnson
Municipal Clerk
City of Atlanta, Georgia

http://apps.atlantaga.gov/citycoul/Public/notice_of_p082404.htm

Reporting Best Practices Through a Website

Sharing best practices through a website is becoming a widely used way for cities to communicate among each other. An impressive website is that of Alberta, Canada.

Best Practice: Alberta, Canada — The Municipal Excellence Network is an initiative developed through the collaborative efforts of Alberta municipalities and Alberta Municipal Affairs. These stakeholders are working together to provide an online resource tool that features a searchable collection of municipal practices from around the province. Other features include a practice request board that allows users to post requests for information, an online newsletter, an upcoming-events listing, and access to various articles, web links, and education/training information. A key part of the network is the sharing of experiences and knowledge so that municipal officials are not “reinventing the wheel” each time they want to implement a new practice or change how they do something in their municipality. By learning from what others have tried, municipalities may be able to do things more efficiently and effectively. As well, continuous improvement within a municipality may also result from the ongoing review of practices being used in other municipalities.

<http://www.menet.ab.ca/bins/index.asp>

Key Component #5 – Common Vision, Strategy, and Planning

Visioning

Developing a common vision for the future of a community is a highly laudable goal. Towns and cities across the United States developed for many different reasons (i.e., industrial, access to railroad, desirable climate) and often as a result of economic development interests. With rapid growth and pressures on infrastructure and the environment in many parts of the country, local leaders are trending more toward proactive visioning and a strategic planning process to chart the course for the future.

Visioning methodologies usually have several different aspects and define a timeframe for the vision (10-25 years), an overall focus (broad or specific), and specific concerns (problems the vision should solve). A number of models exist in the United States that can be tailored to just about any need and the available resources. Communities interested in undertaking a visioning exercise will do well to tailor an existing model to respond to the particular goals and needs of the community.

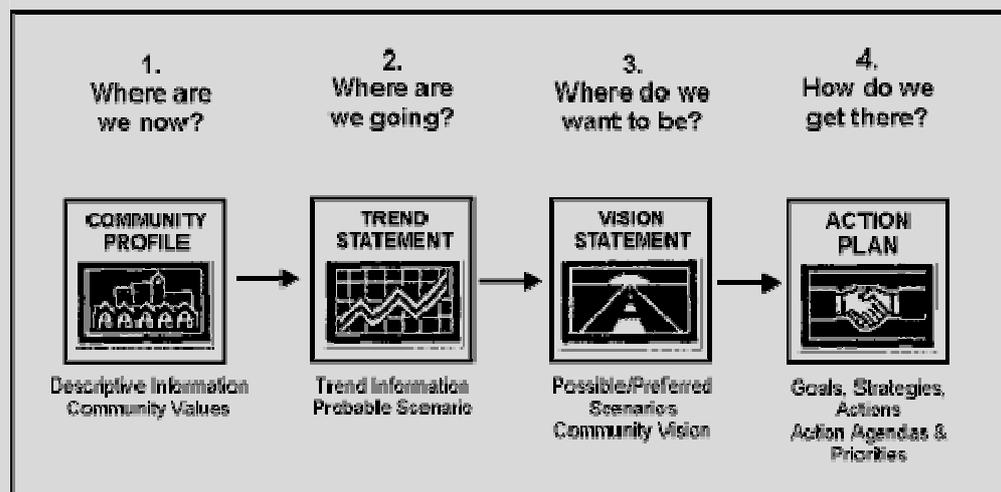
Prior to launching a vision exercise, a municipal council should ensure there is consensus to embark upon the activity and should establish agreement on the direction and scope of the exercise. A visioning activity can take months or years, and involve a small number of committees with community representatives or dozens of small groups and hundreds of community representatives. By establishing the length and scope of the exercise and making a political commitment to explore development of a shared vision, the municipal council can ensure that the process is highly rewarding and serves as a catalyst for great change in a community.

In terms of models to refer to, one of the most comprehensive approaches has occurred in the State of Oregon, well known in the United States for leading community visioning and planning efforts. Blessed with natural beauty including a Pacific coastline and the Cascade Mountains, Oregon has been a popular destination for new growth. Over the past several decades, development pressures and controversy about how to protect the environment and accommodate economic development drove the state to promote local-level visioning exercises.

Best Practice: The Oregon Model of Community Visioning is very practicable and revolves around four simple questions that guide a staged process with activities and outcomes.

THE OREGON MODEL

A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS



Step 1: “Where are we now?” This step focuses on profiling the community as it exists in the present: describing its background and important features, assessing its strengths and weaknesses, defining current issues and concerns, and articulating shared community values.

Step 2: “Where are we going?” This step focuses on determining where the community is headed if current directions persist. Relevant demographic, economic, environmental and social trends are identified, and emerging issues that may confront the community are postulated. A “probable” scenario is then developed showing what the community might look like in the future if it continues on its current course with no major changes in direction.

Step 3: “Where do we want to be?” This step represents the core of the visioning process. The purpose is to articulate a vision of what the community wishes to become in the future. Starting from the probable scenario, a “preferred” scenario is developed showing what the community could look like in the future if it chooses to respond to identified trends and emerging issues in a manner that is consistent with its core values. Ultimately, this “realistically idealistic” picture becomes the basis of a formal vision statement.

Step 4: “How do we get there?” In this step the community begins planning to achieve its vision. This phase is, in essence, a self-contained strategic (or “action”) planning process. It identifies short-term strategies and actions intended to move the community in the direction of its long-term vision. It also identifies groups responsible for implementing specific actions, timetables for completion of these activities, “benchmarks” for monitoring progress, and other relevant information. The resulting action plan is designed to be revised and updated several times over the lifetime of the vision.

Steven C. Ames (Ed.), *A Guide to Community Visioning: Hands-On Information for Local Communities* (Portland, Oregon: Oregon Visions Project, American Planning Association [Oregon Chapter], 1993). See also <http://www.communityvisioning.com/planningforthefutureoregonmodel>.

One result of a vision exercise is a simple, clear, and concise “vision statement” about the direction of the community. Based on the vision statement, next to evolve are mission

statements, a values statement, goals and objectives, and specific strategic planning efforts. A visioning exercise can be conceptual and result only in a vision statement, or expand its scope to develop mission and values statements, as well as more specific goals, objectives, and strategies. A very well-presented and concise example is that of the City of Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada.

Best Practice: Vision, Mission, and Values Statements, Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada

Community Vision Statement

Nanaimo will be a community that respects people. It will hold neighbourhoods as the building blocks of the city. It will support people of all ages and incomes. It will be an attractive place to live with the historic downtown forming the “heart” of the city. Change will be based on community participation. Nanaimo will respect and preserve the environment and be pedestrian friendly. It will have a diverse economy and a wide range of social, recreational, cultural, and artistic amenities and services.

Community Mission Statement

The city’s purpose is to preserve, protect and enhance the quality of life in Nanaimo through the facilitation of municipal services in an equitable, efficient, and effective manner.

Community Values Statement

Honesty: We deal openly and directly with our peers and customers.

Integrity: We do what we say and we live by our values.

Quality: We provide the best possible service with the resources available.

Teamwork: We work together to achieve our common goals.

Accountability: We accept responsibility for our decisions and actions.

Pride: We have a personal commitment and dedication to our work and customers.

Respect: We treat our peers and customers with courtesy and dignity.

Communication: We share information and gather feedback throughout the organization and with our customers.

City of Nanaimo, *Annual Municipal Report*, 2004. Available at http://www.nanaimo.ca/cityhall/index_inside.asp?id=270&collection=57.

Strategic Planning

As with visioning, there are many different models for strategic planning at the municipal government level. Strategic planning will always work best when based upon a clearly articulated vision, mission, and values statement. The major distinction of strategic planning in relation to the above exercise is that it is based on stated goals and objectives, and on specific actions that relate to the goals and objectives. While a visioning exercise may occur only once a decade or even once in two decades, and is used to provide a concept for the community, strategic planning guides implementation of goals and objectives that have a very specific and often limited timeframe—often three to five years. A strategic planning exercise in the United States typically addresses specific areas where improvement is needed in the city’s organizational framework, management plan, economic plan, or financial plan.

Often, professional consultants with training and background in this type of municipal planning are used to ensure that proven methods and techniques are utilized through

implementation of the plan. Consultants also may be employed with expertise in a particular area such as land use or economic development. The City of Camden, New Jersey, employed a municipal strategic planning firm with expertise in financial, management, and economic recovery planning.

Best Practice: Strategic Economic Recovery Plan for the City of Camden, New Jersey.

Faced with a growing budget deficit and urban distress, Camden developed a strategic recovery plan with the help of a professional consulting team. A comprehensive set of actions was developed to correct a \$28 million deficit and reverse a trend where the city lost 40,000 people in 50 years. The core strategic problem to correct was a lack of growth and deterioration of the tax base. The result of the strategic planning process was a multiyear recovery plan aimed at balancing the budget and reversing a half-century trend of lack of investment by launching over \$100 million in new economic development projects and municipal improvements.

City of Camden Multi-Year Recovery Plan, Fiscal Years 2001-2003, Working Plan dated 20 November 2000. Executive summary (30 pages) available at <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/camdensummary.pdf>.

Annual Council-Administration Retreats

Annual council-administration planning retreats provide an opportunity to bring together the municipal elected and appointed leaders to review accomplishments and challenges of the past year and to develop a work plan of priorities for the next year. This practice is best conducted at the beginning of each new calendar year. Ideally the retreat can occur over a two- to three-day period at a location outside the municipality. This provides a “retreat” atmosphere where the daily demands and interruptions are removed and people may focus on in-depth review and discussions of the affairs of the city. Social events and dinners are planned as well to allow the elected leaders and the administration to build rapport. Improving relations between the council and the administration is a major goal of an annual retreat. Planning for the retreat is best done with a small group of councilors and the lead administrator. Content of the retreat can be divided between in-depth study of technical issues facing the city, and discussion for problem solving and planning. The following best practice summaries are complemented by a fuller description of the retreats in the Appendix referenced.

Best Practice: Strategic Planning Retreat for One-Year Goals, Rancho Cordova, California.

The council/administration met March 21, 2003, for a one-day retreat to develop and begin Year One of a Two-Year Plan for providing municipal services. They began their retreat by answering these questions: What is not going as well as you would like with the city? What are the external factors or trends that will or may have a positive impact on the city in the coming year? negative impact? What are your goals for Year One to improve the city?

A clear objective was set with six-month strategic objectives agreed upon with dates for how progress would advance. At the end of the six-month period, the council and administration agreed to conduct a more thorough second step of the strategic planning retreat to set objectives for advancing the next six months of the strategic plan activities.

http://www.cityofranhocordova.org/html/planning_main.html. See also **Appendix H**, City of Rancho Cordova, Strategic Planning Retreat documents.

Regular programming of council-administration retreats is a way to help build strong interrelationships and focus the work of the municipal leadership. In spite of the costs

associated with this type of planning activity, both councilors and administration find it well worth it and realize very tangible results in improving the likelihood of effective decision making throughout the year.

Best Practice: 2004 City Council Retreat, Longmont, Colorado. The City of Longmont held a two-day retreat January 30-31 at a corporate retreat center for the city council and city department directors. The purpose of the retreat was to examine important issues in more depth than usual time allowed. Prior to the retreat, the council identified several issues to address at the retreat. The staff prepared background materials on each issue and provided the documents in advance. The process allowed discussion on what was currently being done, and determination of what additional appropriate action was needed. The agenda included time to review 2003 accomplishments, and 2004 major work plan items. Additionally, time was reserved to review expectations for the retreat and ways to best work together. Other questions asked were what the council needed from the administration to help them be effective, and what challenges the administration faced. Major issues discussed included taxes, downtown revitalization, promotion of tourism, homelessness and substance abuse, and a review of the work plan and next steps. The retreat included one social hour at a restaurant.

