



City of Columbia Heights

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Visit our website at: www.columbiaheightsmn.gov

Mayor

Donna Schmitt

Councilmembers

Robert A. Williams

John Murzyn, Jr.

Connie Buesgens

Nick Novitsky

City Manager

Kelli Bourgeois

NOTICE OF SPECIAL WORK SESSION

Meeting of:	Columbia Heights City Council
Date of Meeting:	June 29, 2020
Time of Meeting:	3 pm
Location of Meeting:	Murzyn Hall Picnic Gazebo (weather permitting) Alternate Location: Public Safety Training Room
Purpose of Meeting:	Special Work Session

1. Goal Setting Session

Nicole Tingley

From: Kelli Bourgeois
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 11:18 AM
To: Nicole Tingley; Kevin Hansen; Joseph Kloiber; Lenny Austin; Renee Dougherty; Aaron Chirpich; Charlie Thompson; Keith Windschitl; Benjamin Sandell; Patricia Sweep
Cc: 'Phil Kern'
Subject: FW: Goal Setting Session - Monday, June 29
Attachments: Final Report.pdf

Good Morning All (Mayor and Council Blind copied) –

Please see below and attached from Phil Kern for next Monday's Goal Setting Session. Just a reminder we will meet:

Monday, June 29th

3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Murzyn Hall Picnic Gazebo (weather permitting)

Public Safety Training Room if needed due to weather

I am excited for the discussion and look forward to seeing everyone on Monday!

Kelli

From: Phil Kern [<mailto:kern.delano@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, June 23, 2020 10:49 AM
To: Kelli Bourgeois
Subject: Goal Setting Session - Monday, June 29

*This message originated from outside the City of Columbia Heights email system. **Use caution** when clicking hyperlinks, downloading pictures or opening attachments. If necessary, contact sender by phone. **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!***

Greetings Mayor, Council, and Staff -

I am looking forward to the opportunity to work with your team again next Monday at your goal setting session. It's certainly been a few unusual and challenging months since we previously planned the session in early March. I am excited to move forward with the session next week and look forward to a very productive meeting.

In advance of the session, I am resending the outline and attachment we shared at the end of February. I also would like to extend the opportunity to connect in advance if there are items you would like to discuss or review prior to the session. We'll pack quite a bit of discussion and brainstorming into the 3-hour period, and things will move along pretty quickly. Thinking about the discussion topics in advance will help make the session more productive and make sure your thoughts and ideas are included in the process.

General Session Overview

- * We'll start the session with a brainstorming discussion of Columbia Heights today - what's going well, what do we see as challenges moving forward, and what opportunities are present that you can be prepared to take advantage of?
- * The next part of the session will focus on the work completed in 2017. We'll revisit the mission, vision, and values of the organization. We'll discuss if they remain impactful and are appropriate statements for the

direction of the City, or if some tweaking/modification might be necessary. I have attached the report from 2017 if you'd like to review.

* Following the discussion of the long-term direction, we'll revisit the short-term goals established in 2017. We'll discuss progress on the goals - they are included in the attached report as well.

* All of this work will lead us to the process of developing and prioritizing new goals for the upcoming year. We will brainstorm, refine, and identify the top priorities.

Again, I look forward to working with you all and assisting your team through this goal setting process. If you have any thoughts or concerns about the process or it's outcomes before the session, please feel free to reach out to me either by email at kern.delano@gmail.com or by phone, 763-286-3991.

See you Monday!

Phil Kern

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City of Columbia Heights

2017 Goal Setting

PROCESS

On May 31 and June 5, 2017, the Columbia Heights City Council and Department Heads convened a special session covering two dates to discuss its vision, organization roles and responsibilities, and to develop key priorities for the upcoming 1-3 year period. The session included Mayor Donna Schmitt, Councilmembers John Murzyn, Bobby Williams, Connie Buesgens and Nick Novitsky, City Manager Walt Fehst, Assistant City Manager Kelli Bourgeois, Community Development Director Joe Hogeboom, Finance Director Joe Kloiber, Fire Chief Gary Gorman, Library Director Renee Dougherty, Police Chief Scott Nadeau, Public Works Director Kevin Hansen, and Recreation Director Keith Windschitl.

