

**City of Dover Council Goal-Setting Workshop  
February 1, 2014**

*Meeting Notes*

**Opening remarks, overview of agenda and meeting orientation**

To begin, the facilitator distributed several excerpts from the International City/Council Management Association (ICMA) Elected Official Handbook, Setting Goals for Action. These were intended to underscore this day's workshop purpose.

One of those handouts contained the following relevant passage:

*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... 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.*

Council members in attendance this day: Karen Weston, Bob Carrier, Catherine Cheney, Bill Garrison, Dot Hooper, Anthony McManus, John O'Connor and Deborah Thibodeaux.  
Absent: Jason Gagnon.

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

*Goals*

These are *qualitative statements* of what the business intends to accomplish over a period of years. These are "big-picture" items vital to organizational success.

*Objectives*

These consist of short and long-term *quantitative results* that directly support the goals. They should be measurable, achievable, related to the key factors for success in the business, and consistent with the goals. Objectives describe specifically *what* we want to happen.

*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.

**Vital Issues Discussion Groups**

To begin the process of identifying the council's primary goals for the next two years, council members were divided into three groups to discuss the following question:

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

Each member of the management team who was in attendance joined one of the three groups.

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Each group then reported back to the whole, listing their identified vital issues. Discussion group results are shown below.

Group #1

- High level of communication to stakeholders
- Manage the effects of development.
- Promote economic development to 60%/40%.
- Maintain infrastructure at a high level.
- Improve pedestrian safety city-wide.
- Enhance affordability.
- Improve the perception of school quality.
- Promote Dover to current and future stakeholders.
- Foster efficiency among all city departments.
- Increase stewardship of resources.
- Move the waterfront forward.
- Pursue new revenue opportunities.

Group #2

- Openness and transparency
- Meet the challenge of federal mandates.
- School board and council together for the good of the city

Group #3

- More engagement with legislators and county officials
- Meet and anticipate infrastructure needs.
- Pursue funds owed the city by insurance pools.

**Goals**

With the most vital issues having been identified, councilors next consolidated these issues into four major goals. These goals were not listed in any order of perceived priority or importance.

1. Create a higher level of communication with stakeholders.
2. Continue to foster responsible and balanced economic development.
3. Prudently meet the challenge of federal and state mandates.
4. Maintain fiscal responsibility.

## **Objectives**

In order to support the four major goals, objectives were then identified for each goal.

### *Goal #1:*

*Create a higher level of communication with stakeholders.*

#### **Objectives:**

- Utilize the most effective outlets for public communication.
- Improve communication with the school board.
- Enhance public knowledge through consistent, factual communication.

### *Goal #2:*

*Continue to foster responsible and balanced economic development.*

#### **Objectives:**

- Effectively manage the effects of development.
- Advance the development of the waterfront.
- Understand and continue implementation of the Master Plan.
- Develop the Business Park 2.

### *Goal #3:*

*Prudently meet the challenge of federal and state mandates.*

#### **Objectives:**

- Create a master checklist of state and federal mandates.
- Advocate for the 8 mg./liter nitrogen out-fill limit.
- Actively pursue alternative funding sources, as necessary.
- Engage federal and state legislators regarding the burdens of state and federal mandates.

### *Goal #4:*

*Maintain fiscal responsibility.*

- Responsibly maintain the infrastructure.
- Pursue new revenue opportunities.
- Continue to foster efficiency among municipal departments.

**Consultant Notes**

A few thoughts for you to keep in mind as you go forward...

- For each objective, tactics must now be developed by the City Manager and his management team. As we discussed, *objectives* identify *what* is to be accomplished. *Tactics* identify the specific steps regarding *how* the objective will be accomplished.
- Remember that objectives must be measurable, otherwise they are just wishes. If you're going to use terms such as "improve" and "enhance" there should be some benchmark or baseline established against which to measure future progress.
- You are encouraged to make every effort to avoid "continue to..." and similar phrases which can create the impression that something is being done when it isn't.
- Every objective and every tactic should have a "person responsible" and a "completed by" date assigned to it. The "person responsible" is not necessarily the one who will do all of the work, but the individual who is responsible for making sure that the work gets done. The "person responsible" should be the one who reports on the progress of the initiative.
- The progress toward the major goals and their supporting objectives should be reviewed routinely by the council, no less than quarterly, in order to keep these most vital matters fresh in the minds of councilors.