Retreat information for 2005 and previous years available at http://www.ci.longmont.co.us/city_council/retreat. See also **Appendix I**, City of Longmont, Colorado, 2004 City Council Retreat Letter of Invitation and Agenda.

Key Component #6 – Decision Support: Information; Analysis; and Technical, Administrative, and Legal Support

The vast majority of support to a municipal council revolves around the decision-making process. In Bulgaria, administrative and technical support is often seen as lacking the depth and breadth that councilors need to make the effective decisions. More budget resources allocated to support the work of municipal councils in Bulgaria would be useful, according to 94% of survey responders in the Alpha Research Study of March 2003.¹⁴ Sixty-seven percent indicated more resources would be “very useful” while 27% indicated more resources would be “somewhat useful.” This section aims to take the key elements of decision support as described by the Effective Municipal Decision-Making Demonstration Team in the June 2003 Sevlievo meeting and offer a description of typical practice from the U.S. experience.

There are two important distinctions in the U.S. experience to point out: (1) in council-manager (form of government) municipalities, support staff work equally for the mayor and council; and (2) in mayor-council municipalities, and especially in strong-mayor settings, support staff functions tend to be separated and distinct with staff working for either the mayor or council. Both approaches have pluses and minuses. In Washington, DC (strong mayor and large municipal council), massive failures in the legislative division led to an in-depth consultant analysis of municipal council operations. A review of support staff structure and functions was conducted and showed that the municipal council’s system of having dedicated administrative and technical support for individual councilors was inefficient, was redundant, and diminished staff cooperation due to the sense of loyalty and competition that resulted. In that case, it was recommended that a collective pool of support staff serve the entire council to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The disadvantages of a collective pool of administrative and technical support—as seen by councilors—are lack of control over resources and inability to obtain tailored services. However, the cost savings generally are worth it to most municipalities.

Administrative Support to Council

In smaller U.S. municipalities, administrative support to the mayor and council is provided by the offices of the municipal clerk. In medium to large cities, an administrative staff may be dedicated to the council as a shared pool. In some of the largest cities, council members have individuals assigned to them specifically. In Chicago, Illinois, each alderman (councilor) has a budget for support staff, decides directly on administrative staff support, and actually hires those individuals. (See Key Component #2 for a fuller discussion of “Organizational and Administrative Procedural Support to Council.”)

Technical Documentation (Standards, Website/Hardcopy, Timing)

The importance of technical documentation to support the council decision-making process cannot be overemphasized. The process for how support is provided is just as important as content, and ground rules should be established by the council as a whole. A good place to start is by defining what materials will be prepared for council meetings, by whom, and with what timing. Standards can be set and included in a council’s Rules of Procedure. Generally,

¹⁴ Alpha Research Ltd., *Sociological Survey on the Work of Municipal Councils* (Sofia, Bulgaria, March 2003).

council meeting documentation is finalized and available to all council members at the same time one week in advance. As noted in Key Component #2, under “Web-Based Information Systems for Council Business and Public Records,” most U.S. municipalities are transitioning fully to electronic web-based systems for disseminating routine council documentation. E-mail distribution of technical reports and routine updates also is standard in the United States. Hardcopy still has a place, however, for reference materials, confidential documentation, or particularly lengthy or complex data reports which may be difficult to read on a computer screen or to download.

Use of Outside Experts and Consultants

It is very common for U.S. municipal councils to hire outside experts and consultants to conduct an in-depth analysis that goes beyond the scope of their staff’s expertise, or supplements the capacity of the staff when demand periods are high. For example, external consultants are used for:

- comprehensive land-use planning
- water and sewer system design
- economic and fiscal impact studies
- lobbying at the state and federal level
- traffic studies
- writing of policy on taxes, fees, and user charges
- design guideline development.

Consultant services usually are budgeted directly by department function (such as public works, planning, engineering, and legislative). Alternatively, funding for municipal consultants could be included in the municipal council budget. Contracts for consultant services are always approved by administrative staff. Council review and approval for consultant services are required when the services are in addition to what was planned in the fiscal year budget. Technical reports and studies done by paid consultants are always available to the entire council.

Legal Support to Council

Most municipal councils have an attorney and perhaps an entire legal department to manage the legal affairs of the municipality. It is absolutely critical that mayors and councilors have ready access to trusted legal advising—either in-house or on a consulting basis. When resources do not permit an in-house attorney, or special expertise is needed, legal services are typically contracted on an as-needed basis.

In-house municipal attorneys usually report directly to the council, but some also report to the city manager. Their primary role is to advise the elected officials and administrators on matters pertaining to law and to ensure that all decisions and operations uphold the legal framework within which the municipality operates. The attorney provides legal opinions during council deliberation, acts as parliamentarian, defends the city and council in lawsuits, advises the council on preparation of legislative proposals, and serves as legal reviewer on contracts and agreements. The attorney also provides opinions on matters of conflict of interest. Broadly, legal support to the council is focused on handling the legal affairs of the city.

Legal support to the council is most effective when a strong degree of trust can be placed in the attorney by each and every member of the council. This means the attorney is impartial and unbiased in dealing with the mayor or any councilor. A very good legal advisor will help the elected officials evaluate legal matters from both strategic and tactical perspectives in a consultative manner and will facilitate solid decision making. A municipal attorney usually serves at the pleasure of the entire council, so great care must be taken to serve the entire body, balancing the need for confidentiality while providing information that is needed for decision making to all members on an equitable basis. Demonstrating any kind of favoritism in this position is strictly forbidden and most U.S. municipal attorneys go to great lengths to uphold this standard code of conduct or risk dismissal.

Council Participation in Draft Decisions

As noted in Key Component #3, under “Recommending New Policy,” councilors often propose new policies or initiatives that develop into draft decisions for full council consideration. In the U.S. context, council participation in drafting decisions is usually limited to framing of the issue and stating an objective or desired result. It is then the job of the staff to produce the draft decision while working consultatively with the council member who initiates the new policy or activity, a council working group, or a council committee. In a council-manager form of government, staff must be directed by majority vote to work on any single draft decision initiated by a council member. This ensures that the resources being spent on preparation of the draft decision have the support of the majority of the council, and are not perceived as politically serving one councilor or a faction of the council.

In order to enhance council participation in drafting decisions, council should provide initial direction and then review progress on the draft two or three times before it is considered final for council adoption. This can be done through committees or by creating a small work group to work with the staff for a limited period of time to shape the draft decision.

Technical Recommendations and Justification

Municipal councils in the U.S. setting rely on the administration to prepare a technical recommendation for council consideration with a justification. In this way, each action to come before the council for a decision is accompanied by a staff recommendation. The council can then either agree or disagree, and propose modifications. This helps to focus council decisions and keep the problem and solution at hand. That is not to say the council will always agree with staff technical recommendations. In fact, the council brings its own perspective to the decision analysis and has the authority to make changes within reason and the law. See *Appendix J* for an example of a technical staff recommendation.

Decision Reporting to Public Through Website, Other Means

Timely and accurate reporting of decisions to the public is an essential element of an effective municipal decision-making process. If not communicated efficiently and effectively, decisions cannot be used by those who are impacted. An excellent practice is to determine how and when decisions will be reported to the public and via what medium. Standard practices used in the United States to report decisions include:

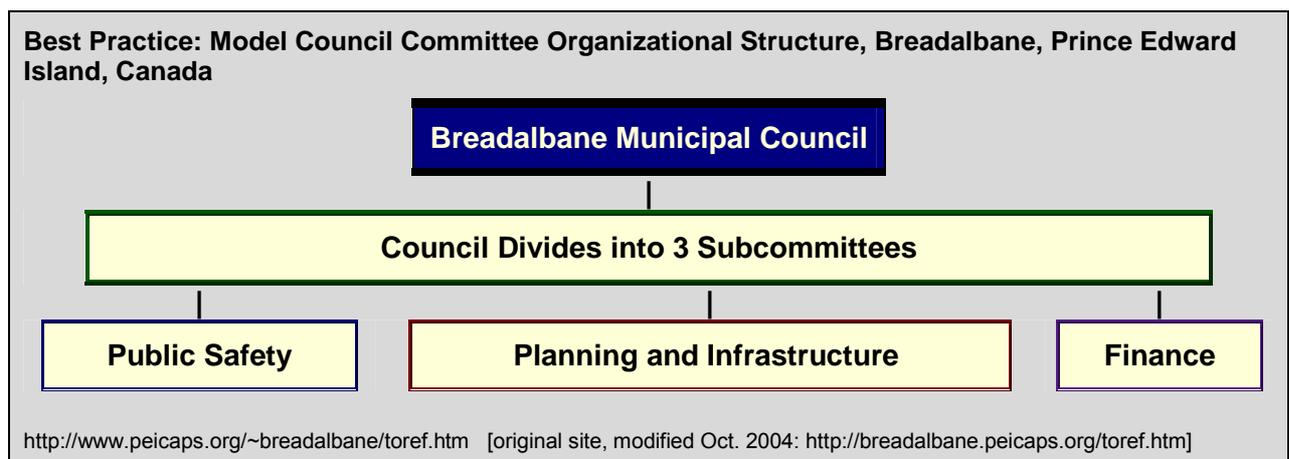
*The 7½ Key Components to Effective Municipal Council Decision Making:
Selected Best Practices*

- Posting on city hall bulletin board
- Public notice of decision in newspaper
- Municipal cable TV or radio
- Posting on municipal website
- Newsletter in monthly utility bills
- Quarterly town hall meetings to discuss recent decisions.

Key Component #7 – Role of Council Committees

Decentralized municipal council committees are widely used in the United States to deal with matters that come before the council for decisions. Committee structure varies greatly and depends to a great extent on the size of the municipality, the number of council members, traditions in terms of number of committees created, etc. Committees are usually designated as either standing (permanent) or special (temporary) committees. The council may delegate any matter council considers necessary to one of its committees and empower it with council duties or powers. Most municipalities have at least two committees and as many as ten that are chaired and filled by council members who deal with operations, planning and development, human resources, budget, or public safety. Some committees have citizen advisors. Committees have set agendas and they are usually established by the administrative staff members who serve as liaisons and technical support to the committees. The committees serve as a decentralized decision-making body, with recommendations proceeding upward to the council as a whole. Recommendations of committees generally channel to the full council either as discussion or consent items. Agenda items in the category of “Discussion” for full council deliberation typically are controversial or are matters of interest to the full body. Items forwarded for “Consent” are decisions that had unanimous committee approval and are deemed noncontroversial.

A council committee structure helps to run a more efficient council, allows for more in-depth discussion on complex issues, and also allows for speedy processing of routine decisions. Each council will do well to reaffirm or at the beginning of each term the committee organizational structure. The structure is best documented with identified chairpersons. It is always good to rotate chairperson responsibilities so as to give many councilors the opportunity to lead a committee. The City of Breadalbane, Prince Edward Island, Canada, has a very well-developed description of its council committee structure, function, and responsibilities. It is diagrammed below:



Internal Rules of Procedure and Practices

Council committees should function under the same internal rules of procedure as the full council. A set monthly meeting time should be established to ensure regularity and predictability in handling the affairs of the municipality.

