

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
March 24, 2016**

A Special Meeting was held by the Schertz City Council of the City of Schertz, Texas, on March 24, 2016 at 9:00 a.m., at the Fairfield Inn & Suites, meeting room, Schertz, Texas. The following members present to-wit:

Mayor Michael Carpenter
Councilmember Jim Fowler

Mayor Pro-Tem Cedric Edwards
Councilmember Robin Thompson

Staff Present:

Executive Director Brian James
Executive Director Bob Cantu
City Attorney Charles Zech
Assistant to City Manager Sarah Gonzalez
Assistant Finance Director James Walters
GIS Coordinator Tony McFalls

City Manager John Kessel
Executive Director Dudley Wait
Executive Director Kyle Kinatader
City Secretary Brenda Dennis
Finance Director Juan Santoya
IT Director Myles Clauser

Councilmembers Azzoz and John were absent.

Guests Present:

Mr. Robert Brockman (left at 9:00 a.m.)
Mr. Glen Outlaw (left at 3:09 p.m.)

Call to Order (General Comments)

Mayor Pro-Tem Cedric Edwards arrived at 11:04 a.m.

Mayor Carpenter called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

Welcome/Overview

- Discussion and direction in preparation for pre-budget prioritization process, including but not limited to key growth and service provision indicators such as population growth, tax base development, staffing levels and structure, and how to apply the information to assist in appropriate priority based decision making. (J. Kessel)

Mayor, Council and staff discussed the following topics:

- Pre-Budget Overview

Mr. Kessel outlined the goals for the retreat to include the following:

- Using the strategic plan with the budget process

Mayor and Council reviewed the Committee of Committees Advisory Board (CCAB) SWOT's which were brainstormed during their meeting yesterday, Wednesday, March 23, 2016.

CCAB:

Strengths

- Public Safety Staff
- Planning for future (vision)
 - Medical complex, industrial, etc.
- Low crime rate
- Partnerships
 - Cities, counties, RAFB, etc.
- Water Supply
- Efforts to gain citizen input

Weaknesses

- Communication
- Citizen involvement/engagement
- Public Safety Staffing
- FM 1518 and FM 78 Code issues

Opportunities

- Community Public Safety
- Growth
- Development
- More parks and open space
- Partnerships
 - Cities, counties, RAFB, etc.

Threats

- Decaying Neighborhoods
- Lack of understanding of civic issues
- Code enforcement (lowering of standards)
- Managing development (high/good standards)
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Mayor and Council reviewed the staffs SWOT's which were brainstormed during their meeting yesterday.

STAFF:

Strengths

- Partnerships with outside cities, agencies
- Focus on long-range planning
- High quality public safety

Weaknesses

- Improving systems/processes to keep pace with change

- Adequate staffing/resources
- Long list of needed roadway improvements (currently)

Opportunities

- Build on partnerships
- Continued responsible budgeting (spending within our means)
- Improved long range planning

Threats

- Emergency preparedness
- Economic downturn
- Adequate staffing/resources to keep pace with growth

- Develop City-wide SWOT

Council developed the following:

Strengths

- Focus on long range planning
- High quality public safety
- Low Crime rate

Weaknesses

- Location for retail development (bookended by existing retail hubs)
- Not pedestrian friendly throughout entire community
- Adequate maintenance of equipment, infrastructure

Opportunities

- Opportunities to expand ETJ
- Forward thinking
- Continue responsible budgeting/spending within our means)

Mayor Carpenter recessed the meeting at 11:55 a.m., for lunch break.

Mayor Carpenter reconvened the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

- Develop City-wide SWOT continued

Mayor and Council finalized their City-wide SWOT's

Threats

- Adequate staffing/resources to keep pace with growth (listed twice under two different categories)
- Adequate staffing/resources to keep pace with growth
- Impact of changing leadership on maintaining a consistent direction and focus

Senior Staff joined Council at 1:00 p.m.

- Develop City-wide SWOT continued with staff

Mayor Carpenter briefed staff on the Council's City-wide SWOT's they brainstormed on today. He provided the following comments.

