



POLICY AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting
November 30, 2010

Chairperson Yeh called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. in the Council Conference Room, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

Present: Yeh (Chair), Holman, Price, Shepherd

Absent:

1. Public Comment

None.

2. Discussion of Policy and Services (P&S) Council Priorities and Council Retreat Discussion.

City Manager, James Keene stated the Policy and Services Committee (P&S) had three follow up items from their last meeting as follows: 1) reflect on the purpose statement adopted by P&S; 2) what constituted a Council priority, and how Council might best identify priorities at its Council retreat (retreat); and 3) when the two-year period, for Council priorities, should commence. Staff was considering January 22, 2011 for the retreat. He reminded P&S that the Council would not create a new set of priorities for the upcoming year. Instead, Council would focus on what the priorities were. He suggested identifying a few big topics to discuss. Staff could develop action steps, outputs, and outcomes for the Council Priorities for the upcoming year and return to P&S in the first quarter with P&S adoption for forwarding to Council by April 1, 2011. He recommended that P&S identify a number of topics for review, study, and action at the start of the calendar year. These projects should form the foundation of the P&S work plan for the year.

Chair Yeh suggested that P&S review Staff's recommendations to adopt a two-year priority option to become effective this year, with next priority setting process or discuss and recommend to Council the cycle start for two-year priorities, adopt the recommendation on the P&S Annual Schedule and Work Planning, and discuss and potentially adopt some recommendations for possible consideration for inclusion at the January retreat.

Council Member Holman stated she was interested in her colleagues' opinions on three-year Council priorities. She stated it had been difficult to accomplish priorities when the Council shifted terms, and the Council was required to start over each time.

Council Member Shepherd stated her immediate response was to support three-year priorities. Sustainability of the environment and sustainability of the budget should be included in the priorities. Civic engagement was dropped off, as a priority, last year and should be revisited.

Council Member Price agreed with three-year priorities terms. It was important not to send the message that the Council had three years to complete these priorities though. There should be timelines and pressure to accomplish them. She stated it was helpful to have a transition period. She suggested that P&S consider a three-year cycle this time, and then return to a two-year cycle once an adept system was in place. In recent years, there was a disconnect in budget recommendations that had policy implications.

Council Member Holman stated obtaining a report from Staff, with milestones included, would address Council Member Price's concern.

Council Member Price asked when the proposed three-year cycle would commence.

Council Member Holman proposed that the three-year cycle start in January of the previous year.

Chair Yeh felt it was unanimous that P&S agreed on a three-year cycle. This would allow P&S to dive deep into the Council priorities. P&S could hold a discussion on how to shape the three years to create workability. During that period, some things may be able to be removed from the list as tasks are completed.

Mr. Keene supported a three-year cycle. He stated it would provide a better opportunity to gain linkage with the budget. He requested that P&S keep in mind these were broad priorities, so the emphasis in a given year would be on smaller chunks of the subsets of the priorities.

Council Member Price stated the priority on sustainability had become part of the City's culture. It was her belief that it may not need to stand alone as a priority, as this action was imbedded in all the Council priorities. She suggested Council discuss this at the retreat.

Council Member Shepherd stated a priority should have a beginning, middle, and end. She suggested including core principles, or guiding principles, that would never be removed from the agenda.

Council Member Holman requested that the use of the word sustainability be corrected. She stated the Council's priority was on environmental sustainability, which had a completely different focus than sustainability.

Council Member Shepherd stated environmental sustainability had been a priority for over twenty years.

Council Member Holman stated she did not realize how long environmental sustainability had been a priority. City finances and land use concerns were issues that came up regularly.

Council Member Shepherd stated she was not advocating to remove them, but to internalize them as core principles.

Council Member Price stated environmental sustainability could apply to several other priorities, and may not need to be a stand-alone priority. Many City projects were land use and transportation related. The question still remained on how many priorities could be manageable in a three-year cycle.