Best Practice: Committee Internal Rules of Procedures and Practices, Breadalbane, Prince Edward Island, Canada

- The municipal council shall appoint council committees in January of each year of operation.
- Councilors hold seats (as either committee chair, committee vice-chair, or committee secretary) on several committees to which they are appointed annually by the chair of the council.
- Each committee operates independently and in accordance with the committee's prearranged composition, objectives, and responsibilities.
- Each committee is accountable to the council as a whole, and to other committees, as required, to ensure an accountable and efficient operation which is responsive to the needs and desires of the community.
- Each committee presents a written update and progress report to the council at every council meeting.
- A committee shall be composed of three (3) members from the council. They shall be appointed by the chair of the council who shall designate one (1) member to be chair and one (1) member to be vice-chair.
- The municipal administrator shall serve as a nonvoting secretary of this committee.
- In addition, there shall be two (2) ex-officio members as follows:
 - a. The chair of the municipal council,
 - b. The vice-chair of the municipal council.
- The quorum for the committee shall be three (3), at least two (2) of whom shall be from Section A.1. above.

<http://www.peicaps.org/~breadalbane/toref.htm> [original site, modified Oct. 2004: <http://breadalbane.peicaps.org/toref.htm>]

Each committee will function best when, in addition to clear rules of procedure, there is a clear description of roles and responsibilities.

Best Practice: Clear Description of Objectives and Responsibilities of Finance Committee of the Council of Breadalbane, Prince Edward Island, Canada

The Finance Committee shall supervise the fiscal affairs of the municipality, with the following objectives:

1. To provide financial advice and information to the council so that the council can fulfill its obligations pursuant to the Municipalities Act of Prince Edward Island.
2. To ensure that the financial transactions of the municipality are conducted in an effective and businesslike manner.
3. To ensure that maximum revenue can be obtained from monies available for investment.
4. To ensure that long-range planning and forecasting are undertaken to enable informed decisions on major financial matters.

Without limiting the generality of the responsibilities of the Finance Committee in financial matters, it shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To advise the council on all financial matters affecting the municipality.
2. To receive and review the audited financial statements of the municipality prior to presentation to the council.
3. To provide advice to the chair of the municipal council on financial matters.
4. To prepare and approve an overall annual operating budget forecast of anticipated revenues, estimated expenses, and spending plan before submission to the council.
5. To determine whether revised committee budgets are necessary and to recommend accordingly to the council.
6. To monitor the financial status of specific activities, projects, and committee as the need to monitor is determined from time to time by the council.
7. To advise the council on specific matters relating to emergency financial needs.
8. To make decisions on behalf of the council on investment policies and practices in accordance with council directives and decisions.
9. To review on behalf of the council all committee budgets and spending plans, contracts, agreements, deeds or other instruments involving the financial affairs of the municipality which are to be presented to the council and to make recommendations to the council regarding appropriate action.
10. To assume such other responsibilities as from time to time may be delegated by the council.

<http://www.peicaps.org/~breadalbane/toref.htm> [original site, modified Oct. 2004: <http://breadalbane.peicaps.org/toref.htm>]

Materials and Technical Support

Council committees should always have technical staff support as well as an administrative staff member. Support ranges from preparation of technical reports through research and planning activities to clerical work that will involve posting public notices and taking meeting minutes. Staff should always provide a recommendation to the council committee, but accept council direction that may deviate from their recommendation. The responsibility of the administration is to provide whatever material or technical support is necessary to make a decision, and then to implement the decision taken. At the same time, the council must be mindful NOT to interfere with staff preparation of recommendations or implementation activities as long as council direction is being applied.

Relations and Meetings Between Chair and Mayor/Administration

The most productive relationships between a committee chairperson and the mayor/administration occur when the two parties are able to meet and discuss key issues on a regular basis in open, honest dialogue.

Best Practices: Tried-and-True Techniques for Building Productive Chair and Mayor/Administration Relations

- Mayor to hold weekly meeting with department heads and council committee chairs to discuss current municipal issues, events, and problems.
- Mayor to invite one council committee chair to breakfast each week to discuss whatever is on his/her mind = no planned agenda.
- Mayor rotates council leadership positions on an annual basis so everyone gets a chance to lead and feels welcome and valued as a member of the team.
- Chair invites mayor to committee meeting to listen to problems and concerns, then meets privately afterward to solve problems together, and make discrete plans for addressing critical issues brought up in committee setting.
- Chair invites committee and mayor to attend special 2-hour planning discussion to review mission and focus of committee to make sure it is functioning well.
- Chair proposes field trip outings with mayor to study committee-related issues at the site of the problem (overcrowding of schools, lack of regular solid waste pickup, business expansion that requires additional water system infrastructure).

All these actions, if faithfully undertaken, may easily lead to stronger relationships built at first on mutual interests and then on mutual trust.

Source: J. Robison

Committee Work Plan Development (Set by Department Heads)

Best practice in the United States has shown that heads of administration departments are in the best position to prepare committee work plans. In the same way, the decisions that come before the municipal council concerning the affairs of the city are best put forward by the professional staff because they are less likely to be influenced by politics. Committee chairs also may take the initiative in agenda setting by putting forward proposals and programs they or committee members initiate. Generally, however, committee activities and agendas are guided by professional staff. The principle in this organizational relationship is a separation between the politicians and the professional staff in order to reduce the influence of political party agendas on municipal decision making.

Key Component #7½ – The Will to Succeed for the Public Good

The Key Components to Effective Municipal Council Decision Making offer a framework for every council to evaluate and improve its performance.

The 7½ Key Components of Effective Municipal Decision Making

1. Interrelations Between the Mayor/Administration and Municipal Council: Teamwork
2. Clear, Established, and Open Procedures
3. Balance of Responsibilities for Decision and Implementation: Leadership Roles
4. Engaging Citizens in Decisions and Accountability
5. Common Vision, Strategy, and Planning
6. Decision Support: Information; Analysis; and Technical, Administrative, and Legal Support
7. Role of Council Committees
- 7½. The Will to Succeed for “The Public Good”

Developed by Effective Municipal Decision-Making Demo Team, July 2004

Developing effective decision-making practices takes time and hard work, but it is an investment in the future and will result in better decisions and savings to the taxpayers and citizens. Dedication to continuous improvement by methodically planning and implementing best decision-making practices will have lasting, positive effects on the quality of council decision making. Systems and practices put in place today will create a strong culture for effective decision making. This will help future councils that take office to transition and function in an open, accountable, and transparent fashion.

Yet, there is one single ingredient that is crucial to how well a municipal council makes decisions, and much depends on the single philosophy of service to the public.

The Will to Succeed for the Benefit of the Citizens and the Community... “The Public Good”

If each member of the team—the mayor, municipal council, and administrator—is dedicated to doing what is right for the public first and foremost, the chances of success in adopting more effective decision-making practices are high. This basic tenet of measuring achieving the public good can become part of any municipal council’s culture if discussions at all times are framed around what is best for the community as a whole. Dedication to the *public good* by all members of the team is a core underpinning and thus becomes Key Component #7½ of Effective Municipal Council Decision Making.

Appendix A

Demo Team Selected Best Practices, by Municipality

Records of Proceedings

Best practices identified by Demo Team for their municipalities

Following the first work meeting of the Effective Municipal Decision-Making Demonstration Team in the city of Sevlievo, the participants agreed to adopt, in their municipalities, practices that will enhance the efficiency of the decision-making process.

Municipality of Dobrich

1. Expand the municipal website to interact with the citizens and foster their input into the decision-making process. Examples include publishing council meeting agendas and draft resolutions in advance, publishing reports on the implementation of council decisions, and surveying public opinion on specific important issues.
2. Increase the participation of citizens, NGOs, and business organizations in the sessions of the standing committees. Hold such sessions on-site when an important issue will be discussed.
3. Improve the procedures by which the council and administration—and the council members themselves—interact, in order to be able to introduce a consent agenda for each meeting of the council.

Municipality of Karlovo

1. Hold joint working meetings of the mayor/administration, chair of the municipal council, and faction leaders.
2. Continue information exchange across the mayor/administration and municipal council.
3. Set up public advisory boards within the mayor's and municipal council chair's offices.

Municipality of Krichim

1. Hold retreats.
2. Arrange coffee “breaks” of mayor and municipal council chair with citizens, NGOs, and business organizations.
3. Have municipal councilors participate in drafting regulatory acts.

Municipality of Lovech

1. Finalize the administration and municipal council communication system:
 - Recordkeeping
 - Enforcement, control, and implementation of decisions.
2. Design an up-to-date and fast Web page to communicate with the media and the general public.
3. Form an economic development council within the mayor's office as well as advisory boards within the offices of the municipal council chair and the deputy mayors.

Municipality of Rousse

1. Hold on-site sessions of the municipal council and the standing committees; locate and use reception rooms in the communities of the municipality.
2. Form public advisory boards within the mayor's and municipal council chair's offices.
3. By resolution of the municipal council chair, assign citizens' resolutions to standing committees to be filed as draft decisions.

Municipality of Sevlievo

1. On the municipal Web page, publish draft decisions filed for deliberation by the municipal council.
2. Hold joint working sessions of the administration, municipal council chair, and municipal councilors.
3. Invite Municipal Youth Public Council (YPC) representatives to participate in the work of the municipal council standing committees.

Municipality of Teteven

1. Plan and hold retreats.
2. Define the personal responsibility of decision makers.
3. Set up an economic development council (with participants being representatives of business, municipal administration, municipal council).

Municipality of Shoumen

1. Publish on the municipal Web page the unabridged text of reports (motives, dispositions, proposals) and keep these available on-line for one year.
2. Introduce two-part municipal council sessions and consent agenda items.
3. Carry out retreats of the administration and the municipal council advisory board.

Municipality of Yambol

1. Set up an economic development council.
2. Develop a Code of Ethics.
3. Introduce a consent agenda for municipal council sessions.

Appendix B

Town of Cary, North Carolina, Agenda and Post-Meeting Action Agenda

**Cary Town Council Meeting Agenda
June 24, 2004
6:30 p.m.
Temporary Council Chambers
Herb Young Community Center
101 Wilkinson Avenue, Cary, N.C.**

Web Site: www.townofcary.org

A. COMMENCEMENT

1. Call to Order (**Mayor McAllister**)
2. Ceremonial Opening (**Council Member Joyce**)

B. CONSENT AGENDA

CONSENT AGENDA items are items unanimously recommended for approval by all involved parties. The agenda has four distinct consent agenda: (1) the **regular consent agenda** contains standard items that go directly to council in which staff unanimously recommends approval; (2) the **planning and zoning board consent agenda** contains items that have been unanimously approved by the planning and zoning board and staff and only require a simple majority vote; (3) the **town center review commission consent agenda** contains items that have been unanimously approved by the town center review commission and staff and only require a simple majority vote; (4) the **committee consent agenda** contains items that have been unanimously approved by the appropriate council committee and staff. **A single vote may be taken for the approval of ALL consent agenda items.**

1. Regular Consent Agenda (*any regular consent agenda item pulled for discussion will be discussed at the beginning of the old/new business portion of the agenda*)
 - a. Consideration of approval of the minutes of the regular town council meeting held on June 10, 2004 and the budget work session minutes held on June 21, 2004. (**Town Council**)
 - b. Consideration of adoption of the tax report approved by the Wake County Commissioners on June 7, 2004. (**Mr. Bill Coleman**)
 - c. Consideration of tabling the following request indefinitely, while Cary and Apex staffs continue to work on the details:

Adoption of an ordinance to amend an existing Utility Service Agreement Boundary between the Town of Apex and the Town of Cary that defines a boundary between the two towns to plan appropriately for the future provision of municipal services. (This item was tabled at the May 13, 2004 Council meeting specifically to be placed on the June 24, 2004 council agenda.) (**Mr. Ricky Barker**)

2. Planning and Zoning Board Consent Agenda (*any planning and zoning board consent agenda item pulled for discussion will be discussed at the beginning of the planning and zoning board's discussion portion of the agenda*)

N/A

3. Town Center Review Commission Consent Agenda (*any town center review commission consent agenda item pulled for discussion will be discussed at the beginning of the town center review commission's discussion portion of the agenda*)

N/A

4. Planning and Development Committee consent agenda, June 17, 2004 (*any committee consent agenda item pulled for discussion will be discussed at the beginning of the committee discussion portion of the agenda*) (**Council Member Roseland**)

C. RECOGNITIONS, REPORTS, AND PRESENTATIONS

N/A

D. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Please adhere to the following guidelines:

Proceed to the podium, and state your name clearly.

