

**MINUTES OF NEWPORT NEWS CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
HELD AT VIRGINIA CROSSINGS RESORT
1000 Virginia Center Parkway
Glen Allen, Virginia
October 3 – 5, 2006
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Charles C. Allen; Herbert H. Bateman, Jr.; Joe S. Frank; William F. Haskins;
Madeline McMillan; Sharon P. Scott; and Joseph C. Whitaker-----7

ABSENT: None -----0

OTHERS PRESENT: Randy W. Hildebrandt; Stuart E. Katz; Mabel V. Washington; William P. Mitchell; Neil A. Morgan; Alan Archer (Arrived October 4); K. M. “Butch” Blanks; Sabine Hirschauer, Reporter, *Daily Press* (Arrived October 4); and facilitators Robert E. “Bob” Matson, Director, Leadership Development, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service; and A. Tyler St. Clair, faculty member, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service

Mayor Frank called the meeting to order and immediately turned the meeting over to facilitators, Bob Matson and Tyler St. Clair.

MBTI: Using Type to Enhance Working Relationships

Mr. Matson began the session with an overview of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) questionnaire, which members of Council completed in advance, each member’s type, and how the scores would be useful (see attached). The end result would allow Council members to appreciate how each thinks in an effort to make decisions, to appreciate one another’s differences, and if used effectively, would help Council, and staff, use their strengths collectively. A booklet Looking at Type: The Fundamentals was distributed for review of various types, and is attached to these minutes), as well as a handout, “Please Understand Me: Character & Temperament Types,” by David Keirse and Marilyn Bates. Council members were instructed to review descriptions of their specific type and the opposite of that specific type, followed by a short discussion of each, including managerial character strengths and weaknesses, and ways to deal with the various types.

(Recess: 7:00 p.m.)

Getting Common Ground: Life Stories and Learning

The session reconvened at 8:00 p.m. Council members shared life stories with one another, and the values and events that occurred that had shaped their lives. This exercise would ultimately allow members to build trust and enhance working relationships among one another to develop a collective vision for the City.

(Recess: 11:00 p.m.)

Local Elected Leadership Model

The session reconvened at 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, October 4, 2006. Ms. St. Clair displayed a copy of the a Local Elected Leadership Model, which included (1) **operating guidelines** that consisted of values that would guide Council members and staff relationships; (2) **vision principles** that consisted of policies to guide the decision making to achieve a preferred future for the city; and finally (3) **vision**, the destination or preferred future.

There was lengthy discussion about the “Framework for the Future” and it being a yardstick to measure the decision-making process. Comments included, but was not limited to, the following: (1) the same citizens were involved in the process of the comprehensive plan; (2) being mindful of citizen input (3) the same members of Council were involved in the process; (4) citizens not being guided by staff; (5) not getting a broad enough view; (6) perception of citizens and how plans were presented; (7) should get new ideas to be forwarded to the Planning Commission’s Oversight Committee; (8) fresh faces productive in planning mode (9) staff should be aligned with City Council’s vision.

Mr. Matson stated that members of Council would work collaboratively and collectively to get ideals of a preferred future and develop a vision for the City. He shared the importance of citizens and staff being on board with Council in the process. Members viewed a video entitled, “What is a Vision? By Joel Arthur Barker. Highlights included the “power of vision” and four essentials: (1) visions are leader initiated; (2) visions of the leaders must be shared with the team, and the team must agree to support it; (3) a vision, to be successful, must be comprehensive and detailed; and (4) a vision must be positive and inspiring.