Mr. Keene supported distinguishing a guiding principle and a Council priority. In order for the Council to not have to recreate the Council priorities, they should be extended for an additional two years. He proposed that the Council discuss guiding principles, and as a parallel discuss with the Council priorities at the retreat. The Council priorities created confusion as projects may extend for longer than one year. Sticking with the same Council priorities next year would allow the Council to delve deeper into the Council priorities. If P&S requested to change the priorities this year, it would create a problem with the notion for creating a longer Council priority cycle.

Council Member Price stated it was important to keep the current Council priorities in order to make manageable progress.

Mr. Keene concurred with Council Member Price. He added that the Council should identify core principles.

Council Member Shepherd stated P&S should define what distinguished Palo Alto from neighboring communities. The retreat could be used to study what had occurred during the year. She recommended a mission statement, encompassing all the priorities, which could guide the Council for the next two years.

Chair Yeh stated it was his belief P&S was establishing a timeframe that worked well. It made sense to him to be able to continue the Council priorities, and use the guiding principles to assist the Council in that endeavor.

Council Member Holman stated the Henry Clay quote located on King Plaza, City's Charter, Comprehensive Plan, and the published Budget all contained different mission statements. The City had branding scattered throughout its documents, and none of them were consistent or grounded. She suggested that each City department have its own vision that was drawn from one specific document.

Council Member Price inquired whether this discussion would occur at, or subsequent to, the retreat.

Council Member Holman stated departmentalizing information was a way to formulate how Staff Reports were delivered.

Chair Yeh stated Staff Reports were technical documents. He suggested changing the tone of Staff Reports by integrating core principles into them.

Council Member Holman stated, if the guiding principles were clearly communicated, they could be referenced in Staff Reports.

Mr. Keene stated he did not recommend segregating City departments, as Staff had been working to unify City departments. Staff's goal was to have alignment, unification, and healthy boundaries. Council's first responsibility was to clarify their guiding principles. He said it was not typical for elected bodies to go through this exercise. It would be helpful for Staff if the Council could articulate what was important. This would allow Staff to ensure the guiding principles were in line. He inquired how important it was to P&S to create messages on what a City was all about in terms of attracting new employees or businesses.

Assistant City Manager, Pamela Antil stated her decision on choosing to work for Palo Alto was based on agenda items and the City Manager's vision. It was her belief that a focused message represented the vision or values of the organization. The more dialogue and wordsmithing that occurred, the more the mission statement was lost.

Management Specialist, Rob Braulik stated having guiding principles from Council was essential, especially regarding land use Staff Reports. It would be easy to incorporate guiding principles into Staff Reports. He agreed with the idea of creating a branding statement to attract new businesses to the City.

Council Member Holman stated setting guiding principles and sticking to them would set an example of integrity and purpose within the community.

City Clerk, Donna Grider stated Staff Reports used to reflect Council priorities by containing a symbol on them. Council priorities could be indicated on the Council agenda and Staff Reports moving forward.

Council Member Shepherd stated, as a new Council Member, it was difficult to comprehend the different components of the community. The topics of High Speed Rail and Stanford were main focuses, and the City should be reflective of such important issues. Staff Reports should clarify differentiations, instead of simply packaging them. She indicated it would be helpful to have core principles, and a mission statement. She felt the Palo Alto Unified School District, and people within the community, influenced new residents and businesses. She suggested that when priorities arose they should be revisited and changed as they developed. She spoke on defining a priority, and discussing the term at the retreat.

Council Member Price agreed that most statements applied to 98 percent of all cities. She inquired how Palo Alto stood out. Palo Alto had advantages that other communities did not have. She spoke on incorporating these advantages into Staff Reports. She spoke on Staff's challenge interpreting guiding principles when writing Staff Reports.

Chair Yeh suggested bringing the concepts of core principles, strategic initiatives, and Council priorities to the retreat.

Council Member Price inquired whether it would be helpful if the Council formulated a few sentences about their own core beliefs prior to the retreat.

Mr. Keene stated yes. He spoke on the Council as being task oriented, yet the public spoke on the Palo Alto process as being untimely.

Ms. Antil suggested that Staff connect the line-of-site between Council priorities and goals that have already been established. She supported incorporating them into Staff Reports.