Be concise; avoid repetition; limit comments to five minutes or less; designate a spokesperson for large groups.

Following your presentation, print your name on a form provided by the town clerk to ensure the official record reflects the correct information.

Provide the town clerk any documents or materials that were presented to the council.

1. **04-AC-003 (Triangle Aquatic Center):** Request by the applicant, Bass, Nixon & Kennedy, Inc., on behalf of the owner, Triangle Aquatic Center, to approve an activity center concept plan to construct an indoor aquatic center of approximately 77,000 square feet, a conceptual office/retail area, and a residential area. The property contains 21.56 acres and is zoned Office and Institutional. The property is located at the eastern end of Convention Drive, approximately 2,130 feet southeast of the corner of Cary Towne Boulevard and Southeast Maynard Road, east of Cary Towne Center. **(Ms. Beth Lewis)**

E. PUBLIC SPEAKS OUT (one hour time limit)

The public is invited to speak on any topic not on this agenda. Comments should be limited to less than three minutes, and speakers should avoid repetition. All speakers should print their names on a form provided by the town clerk immediately after speaking.

F. PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD REPORT (discussion items)

N/A

G. TOWN CENTER REVIEW COMMISSION (discussion items)

N/A

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS (discussion items)

1. Planning and Development Committee, June 17, 2004 **(Council Member Roseland)**

I. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

1. **Alternate Day Watering Exceptions**
Consideration of allowing exceptions to the Alternate Day Watering Ordinance for turf establishment (This item was tabled at the June 9, 2004, Operations Committee meeting) **(Council Member Robinson)**
2. Consideration of adoption of the 2005 Budget and the proposed changes. **(Mr. Bill Coleman)**
3. **Request to Relinquish Extraterritorial Jurisdiction**
Consideration of adoption of a resolution relinquishing Extraterritorial Jurisdiction over property to be included as part of the Copperleaf Subdivision. **(Mr. Ricky Barker)**

J. LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Closed session will be called if necessary.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Please contact the Cary Town Clerk with any questions about this agenda. The e-mail address is sue.rowland@townofcary.org, and the phone number is (919) 460-4941. Visit our Web site at www.townofcary.org for more detailed information about each agenda item.

Refer to [Cary TV 11](#) for the rebroadcast schedule.



Cary Town Council [Post-] Meeting [Action] Agenda
June 24, 2004
6:30 p.m.
Temporary Council Chambers
Herb Young Community Center
101 Wilkinson Avenue, Cary, N.C.
Web Site: www.townofcary.org

A. COMMENCEMENT

1. Call to Order **(Provided)**
2. Ceremonial Opening **(Provided)**

B. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Regular Consent Agenda *(any regular consent agenda item pulled for discussion will be discussed at the beginning of the old/new business portion of the agenda)*
 - a. Consideration of approval of the minutes of the regular town council meeting held on June 10, 2004 and the budget work session minutes held on June 21, 2004. **(Approved)**
 - b. Consideration of adoption of the tax report approved by the Wake County Commissioners on June 7, 2004. **(Approved)**
 - c. Consideration of tabling the following request indefinitely, while Cary and Apex staffs continue to work on the details:

Adoption of an ordinance to amend an existing Utility Service Agreement Boundary between the Town of Apex and the Town of Cary that defines a boundary between the two towns to plan appropriately for the future provision of municipal services. (This item was tabled at the May 13, 2004 Council meeting specifically to be placed on the June 24, 2004 council agenda.) **(Tabled indefinitely)**

2. Planning and Zoning Board Consent Agenda *(any planning and zoning board consent agenda item pulled for discussion will be discussed at the beginning of the planning and zoning board's discussion portion of the agenda)*

N/A

3. Town Center Review Commission Consent Agenda *(any town center review commission consent agenda item pulled for discussion will be discussed at the beginning of the town center review commission's discussion portion of the agenda)*

N/A

4. Planning and Development Committee consent agenda, June 17, 2004 *(any committee consent agenda item pulled for discussion will be discussed at the beginning of the committee discussion portion of the agenda)*

a. Request for modification to 100 ft. riparian buffer (EN04-094)

Committee unanimously recommended approval of a request for a modification to the 100 ft. riparian buffer requirement. **(Approved)**

b. Upchurch Farms – Request for Modification of Subdivision Plan Approval Condition (EN04-095)

Committee unanimously recommended approval of modification of subdivision plan approval condition associated with the Upchurch Farms development (98-SP-027-SK). **(Approved)**

c. Development of a Trailhead on the American Tobacco Trail by Wake County (PR04-40)
Committee unanimously recommended approval of a trailhead to be located on the Raftery tract in west Cary. **(Approved)**

C. RECOGNITIONS, REPORTS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Recognized Town staff for their gold medal award for the Quality of Real Life Video.

D. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 1. 04-AC-003 (Triangle Aquatic Center):** Request by the applicant, Bass, Nixon & Kennedy, Inc., on behalf of the owner, Triangle Aquatic Center, to approve an activity center concept plan to construct an indoor aquatic center of approximately 77,000 square feet, a conceptual office/retail area, and a residential area. The property contains 21.56 acres and is zoned Office and Institutional. The property is located at the eastern end of Convention Drive , approximately 2,130 feet southeast of the corner of Cary Towne Boulevard and Southeast Maynard Road, east of Cary Towne Center. **(Referred to 8/16/04 Planning & Zoning Board meeting)**

E. PUBLIC SPEAKS OUT (one hour time limit)

N/A

F. PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD REPORT (discussion items)

N/A

G. TOWN CENTER REVIEW COMMISSION (discussion items)

N/A

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS (discussion items)

1. Planning and Development Committee, June 17, 2004

a. Off Premise “Open House” Signs (PL04-067)

Committee recommended forwarding this item for discussion at the June 24, 2004 Council meeting. Council member Roseland recommended that Mr. Sinclair of the Raleigh Regional Association of Realtors, to collect relevant data pertaining to this issue to present to Council at the June 24 meeting. **(Directed staff to work with the real estate community to develop pilot program details; staff will bring the details of the program back to a future council meeting)**

b. 2503 Ten Ten Road – Request Waiver of Thoroughfare Improvements and Right-of-way Dedication (EN04-086)

Committee unanimously recommended forwarding this item to Council for discussion at the June 24, 2004 Council meeting. Former Governor Jim Holshouser was present to address his client’s request to waive thoroughfare improvements and right-of-way dedication associated with anticipated site plan submission for car wash addition to the site. **(Approved staff recommendation to waive road widening requirements and that ultimate right-of-way for Penny Road and Ten Ten Road be dedicated with any site plan submittal for the property.)**

I. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

1. Consideration of allowing exceptions to the Alternate Day Watering Ordinance for turf establishment (This item was tabled at the June 9, 2004 Operations Committee meeting) **(Approved staff recommendation to use self-registration for exceptions to the alternate day watering ordinance to allow three weeks of daily watering for the establishment of new sod, of newly seeded turf areas, and for re-seeding of existing turf areas during**

the appropriate seasons [warm season grasses - May 15 to Aug. 15; cool season grasses - Sept. 15 to Nov. 15]. A phone in registration program will be used until staff develops an on-line program.)

2. Consideration of adoption of the 2005 Budget and the proposed changes to the budget. **(Adopted)**
3. Consideration of adoption of a resolution relinquishing Extraterritorial Jurisdiction over property to be included as part of the Copperleaf Subdivision. **(Approved)**

J. LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Closed session was called.

K. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Please contact the Cary Town Clerk with any questions about this agenda. The e-mail address is sue.rowland@townofcary.org, and the phone number is (919) 460-4941. Visit our Web site at www.townofcary.org for more detailed information about each agenda item.

Refer to [Cary TV 11](#) for the rebroadcast schedule.



Appendix C

Town of Cary, North Carolina, Planning and Development Committee Recommendations

**Town of Cary, North Carolina
Planning and Development Committee**

RECOMMENDATIONS

June 17, 2004

Interim Council Chambers

Committee chair Nels Roseland called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. Council member Julie Robison was present. Council member Michael Joyce was absent (excused). The meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

A. Consent Agenda

1. **Request for modification to 100 ft. riparian buffer (EN04-094)**
Committee unanimously recommended approval of a request for a modification to the 100 ft. riparian buffer requirement.
2. **Upchurch Farms – Request for Modification of Subdivision Plan Approval Condition (EN04-095)**
Committee unanimously recommended approval of modification of subdivision plan approval condition associated with the Upchurch Farms development (98-SP-027-SK).
3. **Development of a Trailhead on the American Tobacco Trail by Wake County (PR04-40)**
Committee unanimously recommended approval of a trailhead to be located on the Raftery tract in west Cary.

B. For Discussion

1. **Off Premise “Open House” Signs (PL04-067)**
Committee recommended forwarding this item for discussion at the June 24, 2004 Council meeting. Council member Roseland encouraged Mr. Sinclair of the Raleigh Regional Association of Realtors, to collect relevant data pertaining to this issue to present to Council at the June 24 meeting.
2. **2503 Ten Ten Road – Request Waiver of Thoroughfare Improvements and Right-of-way Dedication (EN04-086)**
Committee unanimously recommended forwarding this item to Council for discussion at the June 24, 2004 Council meeting. Former Governor Jim Holshouser was present to address his client’s request to waive thoroughfare improvements and right-of-way dedication associated with anticipated site plan submission for car wash addition to the site.

Appendix D

Town of Cary, North Carolina, Council Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Cary Town Council
MINUTES
Thursday, June 24, 2004
6:30 PM
Temporary Council Chambers
Herb Young Community Center
101 Wilkinson Avenue, Cary, N.C.

PRESENT: Mayor Ernie McAlister, Mayor Pro Tem Jack Smith, and Council Members Marla Dorrel, Mike Joyce, Jennifer Robinson and Julie Robison; Council Member Roseland arrived late, and his arrival time is noted in the minutes.

A. COMMENCEMENT

1. Call to Order

Mayor McAlister called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Ceremonial Opening

Council Member Joyce provided the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. CONSENT AGENDA

[Link to <http://www.townofcary.org/agenda/councilmin04/cm062404b.htm>]

C. RECOGNITIONS, REPORTS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Mayor McAlister announced that the Raleigh Public Relations Society awarded the Town of Cary's Quality of Real Life economic development video the gold medal in the audio-video category. This was a statewide competition that was judged by communication professionals in California. This video was done in-house in cooperation with the Cary Chamber and with editing assistance from SAS. He congratulated Town of Cary Public Information Officer Susan Moran and her videographer staff – Dave Wolk and Peyote Perryman – for their great work.

Mayor McAlister requested, and council concurred, to address agenda item H.1.b. at this time.

2503 Ten Ten Road – Request Waiver of Thoroughfare Improvements and Right-of-way Dedication (EN04-086)

Committee unanimously recommended forwarding this item to Council for discussion at the June 24, 2004 Council meeting. Former Governor Jim Holshouser was present to address his client's request to waive thoroughfare improvements and right-of-way dedication associated with anticipated site plan submission for car wash addition to the site.

