

City Council
Visioning Workshop Session

November 17, 2018

Purpose:

During the visioning workshop on November 17, 2018, each council member in attendance gave their macro vision of what direction they would like to see the City move towards in a variety of areas. Staff members provided relevant data to assist in the discussion.

This document summarizes the prominent points from the workshop and attempts to highlight common areas of agreement amongst the council members. Following review and comment by staff and council, staff intends to use those areas of commonality as guideposts to direct staff's attention in the upcoming year.

COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- CORY MCGEE, PLACE 1
- SHAUN MYERS, PLACE 2
- ROBBIE POWERS, PLACE 3 (MORNING SESSION)
- KEVIN MOON, PLACE 4
- MARY PENN, PLACE 5
- DAVID JOHNSON, PLACE 6

DEPARTMENT HEADS/PRESENTING STAFF MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

- TONY CARSON, CITY MANAGER
- JON THATCHER, CITY ATTORNEY
- DOROTHY BROOKS, CITY SECRETARY
- RICK TOWNSEND, FIRE CHIEF
- ROB SHERWIN, POLICE CHIEF
- RICHARD CURRY, PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR
- DEBORAH WOODHAM, FINANCE DIRECTOR
- CANDY MCQUISTON, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
- WARREN KETTEMAN, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
- WENDLE MEDFORD, ASST. CITY MANAGER
- TRAFFIC/THOROUGHFARE ENGINEER

Downtown Vision

Shared Viewpoints and Ideas:

- Encourage multi-use growth because it will be needed to support vibrant/diverse businesses
- Increasing the number of events downtown through the encouragement of festivals
- Keep moving forward with revitalization plans that have worked for the core
- Identify appropriate use for Booker T. Washington property
- Would like to see Forney downtown as a destination for the eastern DFW metroplex
 - Envisions outdoor/rooftop dining
 - Increase in number of local restaurants and local shopping options
- May need high density developments to provide the foot traffic/walkability for a vibrant downtown district

Staff Objectives:

- Increase the number of downtown events – *Estimated timeframe of 1 year*
- Produce conceptual drawing that illustrates future downtown development towards Chestnut Street – *Estimated timeframe of 1 year*
- Review of current zoning classifications for Downtown District – *Estimated timeframe of 1 year*
- Extension of Downtown Business District to Chestnut Street – *Estimated timeframe of 5 to 10 years*

City Facilities – City Hall, Fire Station, Public Works Building, Senior Center

Shared Viewpoints and Ideas:

- Regardless of updates/changes to city facilities, City Hall must remain downtown
- Additional information is needed from staff prior to any final determinations
 - Determine need for feasibility study after additional information is received from staff
 - If a feasibility study is undertaken, it should be treated as a planning document to be acted upon
- Believes that public works is the primary city facility that needs addressing

Staff Objectives:

- Complete an internal review showing needs of current buildings – *Estimated timeframe of June 2019*

Amphitheater Usage/Events

Shared Viewpoints and Ideas:

- Amphitheater is currently under utilized
- Supports staff drafting regulations to allow regulated alcohol service at events
- Supports staff developing policies/procedures for responsible use of the facility
- Would like to see it used for a variety of events and different genres of music (concerts, art festivals, food festivals)

Staff Objectives:

- Attempt to book higher profile acts and bring diversity to the venue – *Estimated timeframe of 1 year*
- Review current policies/procedures and bring recommended changes to Council for necessary action – *Estimated timeframe of 1 year*

Parks Master Plan

Shared Viewpoints and Ideas:

- Recognizes that an excellent park system is essential for and a draw to the community
- Believes city residents are carrying the burden for non-residents' use of fields
- Supports putting a bond package in front of voters in the future for expansion of park facilities

Staff Objectives:

- Develop recommendation for council that would fairly distribute park utilization for residents and non-residents – *Estimated timeframe of August 2019*

Growth Management Plan

Shared Viewpoints and Ideas:

- Favors annexation to the extent it encourages planned growth strategies of the City
- Roadways are an integral component of any growth management plan
- Recommends staff bring forward ideas that address increased residential zoning standards
- Use of utility extensions to encourage/incentivize positive growth

Staff Objectives:

- Staff will review current zoning classifications and begin review of comprehensive plan – *Estimated timeframe of 1 year*

Thoroughfare Plan/Road Projects & Funding

Shared Viewpoints and Ideas:

- Recognized as a major need in the City
- Further meetings with additional information needed to develop a plan of action
- Final version of the thoroughfare plan needs to be presented to Council for consideration in the near future

Staff Objectives:

- Presentation will be presented to Council by February 2019 – *Estimated timeframe of February 2019*
- Staff will work with Engineer to identify additional means and methods to leverage State projects - *Estimated timeframe of 1 year*

Future Bonding & Financing Options

Shared Viewpoints and Ideas:

During this section, council members prioritized different bonding projects. Unanimously, the council voted to give roadway issues priority. Unfortunately, many of the roadways needing the most attention are not under the control of the City.

Council members narrowly chose parks as their second bonding priority with city facilities as their third. Discussion that followed indicated that with additional information council members may adjust the prioritization of parks and city facilities.

Prior to undertaking any feasibility studies for city facilities, council members asked that staff present information over their future city facility needs. As to parks, council members requested that a townhall meeting be organized for the public to review maps, options and costs. On roadways, the council members wanted to begin addressing issues as soon as possible. Prior to picking one road project over another, council members requested additional information on the thoroughfare plan and on how the City can work with other entities.

Staff Objectives:

- Staff will await further direction from Council on any potential bonding initiatives –
Timeframe TBD

Summary

It was exciting to work with council members about the multitude of decisions facing the City. I found it very promising that members shared a universal desire to better the community for the whole and that they were on the same page as to what generally needs to be done. There are details to be worked out, but by staff providing some additional information, I believe that many of these issues will be tackled in the near future.