Particularly with adequate staffing and resources to keep pace with growth under Safe Community, Council matched staff and also felt strongly about staffing and resources. They also included this as a high quality of life item.

Regarding the impact of changing leadership on maintaining a consistent direction and focus, it is different than what staff selected.

Regarding commentary on depth of succession planning, anyone on Council could leave. Without that succession planning it is a threat of on-going things that we are working on together to accomplish.

Mayor Carpenter stated that in regard to economic downturn, he and the City Manager have been talking about this and one of the things we saw with our audit report where it talks about our reserves that have gone up and the ratio has gone down, etc. If we are moving upward in a micro-economic condition and things continue to grow and we do not have a major recession, then we can keep going as we are going now. If our competition has not planned as well as we have and they have to follow the micro-economic downturn, instead of maintaining their trajectory, they are at a disadvantage to us. With our strong reserve position we can draw down on it temporarily during the down turn and maintain our trajectory.

Mr. Kessel stated that a way to look at this is our reserve now is our new floor and whatever percentage we think we need for a downturn should take us down to that floor. We are not yet in a position to overcome a downturn such as 2008. Mr. Kessel continued dialog regarding the need for reserves and at what percent.

Staff provided their comments as to why they had chosen high quality public safety and the consequences were the low crime rate. Mayor Carpenter stated that if we ever took our eyes off of making sure we maintain our strength position of having a low crime rate we would be doing ourselves a disservice in putting ourselves in a position of quickly changing our priorities.

Mayor Carpenter commented on the adequate maintenance of equipment and infrastructure item. He stated when we talked about this Council felt this was inclusive of a long list of needed road improvements.

In regard to the 'not pedestrian friendly throughout the entire community' priority, this was closely related to the location for retail development priority. Location for retail development got more votes than any other thing in the room. There was commentary around driving the economic engine; everything else on the list, for the most part, we need money to do it.

Another item Council focused on was that staff said improving systems/processes to keep pace with change. This did not come on Council's radar because they see the many examples of staff doing a great job from their perspective of making the improvements. For Council not to list it was a compliment to staff. Council and staff continued discussion regarding their priority of improving systems/processes to keep pace with change and why they chose this.

Mayor Carpenter commented on the process of Council and staff explaining why they chose their priorities. Council and staff aligned more, and this was not ever done before. He stated it also gets us close to the policy ideas, what we think is the highest and best place of where we want to go and staff's realities are starting to get a lot closer.

Council is getting a better feel of what staff is going through in trying to execute what we do in the various departments and his hope is that staff is also getting a better view of what the Council is thinking. Council is more aware of the staff's struggle to a better degree and this will help when staff comes forward to request an item.

- Work Program Development

Pre-selected staff presented "currently underway" and "proposed" work programs to the group.

- 2 Breakout session with Council/Staff which included the following:

- Brainstorm work programs that tie in with City-wide SWOT

Mayor, Council and staff within the 2 breakout sessions brainstormed possible work programs and provided reports back to the group.

- Reorganization discussion

Mr. Kessel provided information regarding the reorganization of departments with the departure and retirement of Executive Director Bob Cantu and Public Works Director Sam Willoughby.

- Wrap up

Mayor Carpenter stated on behalf of Council, please believe that with the collaborative work we have done here today, trying and not being successful and then learning from that and explaining your experience to your colleagues so they can also learn from it, is still a win. All of us are going to make errors, but let us make sure that we as a team create an environment of trying to move forward. We have to trust one another because as we get bigger, the work gets harder.

Mayor Pro-Tem Edwards stated the environment is changing and we have to be adaptable and be aware of the change around us. We have to take ownership and train our successors. He asked staff to go back and tell their employees that council really appreciates them.

Councilmember Thompson summarized that we just need to learn, grow, mature, and get better. We can only do this by trying.

Councilmember Fowler complimented staff on working together as a team and looking towards the future in spite of a lot of unknowns. He feels we are up to the challenge. Each person's job is very important. We may not yet be where we want to be but we will get there.

Adjournment

Mayor Carpenter adjourned the meeting at 4:43 p.m.



Michael R. Carpenter, Mayor

ATTEST:



Brenda Dennis, City Secretary