

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION  
CITY COUNCIL  
Rapid City, South Dakota  
June 26, 2006

Members of the City Council of Rapid City met at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center for the purpose of conducting a strategic planning session on Monday, June 19, 2006 at 5:15 p.m.

The following attended: Mayor Jim Shaw, Alderpersons Tom Johnson, Mike Schumacher, Deb Hadcock, Sam Kooiker, Bill Okrepkie, Ron Kroeger, Malcom Chapman and Bob Hurlbut, Karen Gundersen Olson, Alderman-Elect Lloyd LaCroix and Kay Rippentrop, Assistant to the Mayor.

Mayor Shaw reminded the members that this was a strategic planning session and no formal action would be taken during the session. The process for July 5<sup>th</sup> will be to open the meeting, swear in new Council members, a brief recess for pictures and reconvene with the election officers as the first item of business. Shaw stated he will continue to work through the Council leadership team which consists of the President, Vice President, Public Works Chair and Legal Finance Chair on various issues. Council President Tom Johnson's brief opening remarks stressed the need to work together better and to be more responsive to each other and the citizens. Malcom Chapman encouraged everyone to step back and look at the process and suggest ways that can make it better through good open discussions.

The upcoming 2007 budget schedule was presented for review and discussion. It was pointed out that the Finance Office is scheduling one evening session – August 2<sup>nd</sup> running from 5 pm to 8:30 pm and August 3<sup>rd</sup> from 8 am to approximately noon. Some departments will not be scheduled for direct discussion if there is very little changes however the Council will have the ability to do so if they want.

The first item of discussion for this retreat was sent from the last regular Council meeting #117 from Aldermen Kooiker and Schumacher dealing with meeting times and schedules. Also included with this discussion were the Council awards and recognitions that take place at each Council meeting. As a means to help shorten the regular Council Meetings, Aldermen Kooiker and Schumacher suggested that there be a different way and time to handle the awards portion – i.e. Citizen of the Month, Veteran of the Month and Employee recognitions. They suggested starting the regular meetings at 6:30 p.m. but handle the awards at 6 pm which would not be an official Council meeting time. Several Council members spoke on the importance of recognizing employees as well as the veterans at the beginning of the Council and that should remain in place at the beginning of a regular meeting, The Citizen of the Month, could be handled on a quarterly basis or when there is something exceptional happening that should be recognized. The employee recognitions can be handled as a group, without individual discussion, as a way to more efficiently handle this presentation. In discussing the starting time of Council meetings, several would find it difficult due to work schedules, to make a 6 pm meeting as well as 6:30 p.m. meeting. Mayor Shaw indicated that this particular section of the agenda could be shortened without eliminating the presentations and leadership work to continue to find ways to shorten the length of the meetings. Another suggestion received was to set a time for the Council meetings to end and if business was not concluded, that the Council reconvene the next morning. Most agreed that would be difficult to do due to time constraints of individual Council members. However if the policies and procedures adopted already by the Council were followed more closely the length of the meetings could be greatly reduced. The Information Meeting on July 19<sup>th</sup> will center on the Council Policies & Procedures and Johnson asked that everyone try

to attend and if there is a problem with attendance that a different date be found. Chapman reported that he had visited with Linda Lea Viken and she would be willing to come work with the Council if they wanted. Kooiker noted one of the problems is the length of debate and noted it is important that the Council follow the policies and procedures that limits discussion to three minutes on continued items (unless there is a substitute motion to do something else) on those items that are not on the continued consent calendar. Discussion held regard the need to continually use the lights so that everyone is fairly treated and if procedures are same for all, the meetings will be shorter.

The topic of laptop and internet use was briefly touched on with a question by Alderman Gundersen Olson as to what the City policy was for employees using this equipment for personal use. Mayor Shaw noted that the Computer Center eliminates all games prior to distribution of the computer equipment and for equipment used by city staff, the Department Heads are charged to make sure there is no improper or excessive personal use of the equipment. Chapman noted sidebar conversations and instant messaging should be kept to a minimum during the meetings and that e-mails sent on city equipment is public information.