Council Member Holman stated Staff expressed frustration because Staff did not always have a focus. She recommended that Council write down their thoughts ahead of time to share at the retreat. She spoke on the idea to take photographs of things, within the City, which Council Members liked and disliked to share at the retreat.

Mr. Keene stated the exercise would mostly be a positive one. He spoke on a number of recent developments that residents disliked. Questions for P&S to think about were what they liked and disliked, what they have seen in other jurisdictions that they liked and disliked, and how they would change them. He stated it was essential to focus on the positive aspect of the exercise. The outcome of the exercise should bring the Council to a collective agreement on the direction the Council should take.

Council Member Shepherd stated this was part of the risk-taking process. She read the Henry Clay quote. She felt the Henry Clay quote was incomplete, as it did not talk about civic engagement or contain a mission statement. Staff was expected to do more than ever before, and they should be honest about what could and could not be accomplished. She requested that services that have been added, taken away, or could potentially be taken away be analyzed.

Chair Yeh inquired whether Council Member Shepherd's discussion was separate from the discussion on Council priorities.

Council Member Shepherd stated her concern related to sustainability. She recommended that Staff prepare two sets of goals. One report on what Council wanted to infuse and one on what Council could potentially remove.

Council Member Price inquired how long the retreat typically lasted.

Mr. Keene stated the retreat was typically a day-long event.

Council Member Price stated, given the timeframe, Council should focus on the Council priority term cycle, core principles, exit strategies, and removal of Council priorities.

Chair Yeh stated the first topic, in the retreat, had traditionally been the Council's annual schedule and work plan. The danger of bringing Council Member Price's suggestions to the retreat was that P&S would be laying the framework for the next two years. Staff needed time to implement and pursue the principles. He suggested splitting the year.

Council Member Shepherd stated work plan items should be cycling through P&S. She spoke on the possible removal of sidewalk repair services.

Chair Yeh stated the context of sidewalk repair services would be discussed during the Budget review process. He inquired whether P&S wanted to hold a role in a pre or post mortem review of the City's Budget.

Mr. Keene spoke on holding a post mortem discussion. This meeting would be a review of the adopted Budget. This would be a discussion on what came out of the budget. He spoke on cost-sharing opportunities with residents. He spoke on his recommendation to not preclude the ability to change a work plan for the year.

Council Member Price inquired whether Staff would have to follow through with all adopted work plan items, even if circumstances changed. She inquired whether this subject area had other implications that should be examined.

Mr. Keene stated work plan items may be placed in a parking lot by a Motion.

MOTION: Council Member Holman moved, seconded by Council Member Price to recommend to the Council to adopt a three-year priority cycle that began on January 1, 2010.

Council Member Shepherd recommended that P&S incorporate the concepts of branding, creating a City-wide mission statement, and formulating an elevator speech. She suggested reevaluating whether the Council priorities were priorities or simply part of the operations of the City.

Council Member Holman felt a separate discussion on these topics should happen at the retreat.

Mr. Keene stated that Council Member Shepherd's recommendation could be included in another Motion, in conjunction with the other recommendations.

Council Member Shepherd inquired whether the Council priorities were limited to the current five Council priorities. She spoke on additional priorities that had been discussed by the Council.

Chair Yeh stated not all strategic priorities and work plan items discussed at P&S meetings have been brought to the Council for discussion.

Council Member Shepherd stated the budget post mortem discussion would not occur until the second half of the year.

INCORPORATED INTO THE MOTION WITH THE CONSENT OF THE MAKER AND SECONDER to recommend to the Council to adopt a 3-year priority cycle with the current five priorities ending in December 2012, then transition to a 2-year cycle.

Chair Yeh recommended that guiding principles and strategic initiatives be the focus of the discussion at the retreat. He recommended that the deliverables be a clear identification of the core principles to inform future Council priorities. He recommended adopting the recommendations on the P&S annual schedule and work planning.

Council Member Price stated, based on results of the retreat, P&S return in the first part of the year to review specific priorities as they applied to budget decisions. She recommended holding a post mortem discussion after the adoption of the Budget.

Council Member Holman stated she could not accept this recommendation.

Chair Yeh stated P&S held discreet discussions. The Motion acknowledged that the language used was interrelated.

Council Member Holman recommended three separate Motions.

Council Member Shepherd stated she preferred using the term strategic initiatives, rather than priorities.

Mr. Keene recommended one Motion to keep the existing five priorities, and for them to continue until 2012. He spoke on renaming Council priorities as strategic initiatives. Then, he suggested rotating Council priorities into a two-year cycle. He recommenced a second Motion to direct the Council to discuss the term core principles at the retreat. He recommended a third Motion to return with a list of action steps that would organize priorities for the P&S work plan in the upcoming year in the first quarter. He spoke on the post mortem discussion subsequent to the adoption of the Budget.

Council Member Shepherd suggested that P&S not recommend these initiatives. She stated land use, finance and environmental sustainability were too broad, and did not assist her in creating policies needed to help guide Staff. She recommended these policies become part of the core principles.

Council Member Price spoke on her concern for the time constraint at the retreat. She spoke on her concern that Council would revisit issues that were discussed a year ago rather than moving forward. She spoke on developing core principles.

Council Member Shepherd stated the Motion did not move land use, City finance, and environmental sustainability into the core principles.

Council Member Price felt there was a line between core principles and the five Council priorities. She stated land use and transportation were a given. She believed elements on these topics should be reflected in the core principles.

Council Member Holman recommended adopting the current five Council priorities, for a three year period beginning January 2010, and then transition to a two-year cycle. Understanding that new undertakings have and may yet be identified that has or will fit into existing Council priorities.

Council Shepherd disagreed.

Council Member Holman stated other priorities come up within a given year, and felt these issues would be clarified.

Mr. Keene stated the details of the work plan may reemphasize the Council priorities.

Council Member Shepherd stated the work plan may become a strategic initiative. She spoke on her recommendation to add three Council priorities to the core principles. This would free up space to add new priorities.

Council Member Holman stated Council had adopted the Council priorities for two years.

MOTION PASSED: 3-1 Shepherd no

Mr. Keene recommended establishing core guiding principles that would represent projects that were ongoing and directed Staff to explore hiring a facilitator for the retreat. If time permitted, the Council could hold a discussion on the 2011 action steps.

MOTION: Chair Yeh moved, seconded by Council Member Shepherd to recommend to the City Council to: 1) establish core guiding principles that would exist on an ongoing basis, 2) direct Staff to explore the services of a facilitator for the Council retreat, and 3) identify the 2011 priority action steps pertaining to land use and transportation, City finances and environmental sustainability priorities.

Council Member Holman inquired how the process would unfold at the retreat regarding the Council priority on land use and transportation planning.

Mr. Keene assumed that the discussion on guiding and core principles would occur in the first part of the retreat. And if time permitted, other discussions would occur. It was his belief the core principles would be delegated back to P&S for discussion after the retreat.

Council Member Price spoke on her concern for narrowing the Council priorities into three areas. She believed all five Council priorities could use more discussion.

Chair Yeh envisioned Council collaboration focused on community collaboration for youth well-being and emergency preparedness.

Council Member Price agreed that emergency preparedness had a life of its own. She stated there had been a lot of work done on youth well being.

Mr. Keene stated clarity was needed on where the emphasis should be.

Council Member Price stated some Council priorities were less defined in terms of their funding options.

Council Member Shepherd supported shifting Council priorities to core principles.

Mr. Keene spoke on the issue of coming to grips with the workload of Staff. He recommended highlighting the few work plan items in the first quarter of the year. He felt the role of P&S should be on leadership.

Chair Yeh did not recommend bringing all five Council priorities to the retreat.

Council Member Price stated it would be a true retreat if the Council revisited all five priorities.

Mr. Keene stated the other five members of the Council were not grounded in the new vocabulary used by P&S. He suggested the focus of the retreat be on the core principles and work plan.

Council Member Holman stated the Council did not attend all Board and Commission meetings that discussed the priorities of the Council.

Council Member Price recommended that Staff to return with a preliminary outline on how the retreat could be conducted. She did not feel the P&S use of time on this was productive.

Council Member Price stated there were issues related to the retreat, and outcomes were anticipated.

Council Member Shepherd stated the Mayor and Vice Mayor should have input on how the retreat should be conducted. She disliked the idea of having Staff work on this.

Chair Yeh stated this idea could return as a separate Motion.

Mr. Keene recommended referring this to the Mayor and Vice Mayor. P&S could recommend that Staff formulate ideas and provide this to the Mayor and Vice Mayor.

Council Member Shepherd did not support this concept due to the full agenda on the next P&S meeting.

Council Member Price inquired whether there was value in potential comments by Staff as they related to the preparation of the retreat.

Council Member Shepherd inquired how much time it would take for Staff to develop bullet points of possible approaches to address core principles at the retreat.

Mr. Keene stated this could not be done by the P&S meeting scheduled for December 14. The Council meeting scheduled on December 13 would be dedicated to a year-end report on the Council priorities. He recommended that individual P&S members share ideas directly to the Mayor and Vice Mayor.

Chair Yeh restated the Motion.

Mr. Braulik clarified that 2011 priority action steps pertaining to land use and transportation, City finances and environmental sustainability would take place if time permitted.

Mr. Keene inquired whether the need for a report on the status of the Emergency Preparedness and Community Collaboration for Youth Well Being Council priorities were necessary.

Chair Yeh stated this information would likely be covered during the year-end review report.

MOTION PASSED: 4-0

MOTION: Council Member Price moved, seconded by Council Member XXXX to direct Staff to return at the next P&S meeting with an outline for the sequence of events, topics of discussion, goals of the day, and anticipated outcomes for the Council retreat to be held in January 2011.

MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND

Council Member Shepherd inquired how establishing core guiding principles that would exist on an ongoing basis would be accomplished.

Mr. Keene stated Staff would attempt to prepare materials on this.

Council Member Holman encouraged Staff to provide any tools available to assist the Council in this endeavor.

Council Member Shepherd anticipated that the Mayor and Vice Mayor would work with Staff on how to get Council involved.

Chair Yeh inquired whether P&S sought to recommend a post mortem discussion.

Council Member Holman spoke on her confusion on the post mortem discussion. She felt it was to review policies that impacted budget decisions. She inquired whether the post mortem discussion was part of a larger process.

Chair Yeh stated the post mortem discussion was based on the semantics of P&S implications of the budget.

Mr. Keene recommended that action steps and priorities be developed in the first quarter.

Council Member Holman spoke on potential work plan items, including quality of life issues, low-hanging fruit, and long and short range goals. She spoke on the possibility for discussing the Cubberley Community Center.

Chair Yeh stated formulating a Motion that was broad enough to capture the Cubberley Community Center was essential. The only action that had a timeline was the first quarter review and action steps.

Council Member Price recommended that P&S be careful as to not be too prescriptive.

MOTION: Council Member Price moved, seconded by Council Member Shepherd to recommend to the City Council: 1) during the 1st quarter of 2011, P&S review and recommend action steps and identify additional or new projects that may impact the budget, 2) after June 30, 2011, and the adoption of the budget, P&S hold a post mortem discussion related to budget issues.

Council Member Shepherd liked the structure. She felt it would allow the process to move forward.

MOTION PASSED: 4-0

3. Future Meetings and Agendas

December 14

- Agenda electronic management (City Managers Office)
- Developer late submittals (City Attorney Office)
- Staffing flexibility: changes for changing environments (City Managers Office)
- Procedures and Protocols from Council Meeting 11/22/2010

January 11, 2011

Project Safety Net

- Staff support for priority next steps (PNS)
- Commitment to youth outreach and youth voice
- Commitment to reduction of lethal means to self harm (City Managers Office and Recreation Services)

MOTION: Council Member Shepherd moved, seconded by Chair Yeh to recommend, to the Council, to include an exit strategy into the Council Policies & Procedures Handbook.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Council Member Shepherd moved, seconded by Council Member XXXX to recommend to Council that the Mayor and Vice Mayor to introduce at the retreat to request P&S work with the Staff to define and exit strategy and identify programs based on changing dynamics.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION WITHDRAWN BY THE MAKER

MOTION PASSED: 4-0

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.