The Upchurch Farms development, located at the intersection of Jenks Carpenter Road and Collins Road, was originally approved as a sketch plan in March 1999. The plan specified that the project was to be built in five phases consisting of approximately 132 single family units and 237 multi-family units. One of the approval conditions associated with the development plan was "Only construction of Phase One (100 units) may occur until the completion of the High House Road improvements as proposed in the FY2000 budget request." Because the High House Road improvements was at least two years from being completed (estimated completion was Fall 2004), the developer's request was approved to allow construction of 90 additional units September 19, 2002. The developer is requesting that the condition be modified to allow construction of 136 additional units.

[Details on road widening, bridge improvements, and traffic analysis]

The development of 136 dwelling units will increase traffic less than two percent on High House Road or Davis Drive. The traffic volume increase on Jenks Carpenter Road is 14%. The increase in traffic volume on Leonard Christian Road is 5%.

Staff would like to point out that the original plan was approved prior to the current APF ordinance. Staff feels that the original 100 unit limit was fairly arbitrary. Based on this and the delayed High House Road project, staff feels that it can support allowing an additional 136 units to be constructed in FY2005 or after. This would allow the developer to get certificates of occupancy on a total of 326 units prior to the High House Road widening and bridge improvements being completed.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends modification of the original condition to read, “Only construction of 326 units may occur until the completion of the High House Road widening and bridge improvements.”

Refer to **Exhibit A** attached to and incorporated in these minutes for a letter from Greg Ferguson.

[Summary of discussion among staff, council members, and developer’s representative related to developer’s proposal. Sample items:]

Mr. Holshouser stated the staff made an effort to reach a reasonable compromise. He stated his client wants to sell the property, but the person will not buy the property if they must dedicate right-of-way. He stated either way leaves the Town without the right-of-way. He stated if they lose the sale it will cost them a lot of money.

Mrs. Robison stated Penny Road will be widened eventually. She stated allowing right-of-way requirements to be waived at this time, while knowing that it could be a decade before Penny Road is widened, puts the property owner and the Town in a position where it would cause duress to the property owner if the Town decides to widen Penny Road. In addition, she stated the acquisition of right-of-way would be much more expensive. She stated it does not seem prudent to allow this difficult situation to occur.

ACTION: Mrs. Robison made a motion to approve the staff recommendation and to waive any waiting requirement that may be associated with a follow-up request on this particular site. Mrs. Robison provided the second, and council granted unanimous approval. (Mr. Roseland was absent for this vote.)

Mayor McAlister requested, and the council concurred to move immediately to item I.3. on this agenda.

Consideration of adoption of a resolution relinquishing extraterritorial jurisdiction over property to be included as part of the Copperleaf Subdivision.

The proposed Copperleaf subdivision is located in the western portion of the Town’s planning jurisdiction south of Green Level Church Road. The majority of the property is under Wake County’s jurisdiction, with a portion subject to the Cary extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction (ETJ).

The residential subdivision plan for Copperleaf is now being reviewed by Wake County. This project is being designed to accommodate Town utilities and will be annexed into the Town of Cary under an arrangement previously approved by Town Council on April 15, 2004 (see staff report PL04-055, which is included in the April 15, 2004 minutes).

Request

Considering that the land is under the planning and zoning authority of two units of government, Mr. Lacy Reaves, with the law firm of Kennedy Covington, representing the developers of this project, has

asked Council to consider relinquishing the Town’s extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction (ETJ) that applies to three separate properties that are in the Cary ETJ. This will enable the entire site to be reviewed by Wake County. Parcels 1 and 2 are owned by Rosabelle Johnson & Ernest L. Johnson while Parcel 3 is owned by J. Michael Edwards & Lelon Calvin Alexander.

[Summary of procedure to be followed]

Staff supports the request since this property is intended to be annexed by Cary after the subdivision plan is approved by Wake County but before any individual residential lots may be recorded and sold. One concern that staff has identified, however, is the possibility that these properties are removed from the Town’s ETJ yet the project does not gain final subdivision approval by Wake County. This would allow these three properties to be removed from the ETJ without a way to bring them back under Town authority without going through the entire process to again establish ETJ. To address this concern, we recommend that the effective date of this action be set as the date upon which Wake County approves the subdivision plan and accepts the territory back under County jurisdiction.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the Resolution to Relinquish ETJ for the three tracts within the Cary extraterritorial jurisdiction that are proposed to be developed as part of the Copperleaf Subdivision.

[Full text of proposed Resolution to Relinquish Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) over Three Parcels in the Proposed Copperleaf Subdivision, and accompanying map]

[Summary of discussion points. Sample items:]

Mr. Joyce asked if the Town can mandate that buyers of property in the subdivision know they will be annexed so it is not seen as a forced annexation. Mr. Barker stated the Town will require voluntarily annexation for utility connection prior to any plats being recorded. He stated this will not impact new homeowners.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith asked if there will be anything in writing to prevent this development from building to county standards. Mr. Henderson, Town Attorney, stated that Cary may only relinquish the ETJ if Wake County approves it, and Wake County may only approve it with the final plat submission. He stated the final plat submission will require municipal water and sewer.

ACTION: Ms. Dorrel made a motion to adopt the resolution to relinquish extraterritorial jurisdiction over three parcels in the Copperleaf Subdivision as presented by staff. Mrs. Robison provided the second, and council granted unanimous approval. (Mr. Roseland was absent for this vote.)

D. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. **04-AC-003 (Triangle Aquatic Center): Request by the applicant, Bass, Nixon & Kennedy, Inc., on behalf of the owner, Triangle Aquatic Center, to approve an activity center concept plan to construct an indoor aquatic center of approximately 77,000 square feet, a conceptual office/retail area, and a residential area. The property contains 21.56 acres and is zoned Office and Institutional. The property is located at the eastern end of Convention Drive, approximately 2,130 feet southeast of the corner of Cary Towne Boulevard and Southeast Maynard Road, east of Cary Towne Center.**

[Full text from the seven-page application]

Nels Roseland arrived at 7:06 p.m. He was officially absent for all votes prior to this item.

[Summary of discussion points on this topic made by council, neighborhood residents, representatives of Cary Towne Center (shopping mall), neighboring business owners, and project representatives. Sample items:]

Mrs. Lewis of the planning department stated the plan includes the conceptual office plan to the north of the facility as well as a Residential use to the east. She noted that a valid protest petition was filed on the case, and she stated the neighborhood is concerned with the connection of this site through to Champion Drive by vehicular access. She stated other than this one issue, the neighborhood is strongly in favor of the aquatic center.

Ms. Dorrel asked if the site plan is being considered. Mrs. Lewis stated the first step is the activity center concept approval, and if that is granted, then the applicant would seek site plan approval for the aquatic center and development that is a part of the aquatic center, and other development within the activity center concept plan would also need separate site plan approval. She stated the applicant is taking advantage of the activity center concept plan to develop the property in a manner that the underlying zoning process would not permit.

Mr. Patrick Anderson, general manager of Cary Towne Center, supports the center. He stated it will provide economic benefit to Cary. He noted the publicity has already had a positive impact on the mall.

Mr. Glenn Harder, executive leader of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, stated they support the facility, which will be adjacent to their building.

Mr. Jeff Gillette is pleased with the aquatic proposal, but he is opposed to the connection of Champion Drive. He urged the council to direct staff to send future site plans through the council approval process so that council will have the opportunity to address the Champion Drive connection. He suggested that this connection be replaced with a pedestrian or bike path to provide access to the neighborhood to the facility.

Mr. Tom Karches stated he lived in Dallas, Texas in an urban area in downtown on a connector street that connected two major thoroughfares. He stated it was a horrible traffic and safety situation.

Mr. John McBride stated he lives at the end of Ivy Lane, and is surrounded by 21 wooded acres full of all kinds of wildlife, and they enjoy their quality of life. He stated if Champion Drive is connected, he thinks burglaries and larcenies will increase, and traffic will result in a need for speed bumps.

ACTION: Referred to August 16, 2004 Planning and Zoning Board meeting

E. PUBLIC SPEAKS OUT (one hour time limit)

No one spoke during this portion of the meeting.

F. PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD REPORT (discussion items)

There were no Planning and Zoning Board discussion items.

G. TOWN CENTER REVIEW COMMISSION (discussion items)

There were no Town Center Review Commission discussion items.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS (discussion items)

[Summary of presentation on research in connection with relaxing the town ordinance that regulates placement of “open house” signs by realtors offering homes for sale]

Conclusion

Based on the above information, staff does not see the need to change the sign ordinance to allow off site open house signs. Cary has a strong real estate market and continues to be a leader in sales and low in number of days on the market. The main function of the “open house” opportunity is to look for new clients for the broker and provide a perception that the broker is actively working to sell the home when in reality very few homes are sold via open houses. We do not believe that the benefit that might be gained by allowing such signs outweighs the impact on the overall community in terms of additional clutter and the enforcement activity needed to ensure compliance. And while the realtor community has offered to provide educational sessions and police their own industry, this will not address other open houses conducted by individuals who sell their own homes.

However, should Council still be interested in allowing off site open house signs, staff has provided an option below. We would recommend that any option be implemented for a trial period (say, one year) and reevaluated before making the change permanent.

“Open House” sign option

Time: 11:00 am to 6:00 p.m. only the day of the open house

Where: Private property only

Number: Two off site signs per open house

Number at intersection: Only one sign per intersection

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends denial of the request for approval of off-site signs for real estate “open houses.”

[Summary of discussion concerning the research. Sample items:]

Mrs. Robison stated she is opposed to ignoring enforcement responsibilities. She will support the open house sign option, and she would like to see an enforcement plan such as the one proposed by the realtors association. She stated they have made a genuine offer to work with their members to develop an enforcement plan and to self-police. She would like this to be conditioned by the development of an enforcement plan, because she does not want to burden the staff.

Mr. Joyce is willing to experiment with this pilot program in order to expedite the sale of homes. Mr. Roseland stated the data does not support that there is a problem with the length of time it takes to sell houses (market comparison).

Ms. Tara Lightner, on behalf of the real estate community, stated a one-year pilot program would give a snapshot of the full cycle. She stated the peak month for open houses was May, which had 24 open houses in Cary and its ETJ. She stated at any given time in Cary, 8.1% of the total assessed property value is on the market. She stated the real estate community is willing to work with staff to develop the details of this program.

ACTION: Mrs. Robinson made a motion to direct staff to work with the real estate community and whichever council members wish to participate to more fully develop a pilot program, and once options for that program are devised, staff should bring them back to council. Ms. Dorrel provided the second.

ACTION: Vote was called for on the motion, and council granted unanimous approval.

I. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

1. Consideration of allowing exceptions to the Alternate Day Watering Ordinance for turf establishment. (This item was tabled at the June 9, 2004, Operations Committee meeting.)

At the June 9, 2004, Operations Committee Meeting, Staff reviewed the history of the Alternate Day Watering Ordinance and the inclusion of hand watering for any purpose at anytime. During 2003, exceptions from Alternate Day Watering were discontinued for newly seeded or sodded areas. Staff also told the Operations Committee that it had received expressions of concern from a number of water customers that those Alternate Watering Exceptions should be re-implemented. The Operations Committee asked Staff to develop plans for re-implementing Alternate Day Water Exceptions.

