

City Commission Workshop

Retreat Day 1 Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2022

(APPROVED)

10/17/2022 - Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present: Mayor Jack Hilligoss, Terrye Howell, Robin Gibson, Daniel Williams, Danny Krueger

Staff Present: James Slaton, City Manager; Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk

Guests: Mike Mowery and Andy Duke from Strategic Government Resources (SGR)

Mayor Hilligoss called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m.

2. Commission Retreat Led By Strategic Government Resources

James Slaton, City Manager, asked everyone to be candid and open in the discussions.

2.1. SGR Retreat Tentative Agenda

Introductions and Warm up

Mike Mowery introduced himself, his colleague Andy Duke, and his company Strategic Government Resources. He reviewed the schedule and plan for this meeting. He encouraged everyone to listen. He wants everyone to be able to talk to each other.

Principles of Good Governance

He then reviewed the basics of leadership and effective government. Healthy relationships are a good foundation for good leadership. People will cooperate when treated with respect. Expertise is important but we shouldn't forget good relationships. Everyone needs to know their role. Commissioners need to develop policy and let staff execute it. Commission decisions need to consider what happens 5-10 years from now.

Mr. Mowery said we need to avoid a toxic culture. Leadership is grown from the ground up but culture comes from the top down. We need a healthy culture at the top levels. We need a culture of mutual respect to allow departments to function. He spoke on different types of leadership such as operational and relational.

There was a group discussion on personal strengths and weaknesses in leadership and where we need to grow.

Mr. Mowery reviewed the different steps in the City's Strategic Visioning Loop. They include citizen input that at times can be exaggerated. Staff input can include what they may see on the horizon. Mr.

Mowery cautioned against devaluing staff opinion. Those that may not live in the City still care about the City.

Commissioner Krueger said that how the request is made matters. They shouldn't be accusatory. Mr. Mowery agreed. There should be a process for citizen input.

Mr. Mowery said the Commission should set strategic vision and the staff plans it out. There needs to be ongoing back and forth on this to determine steps and funding.

Mr. Mowery discussed why board governance and leadership is important. The Commission needs to always figure out who benefits and the cost. Its important to have good communication to be more effective. The City needs a clear mission and vision. Mr. Mowery reviewed major governance challenges. Some Commissioners want all the details while others are fine with bullet points. There was discussion on these. Deputy Mayor Gibson Commission said there have been problems with arrogance and Commission attempting to direct staff. These things are not a problem now. Commissioner Krueger said when he started on the Commission he wasn't sure what to expect. He thought he might have to go to war but the Commission seems to get along well. Deputy Mayor Gibson said we can disagree but still like each other.

Mr. Mowery said staff can do better at offering alternatives to Commissions. The Commission does not need to be afraid of opposition. Its easy to tear something up than to build it up.

The board roles include communicating the vision to the public. They should be ambassadors for the City. They should develop policy based on data. They should be a strategic visionaries.

There was a recess at 10:02 a.m. The meeting was reconvened at 10:15 p.m.

Overview of IOPT and Discussion of profiles

Mike Mowery reviewed everyone's IOPT profiles. This is how people take in information and what they do with it. The types are a Reactive Stimulator, a Logical Processor, Hypothetical Analyzer, and Relational Innovator. He reviewed the profiles of each type. He then reviewed strategic patterns such as a changer, performer, conservator, and perfecter.

Mr. Mowery distributed information for each commissioner and the staff to review. Those present shared their results with each other. Mr. Mowery shared the results on a graph. The Mayor is more of a changer while other commissioners are conservators. James Slaton is a changer. The leadership team leans towards performing.

Commissioner Howell talked about a lot of growth coming which she has wanted. She also wants to slow down a bit to be sure we are doing the right thing. Commissioner Krueger said the more conservator commissioners may support change but need more information. Mr. Mowery said staff needs to provide more information. Commissioner Williams said the Commissioners can learn from each other. Deputy Mayor Gibson said he is a conservator but supports historic preservation which is a different direction. What do we want to change to? We need to keep Lake Wales a special place. Mayor Hilligoss said change is inevitable but we need to be in control of that change.

Mr. Mowery said we need discussion on the current strategic plan. We need a collective vision.

There was a recess at 11:15 a.m. The meeting reconvened to 11:32 p.m.

Review of Current Strategic Plan

Andy Duke, Strategic Government Resources, reviewed previous strategic priorities established in 2019.

1. Encourage Annexation
2. Improve Infrastructure
3. Develop Recreation
4. Ensure Quality of Life
5. Invest in Public Private Partnerships.

The group had discussion on how well we have done on this.

Deputy Mayor Gibson said we are doing well but annexation needs to go down the list. James Slaton, City Manager, said we are doing fair on this. Mayor Hilligoss said that we are doing well on infrastructure.

James Slaton, City Manager, said we need more definition of "Quality of Life". Deputy Mayor Gibson said the other 4 items contribute to quality of life. Mayor Hilligoss said citizens should define quality of life. Commissioner Krueger said citizens have told us what they want, fix the streets, sidewalks and clean up the place.

