

City of Dover Council Goal-Setting Retreat

February 2, 2008

Meeting Notes

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Opening remarks, overview of agenda and meeting orientation

To begin, facilitator Bill O'Brien distributed a handout to council members:

As an elected official, you play a fundamental role in the evolution of the goals, purposes and direction of your community... Your job as an elected official is to put in place policies, programs and facilities that will help make your mission statement come true.

... Remember, if each person has his or her own version of the mission statement, it is going to be very difficult to agree on next steps. You and your colleagues must start your administration together; the mission statement is the critical first step.

...If you and your fellow elected officials are not making decisions that support the mission statement, your community will never reach its objectives.

International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
Elected Officials Handbook, Setting Goals for Action

In view of the above, and to set the stage for the day's discussions, councilors were asked to review the Dover City Council's current mission statement:

The mission of the Dover City Council is to provide leadership and vision for the City of Dover to ensure affordable, high quality services and to provide opportunities through responsive and accessible government.

To reinforce the focus of the retreat's purpose, councilors were then provided with another passage from the same ICMA Elected Officials Handbook:

Elected officials are also called on to make decisions about more narrow issues raised by constituents... fixing potholes in certain neighborhoods, the protection and replacement of old trees and the problem of minors hanging out in video arcades during school hours. These kinds of little issues can quickly eat up most of your time.

However, it is the big issues that deserve most of your time and attention.

For this session, the facilitator suggested the terminology and definitions below to assure that all participants were using commonly-understood terms:

Objectives

These are *qualitative statements* of what the council would like to see accomplished in the next two years. (Example: "Beautify the downtown district.")

Goals

These consist of short and long-term *quantitative results* that directly support the objectives. They should be achievable, related to the key factors for success, and consistent with the objectives. Goals describe specifically *what* we want to happen. (Example: "Develop a new downtown park to create more open space.")

Tactics

These encompass a number of separate, but related and reinforcing, steps for accomplishing the selected business objectives and goals. Tactics address the *how* element of the process.

Discussion Groups

To begin to identify the council's primary objectives for the next two years, council members were divided into two groups to discuss the following question:

What do you feel are the most vital issues this council should address over the next two years?

Each sub-group then reported back to the whole, ^{draft} listing their identified priorities. These items were then consolidated into the following six objectives:

Objectives

1. Make the spending cap work.
2. Review and adopt a comprehensive road and sidewalk master plan.
3. Engender public trust and confidence.
4. Support appropriate economic development, focusing on business retention and job opportunities.
5. Preserve our natural resources.
6. Take a proactive role in the legislative affairs of state and county government.

Goals:

At this point, it was time to identify specific goals and timelines to support the six objectives. Below are the goals identified by the council for each objective:

Objective #1

Make the spending cap work.

Goal #1

Define the spending cap language

Completion date: March 1, 2008

Goal #2

Identify council budget priorities.

Completion date: March 1, 2008

Goal #3

Adopt the budget.

Completion date: June 15, 2008

Objective #2

Review and adopt a comprehensive road and sidewalk master plan.

Goal #1

Review and revise a policy on creation and maintenance of sidewalks.

Completion date: October 1, 2008

Goal #2

Review and revise a policy on maintenance of roads.

Completion date: October 1, 2008

Goal #3

Allocate sufficient resources to properly implement the policies.

Completion date: June 15, 2008

Goal #4

Publicize the policies.

Update by: November 1, 2008, then ongoing

Objective #3

Engender public trust and confidence.

Goal #1

Video or audiotape all boards, commissions and standing committee meetings.

Completion date: March 1, 2008

Goal #2

Conduct periodic public question and answer meetings.

Completion date: July 1, 2008

Consultant note:

There was spirited debate over whether there should be an additional goal aimed at engendering public trust and confidence, but ultimately lacked consensus. As a result, the council may, or may not, elect to add additional goals to this objective at some point.

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Objective #4

Support appropriate economic development, focusing on business retention and job opportunities.

Goal #1

Review and endorse the new master plan.

Completion date: October 31, 2008

Goal #2

Work with DBIDA to develop a development plan supportable by the council.

Completion date: April 15, 2008

Objective #5

Preserve our natural resources.

Goal #1

Complete the landfill closure plan.

Completion date: December 31, 2009

Goal #2

Develop and implement the Willand Pond plan.

Completion date: September 1, 2008

Goal #3

Review and revise policies to protect and expand our water supply.

Completion date: December 31, 2008

Goal #4

Work with the Open Lands Committee to review and revise, if necessary, the Open Lands Program.

Completion date: December 31, 2008

Objective #6

Take a proactive role in the legislative affairs of state and county government.

Goal #1

Appoint a legislative liaison.

Completion date: February 13, 2008

Goal #2

Review and revise a policy under which the liaison operates.

Completion date: December 31, 2008

Final note:

Now that the council has identified the objectives and goals, the matter of developing tactics to accomplish these goals falls to the City Manager.