Staff has considered a variety of plans: Basically, there were “no registration” exceptions and “registered” exceptions. The “no registration” exception could cause some confusion among customers about the program; how long they can water, who is allowed to do this (for other customers seeing it occur), and lots of staff time to track down customers to determine if they are using a watering exception or violating the Alternate Day Watering Ordinance. With “Registered” exceptions, any town staff member will be able to consult a database and know whether a watering exception was registered or not.

Staff feels strongly that anyone wishing a watering exception should register with the town so that when calls are received from other customer about a site being watered everyday, it is as easy for staff to determine the location of the watering exception as it is for the customer to register a watering exception.

The proposed “Registration” program would start as a phone-in program, until the Technology Services Department develops the on-line registration tools. In about three weeks, Cary water customers will be able to register Alternate Day Water Exceptions on-line. A sample of the information for that registration is included in an attachment.

<p>Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends using self registration for exceptions to the Town’s Alternate Day Watering Ordinance to allow three weeks of daily watering for the establishment of new sod, of newly seeded turf areas, and for re-seeding of existing turf areas during the appropriate seasons [warm season grasses – May 15 to Aug 15 / cool season grass – Sept 15 to Nov 15].</p>
--

[Form for citizens to request a waiver from compliance with alternate-day watering rules]

ACTION: Mrs. Robinson made a motion to approve staff’s recommendation to allow exceptions using a self registration process. Mr. Roseland provided the second, and council granted unanimous approval.

2. Consideration of adoption of the 2005 Budget.

The following is a list of changes to the FY 2005 Budget, since its original submittal:

CHANGES TO FISCAL YEAR 2005 PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

The FY 2005 Proposed Operating Budget, as modified by the changes that have been identified below, is hereby presented for the Cary Town Council to consider for adoption at its regularly scheduled meeting on June 24, 2004.

[Selected items:]

2. Reduction in General Fund salaries and benefits in the Engineering Department as a result of the reorganization that was presented to and approved by Council via Staff Report EN04-93 at its regularly scheduled meeting on June 10, 2004. The combined total, which includes the full annual savings of the reorganization and the elimination of one position, is \$63,784. The staffing document represented in the ordinance as Attachment B has been modified to reflect the detailed changes as a result of the reorganization.
5. Reduction in General Fund debt service expenses by \$42,828. This update is a result of debt being issued in FY 2004 at a lower amount and a slightly lower interest rate than had been projected for the Fire Department's third aerial ladder unit. These factors served to reduce the related debt service that will be necessary in FY 2005.
8. Increased Utility Fund fees and related revenue projections based on Town Council direction in a work session on June 21, 2004 to reduce the increase of a 7,000 gallon per month residential customer from 18.8% to 17.8%. The specific line items affected include an updated projection of connection fee revenues of \$14,000, new account service charge revenues of \$76,000 based on increasing the fee from \$4 to \$15, and late payment penalties of \$85,000 based on adding a \$5 minimum to the current 1% late fee. These changes reduced the proposed water and sewer base rate by 17 cents from \$2.79 to \$2.62 per month. The Town Council approved a new fee in its regular Council meeting held June 10, 2004, related to Fats, Oils, and Greases (FOG), that also served to increase revenue projections for Fiscal Year 2005. With the additional \$56,400 in projected annual revenue, the proposed sewer rate decreased by 2 cents from \$3.75 to \$3.73 per one thousand gallons.

CHANGES TO FISCAL YEAR 2005 PROPOSED CAPITAL BUDGET AND TEN YEAR PLAN

[Selected items:]

The FY 2005 Proposed Capital Budget and Ten Year Plan, as modified by the changes that have been identified below, is hereby presented for the Cary Town Council to consider for adoption at its regularly scheduled meeting on June 24, 2004.

1. Removed the North Cary Community Center – Phase I project from the FY 2005 Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources Capital Improvements Budget. The Town of Cary Town Council decided during the May 12, 2004, Capital Improvements Budget work session that they were not prepared to dedicate funding to this project at this time. The \$435,000 requested in FY 2005 was to be directed toward design work associated with the new center. Given the budget constraints surrounding FY 2005, Council opted to push this funding request back one fiscal year to FY 2006.
3. Added a \$1,500,000 appropriation to the Sewer Capital Improvements Budget to fund capital related work that may be performed at the North Cary Water Reclamation Facility (NCWRF) resulting from the Odor Control Study being conducted for this site. The Town of Cary initiated the Odor Control Study for this facility in late spring 2004. Specific recommendations from the study on how to best mitigate odor issues at the facility are expected to be brought before Council in the summer of 2004.

[Summary of discussion. Selected items:]

Ms. Dorrel wants several budget work sessions scheduled in advance next year with the idea that they can be canceled if they are not needed, and she wants all of them televised. She stated although she does not agree with every decision made by the majority of council regarding the budget, she does feel the overall product is a good budget.

Mrs. Robison stated council had to make many difficult choices in this budget in order to maintain the tax rate.

Mrs. Robison urged the council to get involved much earlier in the next budget cycle and in shaping the foundation. She is in favor of creating mechanisms for more citizen involvement.

Mayor McAlister and all the council members thanked the staff for their hard work on the budget.

ACTION: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to approve the budget with all the changes documented (within these minutes). Mr. Joyce provided the second, and council granted unanimous approval.

The final approved budget incorporating all the changes herein is attached to and incorporated in these minutes as **Exhibit F**.

3. Consideration of adoption of a resolution relinquishing extraterritorial jurisdiction over property to be included as part of the Copperleaf Subdivision.

This item was handled after the consent agenda.

J. LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

ACTION: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made the following motion for closed session, which was seconded by Mrs. Robison and unanimously approved by council:

Pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5), closed session was called to establish or to instruct the Town staff concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the Town in negotiating the price and other material terms of contracts or proposed contracts for the acquisition of the SAS Soccer Park by lease.

K. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: At 9:48 p.m., Mrs. Robison made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Dorrel provided the second, and council granted unanimous approval.

Appendix E

Town of Cary, North Carolina, Performance Measurement Tables for the Town Clerk and Fire Department

TOWN CLERK DIVISION

Additional information about the Town Clerk’s Department may be obtained by calling Sue Rowland, Town Clerk, (919) 469-4011 or through e-mail at srowland@ci.cary.nc.us.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Town Clerk’s Office is to prepare and maintain complete and accurate records of Cary Town Council proceedings, to serve as the custodian of all permanent records, to provide staff support to the members of the Cary Town Council, and to furnish information and assistance to citizens.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Town Council Support

- Prepares agendas and minutes for all Cary Town Council regular meetings, special meetings, emergency meetings and work sessions.
- Provides staff support to the members of the Cary Town Council.
- Responsible for maintaining records for all Town boards/commissions appointed by Council, solicits applications for citizen advisory groups, and ensures that the Town Code is administered appropriately in the appointment procedures.

Citizen Services

- Serves as a liaison with the citizens and the Town Council, ensuring that correspondence and phone messages are routed to the appropriate persons for prompt response.
- Conducts research for citizens and internal departments.
- Maintains records of ownership for the Town-owned cemetery.
- Responsible for ensuring that going out of business sales are conducted properly.

KEY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Ensure 90% of all agendas and supporting documents are available the week prior to the Town Council meetings.
- Process 100% of all action agenda (synopsis of action taken at council meeting) the day following Council meetings.
- Ensure 90% of all minutes available from previous Council meetings are available the week prior to the next Council meeting (via Internet).
- Process 90% of official documents within two working days after a Council meeting.
- Ensure 100% of all minutes are error-free.

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

<u>Performance Measure</u>	<u>Actual FY 2001</u>	<u>Estimated FY 2002</u>	<u>Projected FY 2003</u>
% of agendas available within time frame	95%	95%	95%
% of action agenda processed the day following Council meetings	100%	100%	100%
% of minutes available the week prior to Council meetings	95%	95%	95%
% of time documents processed within two days	100%	100%	100%
% of Council minutes error-free	100%	100%	100%

KEY WORKLOAD INDICATORS

<u>Workload Indicator</u>	<u>Actual FY 2001</u>	<u>Estimated FY 2002</u>	<u>Projected FY 2003</u>
Number of Council related meetings attended	14	37	45
Number of agendas prepared	14	37	45
Number of sets of minutes prepared	14	37	45
Resolutions processed	146	332	200
Ordinances processed	22	67	30
Contracts processed	142	272	200

ACTIVITY HISTORY

Fund Number: 10-4130					
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Actual FY 1999</u>	<u>Actual FY 2000</u>	<u>Actual FY 2001</u>	<u>Estimated FY 2002</u>	<u>Budget FY 2003</u>
Personnel Services	\$78,775	\$84,232	\$84,067	\$94,997	\$103,891
Operations and Maintenance	\$23,579	\$20,151	\$37,142	\$60,232	\$33,200
Capital Outlay	----	----	---	---	---
Total	\$102,354	\$104,383	\$121,209	\$155,229	\$137,091
Authorized FTEs	2	2	2	2	2

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Additional information about the Fire Department may be obtained by calling Wayne House, Fire Chief, at (919) 469-4056 or through e-mail at whouse@ci.cary.nc.us.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Suppression

- Provides emergency response to control fires and mitigates hazardous conditions throughout the Town.
- Provides emergency medical care for citizens and visitors when needed.
- Provides technical rescue services for confined space, extrication, high-angle, trench, and water emergencies.
- Responds to 4,634 calls for service annually for emergency response, technical rescue services, and emergency medical care.

Risk Management

- Responsible for fire code application and enforcement, building and site plan review, and public fire and life safety education.
- Conducts over 3,559 inspections and over 19,909 public education contacts annually for risk management activities.

Training/Safety

- Coordinates a continuing education program in order to maintain employee certifications.
- Ensures compliance with related safety regulations and standards.

FY 2002 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) approved our annual *Accreditation Compliance Report*.
- Placed the second Special Response Unit (SRU) in service.
- Reorganized resources to improve rescue services delivery and training logistics.
- Implemented first phase of pre-empting traffic signals for fire and police vehicles responding to emergencies.

KEY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- Respond to 90% of emergency calls for service within five minutes.
- Comply 100% with the State Fire Code Inspection Schedule.
- Review all building and site plans within 3-day turn-around.
- Ensure that 100% of certificate of occupancy inspections conducted by fire inspectors comply with initial plan reviews.
- Strive to provide that 85% of all employees are rated above standard in job knowledge based on annual fire training objectives.
- Complete and implement criteria in the annual *Accreditation Compliance Report*.
- Contact 20% of the Town's population about fire and life safety techniques.

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

<u>Performance Measure</u>	<u>Actual FY 2001</u>	<u>Estimated FY 2002</u>	<u>Projected FY 2003</u>
% of emergency calls responded within 5 minutes	87%	91%	90%
% inspection schedule compliance	100%	95.5%	100%
% plans reviewed within 3 day turn-around	100%	100%	100%
% CO inspections comply with initial plans	100%	100%	100%
% employees rated proficient in job knowledge	81%	95%	85%
Complete and implement the criteria established in the annual <i>Accreditation Compliance Report</i>	N/A	Y	Y
% Town population contacted regarding fire and life safety (99.909 est.)	23%	19%	29%

KEY WORKLOAD INDICATORS

<u>Workload Indicator</u>	<u>Actual FY 2001</u>	<u>Estimated FY 2002</u>	<u>Projected FY 2003</u>
Number of Emergency Calls	4,470	4,634	5,250
Number of Inspections	3,819	3,559	4,053
Public Education Contacts	33,014	19,049	29,800
Annual Fire Loss in Dollars	\$915,000	\$1,461,000	\$1,000,000
Fire Loss per Capita	\$9.50	\$15.18	\$10.00
Number of Training Hours	52,092	44,880	52,800

ACTIVITY HISTORY

Fund Number: 10-5300

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Actual FY 1999</u>	<u>Actual FY 2000</u>	<u>Actual FY 2001</u>	<u>Estimated FY 2002</u>	<u>Budget FY 2003</u>
Personnel Services	\$5,326,877	\$6,425,405	\$7,719,277	\$9,206,970	\$10,260,560
Operations and Maintenance	\$721,482	\$850,614	\$1,089,301	\$996,267	\$1,101,489
Capital Outlay	\$51,975	\$101,466	\$77,007	\$196,123	\$115,692
Total	\$6,100,334	\$7,377,485	\$8,885,585	\$10,399,360	\$11,437,539
Authorized FTEs	145.00	178.00	197.00	197.0	213.0

SIGNIFICANT BUDGET AND SERVICE LEVEL CHANGES BEYOND CURRENT LEVELS

- Our FY 2003 budget request includes funding for one (1) staff person to plan, organize, and deliver ongoing fire, rescue, and EMS skills training for operative staff.
- Our FY 2003 budget request includes funding for an aerial ladder truck and fifteen (15) personnel to compliment existing aerial companies to our goal of three aerial companies.