On public-private partnerships Mayor Hilligoss said we have done well especially in the CRA. Commissioner Krueger said we should have goals for public-private partnerships. Deputy Mayor Gibson said its part of our heritage that the city and non-profits work together.

There was a lunch recess at 12:07 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

Department Head and Commission Small Group Discussions about Strategic Priorities

The department heads divided into five groups and each commissioner visited with each group to hear the goals and concerns of each department.

H.A.R.D. Questions Exercise

Different groups then shared ideas on what they are hopeful about, what they are afraid of, what we we need to rethink and what needs to die.

Group #1 List Included Commissioner Howell

Hopeful: More Residents, Tourists, Restaurants, More jobs, More Recreation Facilities, More trail Connectivity

Afraid of: Congestion, Recession, Moving too fast

Rethink: How to get people and businesses to move here, how do we want to grow

Die: Ideas on Alcohol and Entertainment

Group #2

Hopeful: continued CRA Impact in the community, Positive outcome of Land Study

Afraid of: We stop Growing

Rethink: Definition of "Better"

Die: Fear that growth is a "negative concept"

Group #3 with Mayor Hilligoss

Afraid of: Economy Crashing, Lack of citizen involvement or Engagement, "sea" of rooftops, Monotony, Growth out of our control

Hopeful: vibrant downtown - bustling, diverse, mixed use, Mall re-purposed - mixed use; Redeveloped northwest District;

Rethink: Education, Walesbilt Hotel, Community Mental Health, local control

Die - Denial/avoidance

Group #4 shared by Autumn Cochella, Assistant Director of Development Services

Hopeful: Opportunity for Individual Prosperity

Afraid of: Loss of Identity

Rethink - Our standards and expectations

Die - Fear of the vocal minority.

Recess was held at 2:15 p.m. and reconvened at 2:30 p.m.

Reputational Drivers (What do we want to be known for?)

Mr. Mike Mowery said the next questions to discuss are making them better or more beautiful? what is a vision of success or definition of success? What does the City need more of? less of?

Commissioner Krueger said we need to figure out what is best and beautiful before we can improve. Commissioner Howell said what is better now might not be better in 10 years.

Commissioner Williams said better is improved quality of life for everyone. Better economic conditions and better schools. We need to work together better.

Mayor Hilligoss said better is moving towards goals that are set. What is better for some may be worse for others.

Commissioner Williams said better is improved quality of life for everyone. Better economic conditions and better schools. Economic quality. We need to work together better.

Mayor Hilligoss said he agreed with elevating design standards and improving economic standards for our citizens. He is in favor of more annexations. There is a housing shortage in Lake Wales. We need different types of housing.

Deputy Mayor Gibson said a definition of better is improving property values. That is measurable. We need to move forward with design standards and aesthetics. Many people like property standards. We need different types of housing. That makes things better.

Mayor Hilligoss said he would like more events downtown.

James Slaton, City Manager, said he would like to increase median incomes.

Deputy Mayor Gibson said agrees with more annexations but on our terms.

What can we do more of or less of? Mayor Hilligoss said we could do more communication with the public. Commissioner Williams said the City can do better on this however we are getting stuff out there. Commissioner Howell said more of our CIP list needs to be done.

Commissioner Krueger said we need more jobs, better houses, and more education opportunities.

Deputy Mayor Gibson said the Charter Schools are doing more vocational training.

[Begin Written list]

What is Best and Beautiful?

Better: Same opportunities for everyone, opportunity to own homes, focus on future for younger generations, improved departments, improved Schools, Community Engagement, make progress towards goals, increase property values, enhance the prosperity of people, raising our Design and building standards, increase economic opportunities, What is our business Plan?

[End Written List]

Deputy Mayor Gibson left the meeting.

The Amazing Future of Lake Wales

Economic Incentives to bring in new business were discussed. Mr. Slaton asked about ad valorem tax breaks. Mayor Hilligoss said he would be open to discussing these.

Mr. Slaton asked what is the end goal or what should we look like in 10 years? Commissioner Williams said he would like Lake Wales to be talked about when Polk County is brought up. Commissioner Williams said he would like to be size of Winter Haven. Mayor Hilligoss said he prefers a smaller town to a big city.

Mr. Mowery asked about economic development goals and marketing the City. Mr. Slaton reported on the new Marketing coordinator. Commissioner Krueger asked if the Chamber of Commerce is doing a good job marketing Lake Wales. Commissioner Howell said they are getting our name out there now.

Mark Bennett, Development Services Director, asked for clarity in development goals. Does the Commission want mixed houses for example?

Mr. Mowery suggested that staff needs to provide more measurable goals.

Mr. Mowery asked what the takeaways for today were?

Commissioner Krueger said that we are pretty much in agreement with where we want to go and we have a good relationship. He is optimistic.


Commissioner Williams said we need more meetings like this so we know each other more. He really benefitted from listening to staff and learned a lot.

Commissioner Howell said today she found that we are all in agreement. She said she appreciated just listening to the other commissioners. This was different than a regular workshop.

Mayor Hilligoss said the atmosphere of the Commission is important. We can disagree but be friendly. Forums can be good. We need to trust each other.

3. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 3:47 p.m.



Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk