



POLICY AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting
October 26, 2010

Chairperson Yeh called the meeting to order at 8:04 p.m. in the Council Conference Room, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

Present: Yeh (Chair), Holman, Shepherd

Absent: Price

1. Oral Communications

Fred Balin spoke regarding the Protocols and Procedures where an Applicant changed or agreed to a Council suggested change during a Council meeting.

Tom Jordan spoke regarding the tentative schedule on the back of the agenda.

2. Discussion and Recommendations on Role and Purpose of Policy & Services Committee for Inclusion in Council Protocols.

City Manager, James Keene stated due to Staff changes he would be stepping in to assist with the item. He asked for clarification on the status of the item.

Council Member Shepherd stated her interest was to determine the purpose of the Policy & Services Committee and to define guidelines for pursuing projects.

Mr. Keene stated the goal would be for Policy & Services to construct the concept of the role and purpose of Policy & Services and present them to the full Council for approval or adaptations.

Chair Yeh stated the purpose of Policy & Services was to be utilized as a sounding board for Staff and as guidance for Council. Prior to the departure of the Policy & Services Staff liaison there was mention of a retreat to gather information on how Staff felt Policy & Services could assist them with prioritizing projects, programs and services.

Mr. Keene stated due to the degree of vacancies at the senior Staff level the retreat had not occurred.

Chair Yeh stated the first bullet in the Staff Report captured the concept of balancing and prioritizing the workload. The second bullet related to Policy & Services being in a position to provide substantive feedback for what were the core services and programs. There is a need to find a balance between the financial aspects of the City with the drive for the program.

Mr. Keene suggested language as "The intent and purpose of the Policy & Services Committee was to proactively evaluate community issues and the organizations capacity and focus on the context of the interest base of policy setting." He stated the goal to respond in a timely manner as an organization that reflected community values in City programs and services.

Council Member Holman asked for clarification on the difference between the role of Policy & Services and the purpose of Policy & Services.

Chair Yeh stated both standing Committees had similar language in the Municipal Code regarding their role. In order to alter the role of the Policy & Services Committee there needed to be an Ordinance adopted; whereas by determining the protocols for Policy & Services and vetting them through Council the Municipal Code was not changed.

Council Member Holman asked how the role was being differentiated from the purpose.

Chair Yeh stated the purpose language was to provide more value based detail whereas the role language listed in the Municipal Code was a generic statement of what the Committee provided to Council.

Council Member Shepherd stated the Municipal Code did not differentiate between Policy & Services Committee and the Finance Committee. The Policy & Services Committee was an administrative, procedures-based Committee and in being such needed to be clearly defined by its purpose.

Council Member Holman stated the City Managers' suggested verbiage was an improvement. She recommended changing the wording from "respond" to "responsible" in the following statement. "The goal was to be responsible respond in a timely manner as an organization that reflected community values in City programs and services".

Chair Yeh stated responsive was something that the community expected from government. He felt as though being responsible was inclusive of being responsive. He clarified there were times when being proactive was necessary and others where being responsive was preferred.

Council Member Shepherd stated the term responsive had a connotation that action was going to be taken where the term responsible was more passive. Her understanding of the purpose and role of Policy & Services was to be responding to issues and proactively evaluating them.

Council Member Holman asked for clarification on the terminology of interest based policy setting.

Council Member Shepherd stated it was looking at concerns and issues without financial implications. The goal was to capture the essence of the community.

Council Member Holman requested Staff edit the language to be clearer.

Mr. Keene stated Staff would return to Policy & Services on November 9, 2010 with a revised draft for their review. He wanted to be clear that the role of Policy & Services as policy makers was to identify and define the priorities being initiated from the Council retreat. He stated the goal of the Council was to have Policy & Services working on a two year work plan for Council priorities. There needed to be consideration of a parallel work plan with the budget to ensure Council priorities had the financial sustenance necessary to move forward.

Council Member Holman stated combining the priorities with the budget made sense although she asked how the input would be delivered and what timeframe would the information need to be available in order to give the Finance Committee the ability to assimilate the information.

Council Member Shepherd stated the budget process although well organized was a difficult one. She felt some of the tougher issues needed to continue, such as the sidewalks. Her thought was Policy & Services could take on the issue, analyze it, and allow Staff to prepare the item for the return of the next budget season.

Chair Yeh stated a two-year rolling calendar for Council's Policy and Procedures would be beneficial. He clarified with work planning the goal was to take the full set of Council priorities, work with Staff, and task the Sub-Committees with bringing back something actionable to Policy & Services.

Mr. Keene stated Staff would return to Policy & Services prepared to address the key desires as he understood them; first, how to develop a meaningful, high level, strategic workplan around the Council priorities and second, how to dig down into policy issues or service questions at the right time of the year in order to develop new directives. He stated there were models where budget and research collaborated; those models would be suitable for this course of action.

Council Member Holman stated a policy discussion related to budgetary items could be assisted by the Staff associated with those items. She emphasized not wanting to fatigue the community by having them assume the need to attend the Policy & Services meeting and the community meeting regarding the same matter. She asked the feasibility of the budget process being a two-year process. She felt any efficiencies that were available would be beneficial to avoid rehashing the same items each year.

Mr. Keene stated the City had done a two-year budget in a sense, they adopt the first year while the second budget year was in concept. He noted it was easier to have a biennial budget in stable times rather than in changing times. He clarified it was more difficult to predict budgetary occurrences eighteen months out opposed to six months out. He stated if there was revenue loss or gain there was need to revisit the second year to determine the choices being mandated by the economy.

Council Member Holman recommended adding items initiated by Committee or those brought forward by Staff to the last line of Annual Committee Work Planning.

Council Member Shepherd asked whether the recommended verbiage needed to be its own bullet. She stated the verbiage should read if a Colleagues Memo was presented with an item or when they recommend a proposed topic list for the annual budget.

Council Member Holman agreed as long as the verbiage was added to the role and purpose she felt it could be its own bullet or added to the second bullet.

Mr. Keene stated there was value in reviewing the matrix as an immersion process for the new Council members. He suggested the simplest approach would be to identify the Council priorities, break down into the key initiatives for each priority, then define the detail within each key.

Council Member Shepherd stated the 2010 Council priorities were listed on the See-It site which had not been updated other than unloading the priorities. She noted the use of the site or any other type of notification system was not useful if it was not maintained or updated with the status of the priorities.

Mr. Keene stated the goal of Policy & Services was to identify the priorities they would be addressing then direct Staff to delve deeply into the structure of the issue and return with probable solutions. Finance and Policy & Services could have a reconciliation of budget matters relating to the Council priorities by April prior to the release of the budget discussions. The Finance Committee dealt with more than the Council priorities during budget.

Chair Yeh stated they should consider what would appeal to future Committee members. He reiterated the beginning of the first year was to set the initial work plan then in mid year breakout into Sub-Committees where each group worked on a specific achievable item. The goal would not be to cross any operational lines while becoming a dynamic process for the Committee.

Mr. Keene stated the recommended structure made sense. However there needed to be discipline and agreement amongst the Council and Sub-Committee members as to which items to focus on.

Council Member Holman stated being able to focus on two to three priorities and accomplish them successfully each year was important. She observed items needed to filter through Policy & Services at a more streamlined pace.

Chair Yeh stated if Staff was to re-guide the Sub-Committee in a different direction there needed to be valid context behind the guidance provided to Council. He clarified once a project had been reviewed by Policy & Services and had been taken over by Staff it needed to be removed from the Policy & Services work plan to be replaced by another project.

Council Member Holman stated Policy & Services was still required to follow-up on the item to ensure its completion though.

Mr. Keene stated the leadership position of Policy & Services was to select the priorities representative of policy makers, there was listening to the community and to Staff.

Council Member Shepherd stated Palo Alto had a strong presence in community service and Policy & Services should be able to utilize their skill and expertise when a project calls for it as do the majority of other Boards and Commissions.

Chair Yeh stated there needed to be a clear expectation for what serving on Policy & Services would mean and what direction the recommended structure was heading in.

Mr. Keene stated the potential was to have more of a policy leadership role than an oversight and accountability role.

Council Member Shepherd stated there was a process in place for cutting the budget whereas there was a lack of process in the methodology. She stated the role of policy leader gave way to the probability of creating a deliberative process.

Mr. Keene asked for direction to reformat the structure and calendar in a way that provided more clarity and operational lease for Staff and Policy & Services.

Council Member Holman mentioned the return of minutes appeared to be cycling back slowly, she asked for an explanation.

City Clerk, Donna Grider stated there was limited staffing in the Clerk's Department and she had eliminated the use of the outside transcriptionist during the budget process. With the addition of the High Speed Rail meetings, maintaining Council minutes and Policy & Services adding a second meeting per month there was a lack of capacity for a faster turn around.

Council Member Holman suggested Staff provide a summary of action rather than minutes in a more timely fashion.

Ms. Grider clarified the terminology of Action Minutes covered the Motions voted on during the meeting such as the Action Agenda's that were released the week following a Council meeting.