Appendix F

Town of Cary, North Carolina, Boards and Commissions



Promotional Video



Town of Cary Boards & Commissions

- [Economic Dev.](#)
- [Info. Services](#)
- [Parks/Rec/Culture](#)
- [Planning & Zoning](#)
- [Public Art](#)
- [Sister Cities](#)
- [Town Ctr. Review](#)
- [Utility Adjustment](#)
- [Zoning Adjustment](#)

Town of Cary has nine Boards and Commissions. Each is unique in its size, meeting schedule, and specific function; however, the overall mission is the same: To make Cary a place in which we can be proud to live, work and play.

Citizens who serve on these boards and commissions perform a community service using their skills, interests and initiatives to make the difference. These volunteers believe that Cary should indeed become "My Cary" for each of us.

Whether you are interested in recreational activities, cultural events, technology issues or land use practices, the Town of Cary has opportunities for you to volunteer to share your time and talents.

Applications are accepted each year from the 1st of September through the 1st of December for upcoming vacancies for the following year. Please e-mail karen.gray@townofcary.org or call (919) 469-4011 with questions.

Community Service At Its Best!

[Town Homepage](#)

Appendix G

Town of Cary, North Carolina, Planning and Zoning Board

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD

Meets the 3rd Monday of each month, 6:30 p.m. Please see the Town of Cary [Calendar](#) to confirm meeting dates, times, and locations.

The Planning and Zoning Board is an advisory body to the Town Council and deals with land use, zoning and development issues. In addition to attending monthly Planning and Zoning Board meetings, these board members are also expected to attend public hearings on plans, rezonings, and ordinance amendments held jointly with the Town Council. The Planning and Zoning Board consists of 10 members appointed by the Town Council, 1 of whom the Town Council designates as chairperson. Eight members are appointed from within Cary's corporate limits and 2 members are appointed from the Town's extraterritorial jurisdiction. A description of the duties and powers of this board can be found in the [Cary Code of Ordinances](#). (See Chapter 2 under Land Development Ordinance.).

Questions concerning the Planning and Zoning Board should be directed to the Town of Cary Planning Department staff by calling (919) 469-4082 or by emailing jeff.ulma@townofcary.org or brenda.culbertson@townofcary.org.

Anyone interested in serving on the Planning and Zoning Board should complete an on-line [application](#). Once this application is completed, it may be submitted electronically to the Town Clerk's Office. Anyone with questions about this application should contact the Town Clerk's Office by emailing karen.gray@townofcary.org or by calling (919) 469-4011

[2005 Rezoning/PDD/ACCP Schedule](#)

[Current Membership Roster](#)

[Current Agenda](#)

[Minutes](#)

[2000 Rezoning Cases](#)

[2001 Rezoning Cases](#)

[2002 Rezoning Cases](#)

[2003 Rezoning Cases](#)

[2004 Rezoning Cases](#)

[2005 Rezoning Cases](#)

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Appendix H

**City of Rancho Cordova, California, Strategic Planning
Retreat, March 2003**

CITY OF RANCHO CORDOVA
STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

March 21, 2003 * Sheriff Dept. Rockingham Substation

Marilyn Snider, Facilitator – Snider and Associates (510) 531-2904 or (916) 483-9802

Gail Tsuboi, Recorder – Tsuboi Design (925) 376-9151

MISSION STATEMENT

The City of Rancho Cordova serves a diverse, growing community and provides innovative, efficient customer-oriented city services to support and enhance civic involvement, livable neighborhoods and economic opportunities.

ONE YEAR GOALS

March 21, 2003 – March 15, 2004

not in priority order

- ▶ **Develop and begin to implement a Two-Year Plan for providing municipal services**
 - ▶ **Ensure quality development**
 - ▶ **Ensure financial stability**
 - ▶ **Enhance civic involvement**
 - ▶ **Improve community image**

SIX-MONTH STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

March 21, 2003 through September 15, 2003

ONE-YEAR GOAL: DEVELOP AND BEGIN TO IMPLEMENT A TWO-YEAR PLAN FOR PROVIDING MUNICIPAL SERVICES

SIX-MONTH STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. By May 15, 2003, Interim City Manager Chuck Cate – lead, Transition Coordinator Curt Haven and Transition Consultant Mike Oliver will present to the City Council for its consideration options and recommendations for which city services should remain with the county, be provided by outside contract or by city employees for FY 2003-2004.
2. By September 15, 2003, the City Manager, working with city staff, will develop and present to the City Council for its consideration options and recommendations for which city services should remain with the county, be provided by outside contract or by city employees for FY 2004-2005.

ONE-YEAR GOAL: ENSURE QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

SIX-MONTH STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. By August 1, 2003, the City Attorney will present to the City Council for discussion the pros and cons of serving as a Redevelopment Agency.
2. By August 15, 2003, an urban planner and the City Attorney will conduct a study to examine the county's zoning code to determine what parts of the code are applicable in Rancho Cordova.
3. By September 15, 2003, an urban planner and the City Attorney will conduct a City Council workshop to discuss the level of development standards that are needed to ensure the quality of development for the future.
4. By September 15, 2003, the Urban Planner will present to the City Council, as an initial step in the city's General Plan process, a conceptual Plan for Future Development, including options, based on a community analysis and a series of community visioning workshops and projects already in the pipeline.
5. By September 15, 2003, the Financial Planning consultant will develop and present to the City Council a financial model/template to evaluate new development and to identify service costs and available offsetting revenue sources (residential, commercial, retail).

ONE-YEAR GOAL: **ENSURE FINANCIAL STABILITY**

SIX-MONTH STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. By April 15, 2003, the Transition Consultant, Interim City Manager, City Attorney Steve Meyers and the Transition Coordinator will develop and recommend to the City Council for action strategies to ensure that Sunrise Douglas/Sunridge development financial planning is structured to pay its fair share for city services.
2. By May 15, 2003, the Transition Consultant – lead, Interim City Manager and Transition Coordinator will develop a Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis including a 10-year revenue and expenditure model addressing revenue neutrality and actual costs and revenues.
3. By May 15, 2003, the Interim City Manager will obtain from the county their plan of services and costs proposed to be provided to the City of Rancho Cordova for FY 2003-2004.
4. By June 1, 2003, the Transition Consultant – lead, City Attorney, Transition Coordinator and Interim City Manager will develop and present to the City Council new sources of revenue that include work with congressional delegations, grants, CDBG entitlement, licensing fees in all departments, franchise fees, etc.
5. By July 1, 2003, the Transition Coordinator - lead, Interim City Manager, Transition Consultant and City Attorney will analyze all opportunities and responsibilities to participate in the regional bodies which either provide targeted funding or require expenditures for membership (Regional Sanitation, STA, Sacramento Cable, etc.).
6. By September 15, 2003, a financial consultant will present to the City Council ways in which government is financed in California, how development is related to that, and a cost-of-services model.

ONE-YEAR GOAL: **ENHANCE CIVIC INVOLVEMENT**

SIX-MONTH STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. By April 15, 2003, the Interim City Manager will formally request the Sacramento Cable Commission to provide the cost, timing and necessary improvements to provide live broadcasts of City Council meetings.
2. By June 1, 2003, the Interim City Manager will present to the City Council for discussion the pros and cons of establishing a City Planning Commission.

3. By July 10, 2003, the Interim City Manager will issue an RFP to solicit proposals for issuing a citywide newsletter on both paper and online, with options for monthly and quarterly basis, for submission to the City by Sept. 1, 2003.
4. By August 15, 2003, the Interim City Manager and the Transition Coordinator will develop and present to the City Council a catalogue of possible rules, commissions and committees for community participation.

ONE-YEAR GOAL: IMPROVE COMMUNITY IMAGE

SIX-MONTH STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

1. By June 15, 2003, Interim City Manager – lead and Transitional Coordinator will open and staff a city hall at 3121 Gold Canal.
2. By July 1, 2003, the Transition Coordinator will develop postcards for sale having photos of Rancho Cordova.
3. By July 1, 2003, the Interim City Manager, working with a consultant, will present to the City Council for consideration a city logo and color scheme for city street signs and vehicles, including police cars.
4. By July 1, 2003, the City Council will identify potential locations for four community signs promised by a local sign company.
5. By September 15, 2003, the City Manager, working with a consultant, will compile and analyze the Rancho Cordova Boundary 2000 census data set to support planning decisions and present to the City Council
6. By September 1, 2003, the Interim City Manager will submit an application for a federal grant to replace existing street signs and to create street banners noting the City of Rancho Cordova.
7. By September 15, 2003, the Interim City Manager will present to the City Council for consideration the criteria for siting a future City Hall and/or civic center giving consideration to concerns such as mass transit, the City's geographic center, etc.

NEXT STEPS/FOLLOW-UP PROCESS

WHEN	WHO	WHAT
by March 25, 2003	City Council Management Team	Review the retreat record.
April 7 2003	City Council	Present the Strategic Plan to the public at a City Council meeting.
Monthly	City Council	Review progress on the goals and objectives and revise objectives (add, amend and/or delete), as needed.
Monthly	Interim City Manager	Distribute the Strategic Plan Update.
Sept. 26, 2003 8:30 – 4:00	City Council Management Team	Strategic Planning Retreat for a more thorough assessment of progress on the goals and objectives. Identify Core Values for the City. Set objectives for the next six months.

WHAT'S GOING WELL WITH THE CITY OF RANCHO CORDOVA?

[Brainstormed List]

- Great management team
- Redevelopment of Folsom Blvd.
- The five people on the city council have known and worked with each other for years
- We have a heavy rail line
- Polite, focused and well-intentioned leadership
- Highway 50
- We have a high tech infrastructure
- Focus on the community by new developers
- The city has a place for the council to meet and the city to exist
- We are welcomed as a participant jurisdiction by other jurisdictions in the region
- Strong Chamber of Commerce
- Citizens keep volunteering to do things
- The local newspaper, *The Grapevine*, is very supportive
- We have the American River Parkway and proximity to the river
- Strong church community
- Large retail base - we're valuable to the county
- The council has a very strong information base and a strong base of experience
- Large and growing job base
- Strong community organizations
- We have hotels, a place for people and businesses to come
- Everything is close - a good location
- Community involvement
- Cohesive city council
- Light rail pushing well
- Economic and ethnic diversity
- Active service clubs
- The City website

WHAT'S NOT GOING AS WELL AS YOU WOULD LIKE WITH THE CITY?