On the topic of civility, Johnson note that the only way the Council can work effectively is that nothing becomes personal; you debate the issues not the person. It is important to remember that Council members remember not to personalize the issue; you can agree to disagree but need to always be respectful of each other. When questioning personnel situations, general discussion from the dais may be ok as long as employee names are not used, once into that area, executive sessions should be held to conduct personnel business. Mayor Shaw reminded that the meetings are televised and members always need to be mindful of that aspect and once the Council vote is taken, the hardest things is to then let it go and move on.

Agenda items that are on the continued section from Growth Management that get pulled off at the Council meeting were discussed. Chapman noted that when he reviews the agenda for the meeting, he does not review the continued items so pulling items off and asking the Council to vote concerns him. General discussion on pro-con's of pulling items off that meet requirements after the deadline knowing that the Council does not want to be in the position of delaying a project, that Growth Management could take the three or four items that meet the stipulations in one group, rather than repeating the same statement several times. Council members mentioned the need to go ahead and approving a project if the stipulations were met and not hold up development. Most feel that it is best to leave this item as is currently being handled and know that from time to time; there may be more than one that meets the requirements just prior to the meeting. If a legally advertised item is continued on the Planning Commission agenda to a certain date, it must also be continued on the Council agenda. One suggestion was to keep a tally of how many times someone missed the Planning deadline and then went to Council expecting approval. The topic of what constitutes a late night meeting was discussed, is it 10:30 or midnight?

The Council Committee structure was briefly discussed as to committees of the whole or five member committee as is the current status. Some expressed concern when an item is placed on consent calendar by a committee and someone pulls it off at Council. It was noted that sometime it is pulled by a member of the committee that sent it to consent so therefore the best practice if a member wanted additional discussion was to vote to either send to Council without recommendation or vote no, so that it did not appear on the consent calendar. It was suggested that if a Council member had questions on why something was on the consent calendar, they

should call a member of that particular committee or call the Department Head rather than pulling it off at the Council meeting for a long discussion.

Alderman and Department Head items added to the agenda at a Council meeting was discussed, Several members noted that this can take quite some time, that if you are going to add something to the agenda, that the Council member e-mail or call others to let them know it is going to be brought up. This holds the same for a Department Director wanting to put something on the agenda at the meeting that no one is familiar with and can be a lengthy debate. The topic of executive sessions was discussed, with a suggestion that perhaps they should be held at the beginning to the meetings perhaps 6:30 instead of at the end. Mayor Shaw noted that currently the City Attorney likes to keep the Council informed on issues and that sometimes need executive session discussion. Mayor indicated he would visit with the Attorney so that the Council could be advised of an executive session with as much advance notice as possible.

The topic of recesses during the Council meeting was briefly discussed, suggestions were five minutes should be five minutes and then restart the meeting with whoever is present. General agreement that by doing so, the meetings could be shorter. If the chair of the meeting needs a break, then the meeting could be turned over to the Council President or Vice President to continue the meeting to avoid a longer recess. "Echoing" each other's comments also add to the length of meetings and can be a problem when everyone feels they have to speak to agree with the last comment made. General agreement that the Attorney's Office should let Kay or Jackie know early in the day if there is to be an executive session, also department heads and aldermen should let them know if they have items they are going to bring up that are not on the agenda in an effort to avoid 'springing' something on the rest of the Council. Another suggestion was that if the question has been called on an item, to make sure the policies/procedures are followed and not allow an hour and half discussion on something to be continued.

Council President Johnson noted that these items are only discussion and can be considered individually or together at the policy and procedures meeting on July 19<sup>th</sup>. Johnson thanked all for attend and encouraged them to attend the meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> and closed the gathering at 7:40 p.m.