Council Member Holman stated there would need to be a Motion made for what Policy & Services would be requesting of Staff.

Chair Yeh summarized the potential Motion as "Staff revise the Policy & Services Committee Role, Purpose and Work Planning document to reflect the comments made on the Purpose Statement, the Annual Committee Work Planning and Role of the Committee and Annual Budget Process."

Mr. Keene stated the connection to calendar should be included and brought back to Policy & Services on November 9th.

MOTION: Chair Yeh moved, seconded by Council Member Holman to request that Staff return to the Policy and Services Committee at the November 9, 2010 meeting with the revised Policy & Services Committee Role, Purpose and Work Planning document to reflect the comments made on the Purpose Statement, the Annual Committee Work Plan and Role of the Committee, and Annual Budget Process including a two-year rolling priorities calendar and create a Committee Initiated Topics List.

Council Member Holman asked for clarification that the recommended Committee initiated topics be a second bullet added to the Motion.

Council Member Shepherd asked if Staff could develop more detail for the Committee Initiated Topics list.

Mr. Keene agreed.

MOTION PASSED: 3-0 Price Absent

MOTION: Council Member Holman moved, seconded by Council Member Shepherd to authorize the City Clerk to provide Summary Action Minutes to the Policy and Services Committee prior to the completion of the standard Sense Minutes.

MOTION PASSED: 3-0 Price Absent

Mr. Keene asked for clarification if Policy & Services approved the reformatted Role, Purpose and Work Planning documentation on November 9th the next step would be to recommend the approval from the full Council.

Chair Yeh stated that was correct.

Mr. Keene suggested recommending to the full Council for consideration the two-year priority cycle prior to presenting the Role, Purpose and Work Planning documentation. He stated separating the items out may lead to a more rapidly and simpler fashion.

Council Member Holman stated she supported recommending the two-year cycle to Council after clearer language was developed in support of the two-year priorities opposed to the previous procedures in a one-year priority.

Chair Yeh stated the procedures and protocols were reviewed previously with a suggested alteration for two-years. The original concept was to review all of the concerns prior to sending the recommendation to Council.

Council Member Shepherd asked whether the procedures and protocols were ready to go to Council.

Council Member Holman stated there were a few more items that needed to be sent to the City Attorney's Office.

Mr. Keene stated it was beneficial for Staff to bring to Council the completed portions, than to wait.

Council Member Holman agreed with the understanding Council would be notified there were follow-up items awaiting legal input.

Chair Yeh stated no action could be taken on the Council Procedures and Protocols since it was not agendaized. By consensus the Committee had signed off on the recommended changes to the Council Procedures and Protocols.

Ms. Grider stated at the last Policy & Services meeting there was a Motion to move forward with recommending the Council Procedures and Protocols changes to the full Council.

Mr. Keene stated Staff would add the Council Procedures and Protocols to the tentative agenda, return to the Committee as directed with the re-formatted Role, Purpose and Work Planning documentation and verify with the City Attorney the status of the Council Procedures and Protocols that needed review.

3. Recommendation to Council on Discussion Topic for January Council Retreat: Definition and Intent of Council Priorities

Council Member Shepherd stated three of the priorities; Finance, Land Use and Environmental Sustainability. She mentioned sustainability had been a priority in one manner or another for over twenty years. There were two new priorities that had specific changes Council had seen them emerge, develop, expand and integrate into the City; Emergency Preparation and Project Safety Net. There were other items of importance that she felt were priorities within the main three such as the High Speed Rail, Economic Development.

Chair Yeh stated if the Committee shifted to two-year priorities calendar what was the timeframe being proposed for completion of the tasks. He clarified

some tasks had a greater level specificity and the ability to be actionable through all five levels of priority.

Mr. Keene stated an important component to prioritization was differentiation focusing on the work plan and revisiting the status in summer/fall of each year.

Council Member Holman stated if you were to look at how the City was structured, some of the priorities would be continuous. She stated the Committee was recommending a two-year priority cycle be approved by Council there needed to be a reason to remove the standing items while allowing room for emerging items.

Council Member Shepherd felt sustainability and finance were too broad of categories. She stated balancing the budget was in the Charter so why was it necessary to be a priority.

Project Manager, Rob Braulik clarified sustainability itself was a broad category although there were issues within the category that could and should be resolved within the two-year cycle.

Mr. Keene stated any time Council noted an issue as a priority there was going to be attention drawn to it. Therefore removing the category from the priority list would create confusion for the community causing them to question why. He suggested an exercise to determine what the guiding values of the City were ultimately part of its brand or identity. He noted there were identity values that the City stood for year in and year out that would remain on the list.