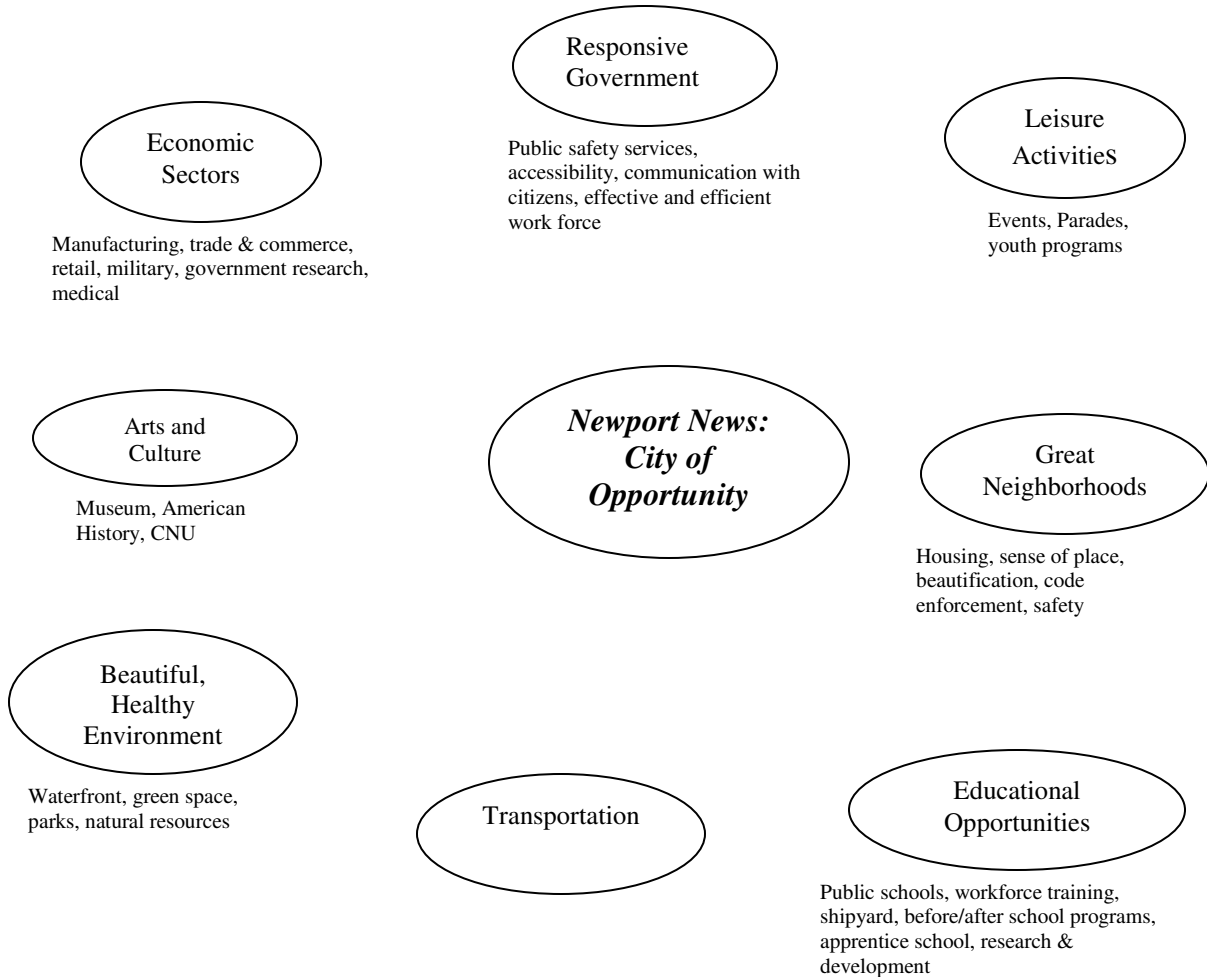
Participants were divided into groups for a vision brainstorming exercise to describe long-range changes Council would like to make in the City and the best aspects of what they would like to retain. Instructions were as follows: Thinking of the City of Newport News in the Year 2025, and keeping an ideal, comprehensive, possibility-oriented perspective: (1) What would we want to make sure to keep? Council was instructed to keep in mind what was special and unique and reminded of why we want to be in Newport News, as well as retaining the identity of the City; and (2) What would we want to make sure that we change? What would have to be different in 2025, something the City would be known for that was not currently in the City. Each group gave a full report. The comprehensive lists compiled by Group Red and Group Blue are included in the City Council Retreat Report, which is attached and made a part of these minutes.

(Recess: 12:00 noon)

Council Vision Synthesis

The session reconvened at 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 4, 2006. Ms. St. Clair asking participants to keep the Local Elected Leadership Model in mind, and based on the “keep” and “changes” from the lists created by each group, advised that Council would develop vision themes that would form the strategic targets of its vision and would define a core vision that would take the City of Newport News to the next level.

Ms. St. Clair indicated that vision themes were places/areas that participants were to focus their attention. At the core, was the total end-state – the highest ideal as a City. With the model below, Council and staff came up with the following end-state and themes.



Develop Vision Principles

The session reconvened at 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 4, 2006. Participants were divided into groups to develop more specific vision positions in support of the vision that would provide guidance to staff and a framework for its own decision-making. Group 1 developed vision principles for Economic Sectors and Arts and Culture and was comprised of Frank, McMillan, Haskins. Group 2 developed vision principles for Leisure Activities and Beautiful, Healthy Environment, and Educational Opportunities, and was comprised of Scott, Bateman, Hildebrandt, and Mitchell. Group 3 developed vision principles for Responsive Government and Transportation and was comprised of Allen, Whitaker, Morgan, and Blanks.

(Recess: 6:30 p.m.)

Complete Vision Principles

The session reconvened at 8:30 a.m., Thursday, October 5, 2006. Members of Council continued to work on vision principles, and worked to achieve consensus on its vision principles as shown in the above-referenced diagram.

Develop Operating Guidelines

Mr. Matson stressed that the document must be a guidance system, a script to the future that each Council member stood behind as a collective body. Participants viewed a video tape, "Painting a Vision for Your Future."

Mr. Matson asked what "opportunity" meant to each Council member in an effort to capture the essence of each member's direction.

This session was devoted to helping Council define the guidelines for operating effectively as a group and in its work with staff. Ms. St. Clair shared several samples of vision principles and operating guidelines, as a guide, from other towns and cities, to include Leesburg, Portsmouth, and Lynchburg. She reminded that when Council worked on its desired future states, it should be as inviting and inspirational as possible. She further reminded that a Preamble was needed, which was a transitional statement to lead into the operating guidelines. A draft copy of the desired future states, "Newport News: A City of Opportunity," is attached and made a part of these minutes.

(Recess: 12:30 p.m.)

Develop Operating Guidelines

The session reconvened at 1:30 p.m., Thursday, October 5, 2006. Members of Council continued to work on operating guidelines and worked to achieve consensus on its vision principles as shown in the previous diagram.

Council came up with the following operating guidelines:

(1) Seek to insure that Council members are well-informed on regional issues by (a) providing a list of scheduled meetings. The Clerk's Office would compile a monthly calendar to include such meetings as HRT, HRPDC, MPO, etc.; (b) add an item on the Work Session agenda that allowed Council members to report/provide information from member's participation in local, state, regional organizations and initiatives; (c) distribute minutes in correspondence package from Council member's participation in various meetings; (d) taking personal responsibility for reporting on issues; (e) decide on committees which require staff support.

(2) Council would seek to increase the knowledge of their colleague's districts through whatever means seem appropriate, i.e. structured trips, personal site visits, etc.

(3) The Mayor and Council would strive to have citizens' perceive Council was working together by: (a) Mayor and staff members insuring that Council members did not "hear things first on the street; (b) Mayor and Council would encourage citizens to talk to their respective Council members; (c) Encourage respect and courtesy through the sharing of information through facilitating ability of members to represent their constituents; and (d) staff continuing to share information with all Council members productively.

Organize for the Work to Come

Next Steps:

(1) Facilitators Bob Matson and Tyler St. Clair agreed to forward the report to members of City Council.

(2) Members of Council agreed to continue work on the document.

(3) The City Manager agreed to schedule a follow-up session.

(4) Council members McMillan, Scott, Bateman, and Frank agreed to continue work on the vision principles.

(5) Interaction between City Manager and City Council to define the vision and create action.

Council Evaluation

Council member Scott felt Council achieved a greater sense of working together as a result of the Retreat. There was a great deal of team building.

Council member Bateman indicated he had a better understanding of how each operated and processed information to make decisions. He felt it would be easier to go forward and the Retreat helped staff in its ability to better cope with City Council.

Mayor Frank felt the process and outcome was very positive. He expressed his initial opposition. He further stated this provided an opportunity to focus on things that were implied, but not articulated. The Retreat informed staff of who Council was and how Council did things. He expressed appreciation to those attendees who gave up their time to attend and felt the outcome was productive. Mayor Frank indicated the socialization was important and that it would help Council and staff formalize things on their minds.

Council member Whitaker indicated that members of Council had come together better than anticipated, which was healthy. He felt the sharing of values among Council was positive and productive and there was now a greater respect as a result.

Council member McMillan indicated the Retreat allowed for good dialogue and put everyone on a level playing field.

Vice Mayor Allen reiterated that he did not like Retreats. He thanked the consultants for assisting Council in the process. He felt that Council had grown in terms of a process. It was his belief that Council did not have faith in what was done, and needed to build on the work that was started. He felt hopeful and indicated that he looked forward to finishing the work.

City Manager Hildebrandt indicated he wanted to follow the leadership of Council. The Retreat helped staff understand the vision for the community. He thanked members of Council for agreeing to participate in the Retreat. He further stated a Retreat should be held annually, or every two years. City Manager Hildebrandt thanked the consultants for their assistance and hard work and felt the Retreat was very helpful.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS,
ON MOTION, COUNCIL ADJOURNED AT 3:20 P.M.

Mabel V. Washington, CMC
City Clerk

Joe S. Frank
Mayor

A true copy, teste:

City Clerk