[Brainstormed List]

- Lack of adequate information from the county on pending planning projects
- Not enough citizen participation at council meetings
- Citywide infrastructure is inadequate
- Negative consequences of new growth on traffic and infrastructure
- Perception/image by outside communities
- Highway 50 divides the community
- Lack of move-up housing
- We're a linear city - no downtown
- Financial challenges - lack of a 10-Year Financial Plan
- Lack of water supply and water contamination
- Have not engaged people who have volunteered
- Not enough information on services and related costs for the next 2 fiscal years
- Decaying homes in old neighborhoods
- Traffic congestion
- Irregular city boundaries built on fiscal decisions
- No General Plan
- No citywide sense of community identity
- Lack of participation by a lot of ethnic groups
- No place to go, e.g. a restaurant hub
- Community was stagnant for 20 years - no retail or residential growth

EXTERNAL FACTORS/TRENDS THAT WILL/MIGHT HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE CITY IN THE COMING YEAR

[Brainstormed List]

- Construction in Northern California is on fire
- Improving real estate values
- Community support
- Regional connections that we didn't have before when we weren't a city
- Growth of Mather Airport
- Growing network of cities in the county that could provide us with support

EXTERNAL FACTORS/TRENDS THAT WILL/MIGHT HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE CITY IN THE COMING YEAR

[Brainstormed List]

- The county retains jurisdiction over Mather
- State legislation related to revenue sharing
- Other airports taking business away from Mather
- Growth of the Highway 80 corridor
- Shift in services from state and county to the city without accompanying dollars
- Revenue neutrality

BRAINSTORMED ONE-YEAR GOALS:

[Brainstormed master list from which the One-Year Goals were developed]

- Enhance civic involvement
- Attract higher quality retailers
- Finalize a Two-Year Plan for providing municipal services
- Initiate a Ten-Year Financial Plan
- Create a vital downtown
- Initiate a process for preparing the state-mandated General Plan
- Develop a plan for a future city center
- Enhance the community's regional image
- Ensure quality development
- Develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- Lessen traffic congestion

Appendix I

City of Longmont, Colorado, 2004 City Council Retreat Letter of Invitation and Agenda

January 13, 2004

Mayor and Council Members,

On January 30, we will come together at the Annual City Council Retreat. This annual gathering allows the City Council and staff to examine important issues in more depth than we frequently can at regular meetings or study sessions.

The Council has identified several issues that it would like to address. Brief papers and background material on each one is included in this packet for your review. While at the retreat, we will spend time gaining a better understanding of these issues. This process will include discussion on what is already being done and determining the appropriate role for the City organization to play in the future. Work plan items or additional research, if needed, will be assigned based on the City Council's desired outcomes.

We have reserved time on the agenda for council members to share their expectations for the retreat as well as their concerns and/or vision for Longmont in the future. Please be prepared to spend time sharing your thoughts as we kick off the retreat Friday.

This year, the retreat will be held in Longmont at the Xilinx Retreat Center. In this section of the retreat packet, you will find information on the Xilinx Corporation. A list of accomplishments from 2003, an end of the year summary of the 2003 work plan and the 2004 major department work plan items are also included in this packet. On Friday, there will be a brief presentation of the 2003 accomplishments. Staff members will not make presentations on their work plans, but there will be an opportunity for you to ask questions you may have.

The staff and I look forward to spending time with you as we discuss ways to further enhance our community. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Gordon Pedrow
City Manager



City of Longmont Official Government Website



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2004 City Council Retreat

Date for the 2004 City Council Retreat is January 30 and 31, 2004 and will be held at Xilinx Corporation, 3100 Logic Drive, Longmont, Colorado .

To view the documents, just click on the links below to view the PDF files for the Council Retreat. **IMPORTANT:** You MUST have the [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) on your system prior to selecting an item on the agenda in order to be able to view these files.

- Agendas & Minutes
- Board Appointments
- Boards, Committees & Commissions
- City Council Members
- Contacting City Council
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Reports & Surveys

SEARCH HELP ON THE SIDE

- Search
- What's New
- Request For Service & Suggestions
- Sitemap

MORE INFORMATION

City Clerk's Office
350 Kimbark Street
Longmont, CO 80501
303-651-8649

[Overview](#)

[2003 Accomplishments](#)

[2003 Council Work Plan](#)

[2004 Major Work Plan Items](#)

AGENDA

Friday, January 30

1. Arrive/Refreshments (8:30 a.m.)
2. Welcome/Introduction (9:00 -9:25 a.m.)
 - A. Opening Comments
 - B. Images of 2003 - Slide Show
 - C. Overview of Retreat
 - D. Approval of Agenda
3. Expectations (9:25 - 9:45 a.m.)
 - A. Council shares their expectations for the retreat and identifies important issues for the future.
 - B. Working Together - What does Council need from staff to help them be effective?
4. Staff Challenges (9:45 - 10:00 a.m.)
 - A. Q & A - Council Work Plan/Department Work

Plans/Pressing Challenges

5. Break (10:00 - 10:15 a.m.)
6. Review Discussion Process Framework (10:15 - 10:30 a.m.)
7. [Parking Lot Issue Discussion](#) (10:30 - 11:30)

[Main Street](#) | [Mixed Use](#) |
[Neighborhoods](#) | [Pocket Parks](#)
| [Multimodal](#)

[Long Range Planning Commission](#) |
[Attachment 1](#)
| [Attachment 2](#)

8. Lunch on site (11:30 - 12:30 p.m.)
9. [Future Tax Issues Discussion](#) (12:30 - 1:30 p.m.)
10. [Use of Urban Renewal Authority Discussion](#) (1:30 - 2:30 p.m.)
11. MIND BREAK (2:30 - 3:00 p.m.)
12. [Downtown Revitalization Discussion](#) (3:00 - 4:00 p.m.)
13. [Enhancement of the Restorative Justice Program Discussion](#) (4:00 - 5:00 p.m.)
14. Wrap Up, and Adjourn (5:00 - 5:30 p.m.)
15. Social Hour at La Cocina Restaurant, located at 1225 Ken Pratt Blvd. (5:30 p.m.)

Saturday, January 31

1. Arrive/Refreshments (8:30 a.m.)
2. [Promotion of Tourism and Visitorship](#) (8:45 - 9:45 a.m.)

[Part I](#) | [Part II](#)

3. [Citywide Strategic Planning Process](#) (9:45 - 10:45 a.m.)

[Attachement 1](#) | [Attachment 2](#)

4. Break (10:45 - 11:00 a.m.)

5. [Community Response to Homelessness/Chronic Mental Illness and Substance Abuse](#) (11:00 - Noon)

[Attachment 1](#) | [Attachment 2](#) |
[Attachment 3](#) | [Attachment 4](#)

6. Lunch on site (Noon - 1:00 p.m.)

7. [Regional Coordination of Human Services/Increase Funding/Enhance Community Access](#) (1:00 - 2:00 p.m.)

8. [Vandalism](#) (2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

9. MIND BREAK (3:00 - 3:15 p.m.)

10. Finalize Work Plan (3:15 - 3:30 p.m.)

- A. Check-in with Staff Regarding Impact on Workload
- B. Finalize Work Plan
- C. Next Steps

11. Review of Retreat/Input Regarding Future Retreats (3:30 - 3:45 p.m.)

12. Public invited to be heard (3:45 - 4:00 p.m.)

13. Adjourn no later than 4 p.m.

VIEW THE 2003 RETREAT PACKET: City Council Retreat Information scheduled January 24-25, 2003:

▶ [View the Agenda and White Papers](#) for the 2003 City Council Retreat.

Appendix J

Town of Cary, North Carolina, Technical Staff Report

**TOWN OF CARY
STAFF REPORT**

2503 Ten Ten Road – Request Waiver of Thoroughfare Improvements and Right-of-way Dedication (EN04-086) Consideration of waiving thoroughfare improvements and right-of-way dedication associated with anticipated site plan submission for car wash addition to the site	<u>Speaker</u> Tim Bailey
COMMITTEE MEETING	DATE
Operations Committee	
Planning & Development Committee	May 20, 2004

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING	
FROM:	Tim Bailey, P. E. Engineering Director
Prepared by:	Tammy Spivey, Engineer
Approved by:	William B. Coleman, Jr., Town Manager Benjamin T. Shivar, Assistant Town Manager

REVIEW: Attached to this report is a letter from Mr. James E. Holshouser, Jr., written on behalf of the property owner of 2503 Ten Ten Road , requesting that the Town grant a waiver of thoroughfare improvements and right-of-way dedication for the subject property should a site plan be submitted to add a car wash to the site. The site is currently developed as a gas station/convenience store. As stated in the letter, the current owner of the property has been contacted by someone interested in purchasing the property. Staff met with Mr. Holshouser, the property owner and the person interested in purchasing the property and explained that per Town Ordinance, widening and right-of-way dedication would be required for both Penny Road and Ten Ten Road should a site plan be submitted for the car wash addition.

Per the Town’s Comprehensive Transportation Plan, ultimate 4 lane median divided cross sections within 100’ rights-of-way are required for both Penny Road and Ten Ten Road . The majority of both roads along the subject property frontage are 2 lane unimproved roads within 60’ rights-of-way. Improving the roads would consist of widening approximately 30 feet and would require approximately 20 more feet of right-of-way.

As shown on the attached map, the property is triangular in shape. The owner feels that widening and right-of-way dedication to the Town’s ultimate required sections for Penny Road and Ten Ten Road would render the property virtually useless by necessitating the removal of most of the parking area and a taking of the area in which the underground gasoline tanks are located.

The Town’s 2004 Ten Year Capital Improvements Plan has both roads planned for improvements with design starting FY07 for Penny Road and FY08 for Ten Ten Road .

<p>Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the road widening requirements be waived for this property should a site plan be submitted for minor alteration to the existing site, such as the addition of a car wash. Staff further recommends that the ultimate right-of-way for both Penny and Ten Ten Roads be dedicated with any site plan submittal for the property, with the understanding that the owner have right to continue using existing parking and underground gasoline tanks until such time as the Town of Cary or State of North Carolina widens either of the two roads which may necessitate removal of parking and/or the underground tanks.</p>
--

May 6, 2004

Ms. Tammy Spivey
Engineering Department
Town of Cary
PO Box 8005
Cary , NC 27512-8005

Re: Lang-set Corporation Property

Dear Tammy:

I should begin by saying how much I appreciated the helpful Pre-submission Conference yesterday with you and the other members of the panel which conducted the session. This is certainly an excellent way to let potential applicants become aware of the "global" picture involving all of the various facets of concern that must be addressed. It is a model for an approach that avoids duplication, confusion, and potential misunderstanding.

The discussion involving some future expansion of the width of both Penny Road and Ten-Ten Road is a perfect example, since it might not have even been addressed in the absence of the conference.

As we mentioned, this property was annexed into town through a petition for voluntary annexation a year or two ago.

Larnie Horton, the principal of the corporation, is nearing retirement age and has been contacted by someone interested in buying the property. He wishes to sell, but the prospective purchaser is naturally concerned that at some time in the future, the potential widening, if completed, would wipe out the effective use of the property.

As you know, the tract is a very slender triangle at the intersection, and it appears to me that widening would remove most (though not all) of the parking area, would take the area in which the underground gasoline tanks are located, and would make the property virtually useless.

We therefore respectfully request a waiver by the town from the provisions of 8.2.2 of the Land Development Ordinance.

It is my understanding that any potential widening would be more than a decade away and that no money is currently budgeted by either of the state or the town for this purpose. This being the case I hope that the town will be able to honor our request.

Sincerely yours,

SANFORD HOLSHOUSER LLP

James E. Holshouser, Jr.

JEH Jr:pch