Chair Yeh suggested during the January meeting a distinctive difference between the values and the priorities should be determined.

Council Member Holman suggested maintaining a log of Council Priorities past and present. The log should be updated with future priorities to track their status.

Council Member Shepherd stated the tracking list suggested sounded like a Mission Statement use by organizations such as a non-profit. She stated each year at the retreat the tracking list would be verified for accuracy and to ensure the goals listed were within the means of the organization.

Chair Yeh stated traditionally at the end of each year the Council received a listing of Council Priorities that had been accomplished.

Mr. Keene suggested converting the recommendation to be broader with specifics by adding a glossary of terminology, adding a Mission Statement and values.

Council Member Shepherd stated she agreed with the idea of branding and was beginning to articulate the differences.

Mr. Keene stated the issue for the City was it had to define the strategies and ultimately distinguish Palo Alto from other places.

Council Member Holman suggested the Henry Clay quote should be the header on the Council Priorities prior to submitting them to Council. She stated those words would assist in setting the framework for the priorities. She asked for clarification on the term branding.

Mr. Keene stated the term branding had multiple meanings. For the City, it was a way to express the values and assess who we are. He stated if the City was a company our brand would be what we stood for; what our product was, what we believed in.

Council Member Shepherd stated for example FedEx; their identity is to get you the package the next day. If they forget that then they lose their edge. For some of us clarifying what we are about is what branding our identity is.

Council Member Holman stated she felt the Henry Clay quote should be what the City stood for and believed in.

Mr. Keene stated the Mayor and Vice Mayor determined the agenda for the retreat. He stated if the Committee had thoughts they could share them with the Mayor and Vice Mayor for the retreat, he was sensitive about the traditional process.

MOTION: Council Member Holman moved, seconded by Council Member Shepherd to bring back some suggestions from Policy & Services about some discussions at the January retreat in particular if the priority setting was not necessary due to the two-year process and you could innumerate some food for thought things.

MOTION PASSED: 3-0 Price Absent

4. Discussion for Future Meeting Schedules and Agendas

Chair Yeh stated the items discussed for return were Project Safety Net, Role Purpose and Work Planning and the January Council Retreat Discussion for November 9th. Schedule the Community Private Partnerships for December 14th and the Scoping Discussion for the Land Use Priority for November 30th.

City Manager, James Keene suggested the topics of discussion for the January Council Retreat needed to be simple. He stated the Role, Purposes and Work Planning item should be taken care of.

City Clerk, Donna Grider stated the November 9th meeting items needed to be available to be incorporated into the packet for November 3rd.

Chair Yeh stated if the information was delivered on November 4th they would have met their legal obligation.

Ms. Grider stated that was correct.

Mr. Keene stated Staff would strive to have the items completed for the regular Council packet on the 3rd and if not then the information will go out on November 4th.

Council Member Holman stated the final follow-up items on Protocols and Procedures should be on the agenda for November 9th.

Ms. Grider clarified the items included the late submittals, the purpose statement and the City Attorney bargaining with Applicants.

Chair Yeh suggested the late submittal item return on November 30th. He stated it was not as time sensitive as other items needing to be discussed on November 9th.

Council Member Holman stated her preference was to complete the late submittal discussion on the 9th and move Project Safety Net to November 30th.

Chair Yeh noted his concern was staffing resources. There was currently a major transition taking effect in the City Attorney's office.

Mr. Keene felt with the Staff shortages throughout the City he needed to ensure if Staff was in attendance their time would be utilized. It was not efficient to have Staff sit through an entire meeting then have the item continued.

Chair Yeh stated he felt it would be good to have a final review at the Committee level of the Electronic Management System prior to its implementation in 2011.

Mr. Keene suggested December 14th to agendaize the Electronic Management System.

Ms. Grider suggested Greg Hermann be in attendance for that meeting.

Council Member Shepherd asked whether it had been confirmed the Council would have iPads.

Mr. Keene the meeting on the 14th of December would be to follow-up on the status of the program. There was going to be multiple levels and phases to the process that could take the City in different directions. The iPad was one option being considered.

Chair Yeh stated on November 30th there was an actionable item with Economic Development and the Human Resources Policy Issues.

Mr. Keene stated the Human Resources Policy Issues could move out to the 14th of December.

Chair Yeh stated without the Human Resources Policy Issues on the agenda for the 30th with the Economic Development there was flexibility to move the Late Submittals. He clarified the final meeting would consist of the Legislative Program, Core Services, Post Mortem on the Budget Discussion which was the intent of the Budget Prioritization Process.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 10:13 p.m.