

City of Spencer, Iowa Strategic Planning and Goal Setting 2004

Mayor

Reynold Peterson

Council

Steven Bomgaars

Ed Krebs

Rich Prentice

Jim Roling

David Scott

Randy Swanson

Steve Waller

City Manager

Dean Torreson

City Clerk

Donna Fisher

City Attorney

Donald Hemphill



Facilitated by:

Patrick Callahan

Local Government Consultant

Institute of Public Affairs

The University of Iowa

(319) 335-4520

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CITY OF SPENCER, IOWA

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING SESSION

2004

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STRATEGIC PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING SESSION

2004

Introduction

The City of Spencer requested assistance from the Institute of Public Affairs in April, 2004, for a strategic planning and goal setting process. The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

1. Prepare a questionnaire to identify department needs, capital projects, and recommendations.
2. Prepare a list of the overall community development projects and suggested initiatives and policies based upon the comments of the elected officials and city department heads.
3. Conduct a strategic planning and goal setting session with the elected officials.
4. Preparation of this final report.

Goal Setting Work Session

City council members and the mayor held an informal non-binding work session that was conducted by the IPA on June 9, 2004. The city's elected officials were asked to do the following:

1. Review and update the long-term visions for the community. **(Exhibit A)**
2. Identify the major accomplishments of the city in 2002 and 2003. **(Exhibit B)**
3. Review the list of most important issues, concerns and trends facing the city in 2004. **(Exhibit C)**
4. Review and revise the list of potential initiatives, policies, and programs. **(Exhibit D)**
5. Indicate which initiatives and programs are the most urgent or important at this time.
6. Review and revise the list of potential community development projects. **(Exhibit E)**
7. Indicate which projects are the most urgent or important at this time.

Note: An agenda for the Goal Setting Session, the table of introduction and the questionnaire are attached to this report as **Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C**, respectively.

Initiatives and Programs - 2004

The mayor and city council identified the following initiatives and programs as the most urgent or important.

I. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL (GIVEN) BY THE COUNCIL

- A. Support the Nuisance Abatement Program.
- B. Keep pushing on West Beltway Project.

II. TOP PRIORITY ITEMS

- A. Retaining businesses that are already here (Business Call Program)

Action Plan

- 1. Encourage board to expand contacts.
- 2. Request written report on visits.

- B. Comprehensive review of economic development structure and effectiveness.

Action Plan

- 1. Continue prospective business contact program.
- 2. Conduct an “in-house” economic development program pro and con study.
- 3. Better inform the public on job creation efforts.
- 4. Publish a monthly newspaper article on economic development efforts.
- 5. Develop a cable channel “call-in program” on economic development.
- 6. Consult with the Spencer Municipal Utilities on economic development.
- 7. Conduct an economic development summit of all players in Clay County.

- C. Conduct a land use study for east Spencer.

Action Plan

- 1. Review the zoning map.
- 2. Review land use map.
- 3. Possible annexation study.
- 4. Involve the utilities in the effort.

- D. Develop a policy to guide future use of Landfill.

Action Plan

- 1. Update the landfill usage study.
- 2. Conduct a new customer impact study.
- 3. Develop a policy statement on the use of the landfill.

Note: A complete list of all programs and initiatives as ranked by the mayor and city council members is attached as **Exhibit D**.

Community Development Projects - 2004

The mayor and city council identified the following community development projects as the most urgent or important.

I. UNANIMOUS APPROVAL (GIVEN) BY THE COUNCIL

- A. New fire station addition
- B. Getting the west bypass back in IDOT plan – West Beltway Project
- C. New bridge on Grand Avenue – Include Amenities per City Plan
Action Plan
 - 1. Identify source of funding
- D. Complete the Downtown Renovation Project.

II. Top Priority Community Development Projects

- A. North Grand Avenue beautification
Action Plan
 - 1. Hire a consultant.
 - 2. Apply for grant money.
 - 3. Develop an action plan.
 - 4. Decide on billboards and signage.
 - 5. Study conversion of southern Highway Blvd to urban highway
 - 6. Place in CIP and Identify Source of Funding
- B. Continued replacing and repairing of streets.
Action Plan
 - 1. Continue Annual Appropriation from Local Option tax revenues
 - 2. Fund operation and maintenance with RUT money.
- C. Storm sirens installation
Action Plan
 - 1. Solicit bids for sirens ASAP.
 - 2. Use cash reserves from the general fund and LOST money to finance sirens.
- D. Second bridge
Action Plan
 - 1. Identify the overall need and advantages of the project.
 - 2. Conduct a traffic flow study.
 - 3. Identify location and connecting streets.
 - 4. Obtain an engineer's estimate.
 - 5. Identify potential revenues.
 - 6. Prepare a financial plan.

III. High Priority Community Development Projects

A. Continue the trail system.

Action Plan

1. Secure grants for 100% funding.
2. Follow through on the existing plan.

B. Study the use of TIF money for infrastructure and incentives

Action Plan

1. Examine current policy and usage
2. Determine if any changes to current policy are warranted.

Note: A completed listing of all community development projects is attached as **Exhibit E.**

FINAL COMMENTS

It was a pleasure to assist the City of Spencer with this strategic planning and goal setting process. I was extremely impressed with the level of cooperation and positive attitudes of the city department heads, city staff, and the elected officials.

There was obviously no shortage of projects, proposals, and ideas. The process of prioritizing and ranking the proposed community development projects and proposed initiatives and programs proved to be a challenging task, because there were so many excellent ideas.

It is important to note that the prioritizing of all the community development projects and various initiatives are not “cast in stone.” The two lists can be modified as new circumstances may dictate. Hopefully, the mayor and city council will repeat this process in 2005, which may result in some additional modifications.

It is strongly recommended that the city take the time to review the list of community development projects and list of initiatives and monitor the progress that is made on each item on a semi-annual basis. The city could use a format that listed the project or item side by side with a comment that updates the city council and the residents of the city on the progress that has been made on each item. If no progress has been made on the item then a comment on any future action or the reasons for no action may be appropriate.

Once again, thanks to the city staff, department heads, mayor, and city council members for the great cooperation and timely response during this process.

Patrick Callahan
IPA Local Government Consultant
June 25, 2004