VISION

Establishing the vision is an important part of the goal setting process. The vision is expressed through a vision statement – a short, concise description of Columbia Heights in the future. For the exercise, the team focused its dreams and aspirations for the City by 2040, along with the community characteristics it wished to preserve. The brainstorm of participants' vision for the community resulted in a generally agreed upon set of long-term goals and dreams. Through the course of both sessions, the team used the results to draft, refine, and resolve a vision statement to guide the goal setting process.



COLUMBIA HEIGHTS VISION STATEMENT

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS IS A THRIVING, HISTORIC, DIVERSE, AND ECLECTIC COMMUNITY.
THE CITY OFFERS HOUSING AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL, WHILE
PROVIDING SMALL-TOWN CHARM COMBINED WITH ALL THE ADVANTAGES OF BIG-CITY
LIVING. COLUMBIA HEIGHTS IS A DESTINATION THAT MAINTAINS A BALANCE OF
URBAN STYLE AND SUBURBAN PACE. WE WELCOME EVERYONE TO REDISCOVER THE
HEIGHTS, AN ALL-AMERICAN CITY.

KEY ELEMENTS OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS VISION

Safe Community

Proactive Police presence
Safe, multi-modal streets
Strong, skilled public safety staff

Economic Strength

Develop branding for 47th-49th area
Self-Sustaining business – jobs, services
Central Avenue – “Uptown” feel
Maximize land use opportunities

Affordability

Maintain equal access to services
Housing, service options for all
Sustainable in many aspects
Strong City financial position
Stay Resourceful

Opportunities for Play and Learning

Well-rounded recreation services
Library – community focal point, learning opp.
Quality park network

Diverse, Welcoming “Small-Town” Feel

Family-Friendliness
Embrace diverse community
Positive, Can-Do Attitude

Excellent Housing/Neighborhoods

Strong, connected neighborhoods
Stable/rising property values
Remodel/Redevelop aging housing stock

Strong Infrastructure/Public Services

Maintain talented, skilled public servants
Well-planned and maintained infrastructure
Partnerships with School, County, neighbors
City Hall/Public Facilities updated, meet needs
Eliminate duplicative geographical services

Engaged, Multi-Generational Population

Positive community, working together
Workforce, committees reflect residents
Community cohesion – organizations
Complete, open access to information
Engage younger generations

MISSION

The mission of any organization is a statement of the overall purpose and the value proposition it aims to deliver. An effective mission is brief yet thoroughly establishes for decision-makers, staff, and its stakeholders what the organization promises to deliver. Participants discussed the importance of maintaining fiscal responsibility as part of the vision process and reflected that this is an important part of the City’s existing Mission Statement.



COLUMBIA HEIGHTS MISSION STATEMENT

OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE THE HIGHEST QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES. SERVICES WILL BE PROVIDED IN A FAIR, RESPECTFUL AND PROFESSIONAL MANNER THAT EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS CHANGING CITIZEN AND COMMUNITY NEEDS IN A FISCALLY-RESPONSIBLE AND CUSTOMER-FRIENDLY MANNER.

The team did not spend time reviewing the mission statement. At some point in the future, or perhaps at another goal setting session in future years, the City may wish to revisit this statement of purpose and direction.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational values are an important statement of the norms expected at all levels. In local government, effective governance requires that members of the City team conduct actions in a manner consistent with agreed upon values. Additionally, every day City staff members are expected to perform at a high level on behalf of the community stakeholders. A successful integration of organizational values requires that employees know and understand what behaviors are expected. Some organizations go as far as to make organizational values part of Council and staff training and development.

Prior to the goal setting sessions, participants were asked to describe the organization's culture. Overwhelmingly, responses were positive and appreciative of the work environment. The work within the goal setting session highlighted these organizational norms and drew distinctions about what defines Columbia Heights culture distinctive. In summary, these values are as follows (with specific responses identified in parentheses):

- Honesty
- Equality
- Creativity
- Perseverance
- Hard Work
- Commitment to the Community
- Collaboration
- Proactive Leadership

These norms and values represent the team's commitment to each other, to the community, and to those who have interactions with the City of Columbia Heights.

Further, the team explored the working relationship between the City Council and staff. Effectiveness of local government often rests on the interactions between these two important bodies. Understood and agreed upon roles and responsibilities establish a solid foundation for the team to effectively navigate regular operations and controversial matters equally. Often times dysfunction in the local government arena occurs when there is a breakdown of this commitment to the team as a whole.

Generally, the two meetings of the goal setting process provide a solid example that the City Council and staff in Columbia Heights have a very good relationship. Continuing the commitment to each group's roles and responsibilities will only help to maintain this strong foundation.

CITY COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

1. Think and make decisions with the long-term in mind
2. Understand others perspectives
3. Listen to constituents and staff
4. Understand/Focus on policy and big picture
5. Stay educated on trends, municipal affairs
6. Respect the chain of command
7. Be open-minded and adaptable
8. Volunteer, be involved in the community
9. Spread positive community message, both internally and externally

CITY STAFF'S COMMITMENT TO THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

1. Respect the process and the system
2. Be supportive of the City Council and its decisions
3. Provide accurate, well-rounded information
4. Give Council options with background and analysis
5. Facilitate constructive dialogue
6. Be subject experts – stay educated and current with industry best practices
7. Work together across departments
8. Form and communicate a positive image
9. Provide excellent services

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

After discussing the mission and values of the organization, the session moved on to an assessment of the organization and community as it exists today. The Council and staff developed ideas for a goals platform to guide the City's actions over the next 1-3 years. This timeframe is used to establish a workplan that can reasonably be accomplished over the next two years, but also challenges to think of goals that may stretch the organization.

Participants were asked to focus on goals that were measurable, manageable, and achievable. To that end, effective goals need to be within the organization's capability to control. For example, a goal such as "Create \$50 Million in economic development activity" may be a desirable long-term goal, but in terms of the 1-3 year workplan, this goal may not be manageable due to the fact that economic factors outside of the control of Columbia Heights may prohibit its success. Likewise, the workplan should contain goals that can be measured and can be accomplished in the timeline.

As the final step in the workplan development, the Council should formally adopt all, or a portion, of the goals listed below.

CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS TOP SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

- **Develop a Pride of Home Ownership Plan**
 - Examine code enforcement process and structure
 - Develop education systems to residents about property/home maintenance
 - Explore financial incentives (rebates, mini-grants)
- **Conduct an Evaluation of City Services and Staffing Levels**
 - Recruit, train, and retain a talented and professional workforce
 - Develop a staff succession/transition plan
- **Develop a Communications Plan and staff position**
 - Explore more effective use of communication vehicles (i.e., newsletter)
 - Develop a job description and hire a Communications Coordinator or similar role
 - Engage multi-cultural communities, multiple languages in communications
 - Modernize use of technology to engage youth
- **Develop a Park Master Plan**
 - Explore public open spaces and develop better public uses where feasible
 - Communication of opportunities for park facilities
 - Develop a catalog of amenities
 - Signage in parks
- **Develop a Master Plan for new City Hall**
 - Follow library process as a model
- **Build on and expand collaboration with the School District, other public entities**
 - Explore further sharing of facilities
 - Joint promotion of programs
 - Connect municipal operations with educational curriculum where possible
- **Develop and implement strategies to support volunteerism within the community**
 - Coordinate with organizations regarding common goals/objectives
 - Encourage development of neighborhood groups

CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS REMAINING SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

- **"Get Ready for Company"**
- **Encourage commercial redevelopment of Central Avenue**
- **Expand Public Safety community engagement programs with emphasis on prevention**
- **Develop road, pedestrian, and safe routes initiatives to improve public safety**
- **Establish programs to expand interactions with art in the community**
- **Establish a Farmer's Market within the community**
- **Install entry signage at main points of entry into community**
- **Continue sliding scale for recreation programs**
- **Develop private-property Emerald Ash Borer Plan**
- **Expand Capital Improvement Plan to include all capital equipment across the City**

Next Steps

The workplan is ready for review and adoption by the City Council, which will key implementation by City staff. The City has invested quality time and effort into the review of mission and values, along with the development of a goals program. Ongoing review and measurement against the adopted goals will be an important action step for staff and the City Council.

In terms of implementation, there are a number of recommended ways to integrate the Vision, Mission, Cultural Values, and Short-Term Objectives into organizational processes. Some suggestions for application include the following:

- 1. Connect Council discussion and decision-making to Vision, Mission, and/or Short-Term Objectives.**

By establishing these priorities on behalf of the organization, the Council and staff will contribute a significant amount of resources to accomplishing at least the higher priority items. Additionally, opportunities for action will arise over the coming year that cannot be foreseen today. Therefore, if the City Council and staff regularly review the Short-Term Objectives, it will help the team stay focused and committed to action and consistently working towards accomplishment.

Some examples include reformatting Council agendas with placement of discussions/actions under the appropriate actions and/or establishing a category in staff reports to the council for "Alignment with City Vision/Mission/Objectives." These examples help provide a continuous and conscious effort to keep the agreed-upon objectives as the City's highest priorities. Another example – as Columbia Heights has done in the past – is to prominently display the Objectives in the Council Chambers and other visible locations in public facilities.

- 2. Develop Marketing/Communications materials to share Vision, Mission, and/or Short-Term Objectives with the community.**

Communicating the Vision, Mission, and Short-Term Objectives with the community help explain the "Why," "How," and "What" with the stakeholders. In the retreat, participants were encouraged to view a TED Talk developed by Simon Sinek titled "How Great Leaders Inspire Action." The main point of this presentation is that people first want to know why you're doing something before they'll support what you're doing. In the public application of this concept, community stakeholders care about why, then how, then what the City Leadership Team wants to accomplish.

Developing materials, such as handouts, social media bursts, webpages, etc., to communicate this City's direction is an important means to share the "Why," "How," and "What" with the community.

- 3. Develop Action Plans identifying achievable steps, personnel responsible, and timeframes for completion.**

With the policy direction established from the Council, accomplishment of these Objectives

begins with staff's ability to plan upcoming action. It is important to identify not just what you want to accomplish, but also who's responsible for it and under what timeframe.

There are many models for successful action plans, and Columbia Heights needs to look no further than the Annual Strategic Plan established by its Police Department for a good example of this method. In part because of its existing organizational establishment, but also because of its excellence, it is my recommendation that the City follow the same type of action planning document.

4. Regular check-ins with progress.

Review of the Objectives and monitoring of progress creates accountability, which will help the City reach the accomplishments it seeks. City staff (Department Head Group?) should review the goals often, at least quarterly, as a means of collaborating and working as a whole towards goal achievement. Check-ins with the City Council – perhaps semi-annually or annually – will also help keep these priorities at the forefront of the City's actions.

In conclusion, it was a pleasure to work with the City of Columbia Heights on this goal setting process. The City has an excellent leadership team that deeply cares about the community and the organization as a whole. This commitment to the community demonstrated itself through this process by the positive ways in which all the participants referred to the City, its residents, and each other. It was an honor to assist your team in the process of establishing its workplan for the coming years.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Kern", written in a cursive style.

Phil Kern
Facilitator