

**City of Dover Council Goal-Setting Retreat
January 16, 2010**

Meeting Notes

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.

*City of Dover Council 2010 Goal-Setting Retreat
Meeting Notes
Page Two*

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 in the business, 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 objectives and goals. Tactics address the *how* element of the process.

Councilor/Department Head Interchange:

To provide the councilors with some background information intended to serve them in their ensuing discussions today, each councilor met with each department head for three minutes to learn about department issues, priorities and concerns.

Vital Issues 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 group then reported back to the whole, listing their identified vital issues:

Group #1:

- Communication
- Education, public outreach, etc.
- Infrastructure issues
- Increase non-property tax revenues
- "Green City" (recycling, education, etc.)
- Maintain quality of life through education and recreation
- Support quality education in the city

*City of Dover Council 2010 Goal-Setting Retreat
Meeting Notes
Page Three*

Group #2:

- State liaison – state-level issues
- Finance software (*Note: This item was later deleted.*)
 - > public access
 - > efficiencies
- Street/sidewalk policies
 - > maintenance issues
 - > location
- Adding sidewalks to fill gaps (e.g., Mast Road and Spruce Lane)
- Private road going to public policy
- Traffic calming
- Maintain appropriate staffing (citizen expected level of service vs. citizen expected tax bill)
- Natural resource preservation
- Tolend Superfund Site
- More public forums/meetings/education
 - > informal citizen engagement
 - > opportunity for citizens to communicate with Council
- Public Safety
 - > maintain/improve
 - > staffing (get to appropriate levels)
 - > dispatch (regionalization?)
- Balance between Bag 'n Tag revenue to subsidize recycling center (opportunities to improve revenue)
- Financial policies (*Note: This item was later deleted.*)
- Economic development
 - > bringing jobs
 - > vibrancy
 - > sustaining business
 - > opportunity
 - > use colleges for partnerships

Objectives

With the most vital issues having been identified, councilors next consolidated these issues into seven major objectives. These objectives were not listed in any order of perceived priority or importance. Each is considered important on its own:

1. Support open and respectful communication among councilors, department heads, citizens and the school board.
2. Broaden revenue streams.
3. Proactively educate the public regarding city services, policies, etc.
4. Maintain, improve and manage infrastructure issues.
5. Promote city-wide sustainability.
6. Promote and maintain quality of life issues.
7. Plan and implement financial policies to promote the long term financial health of the city.

*City of Dover Council 2010 Goal-Setting Retreat
Meeting Notes
Page Four*

Goals

In order to support the seven major objectives, goals were then identified for each objective:

Objective #1:

Support open and respectful communication among councilors, department heads, citizens and the school board.

Goals:

- Appoint and establish guidelines for legislative liaison.
- Councilors will abide by council rules of decorum.
- Continue public outreach sessions.

Objective #2:

Broaden revenue streams.

Goals:

- Maintain, support and encourage economic development initiatives.
- Identify and implement appropriate revenue sources

Objective #3:

Proactively educate the public regarding city services, policies, etc.

- Enhance the use of media and technology
- Continue to schedule public information sessions.
- City councilors will strive to provide accurate and factual information.

Objective #4:

Maintain, improve and manage infrastructure issues.

- Review and implement updated street and sidewalk policies.
- Review, adopt and manage the C.I.P.
- Review, adopt and manage the operational budget.

Objective #5:

Promote city-wide sustainability

Goals:

- Create financially-viable incentives to recycle.
- Continue to review and update water sources and protections.
- Explore opportunities to reduce commodity consumption.
- Support appropriate conservation and open land initiatives.

Objective #6:

Promote and maintain quality of life issues.

- Prioritize and maintain an appropriate balance if municipal services.
- Continue to support planning initiatives that relate to multi-modal initiatives.
- Promote volunteer activities.
- Continue to be guided by the Master Plan

*City of Dover Council 2010 Goal-Setting Retreat
Meeting Notes
Page Five*

Objective #7:

Plan and implement financial policies to promote the long term financial health of the city.

Goals:

- Appoint, review and implement appropriate recommendations of the Financial Policy Review Committee.
- Adopt a budget that follows city financial policies, as adopted by the Council.

Before adjourning, several final points were suggested:

- The Mayor made the point that each goal should be accompanied by an “achieved by” date, and that councilors will establish these in the near future.
- As explained in the terminology on page two of these notes, *goals* are *what* we want to happen, while *tactics* are the *how*, the specific steps to be implemented in order to achieve the goals. The purpose of this session was not to get down to the tactical level, but these will need to be established in the near future.
- The Council was also reminded that progress toward the major objectives and their supporting goals should be reviewed routinely, no less than quarterly, in order to keep these important matters fresh in the minds of councilors.