City of Carroll, Iowa
Planning Session Report
August 29, 2015

<u>Mayor</u>:
Adam P. Schweers

<u>City Council</u>:
Mike D. Kots
Tom Tait
Clay Haley
Carolyn M. Siemann
Eric P. Jensen
Jerry Fleshner

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CITY OF CARROLL, IOWA
PLANNING SESSION
2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ……..... Page 3

Mission Statement…….. ……. Page 3

Review of 2014 Goals and Priorities……. Page 4

Strategic Focus Areas…… Page 5

Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities…… Page 6

On-Going Commitments/Priorities…… Page 8

New Priority Projects, Programs, Policies, and Initiatives..……Page 8

Organizational Effectiveness……. Page 9

Final Comments ..... Page 9

Exhibit A – Significant Projects, Programs, Policies, and Initiatives Considered Page 10

Exhibit B - Agenda…. ……Page 11

CITY OF CARROLL, IOWA
PLANNING SESSION
2015

Planning Work Session

IPA conducted a planning work session with the Mayor and City Council Members on August 29, 2015. In attendance and participating at this meeting were Mayor Adam Schweers and Council Members Mike Kots, Tom Tait, Clay Haley, Carolyn Siemann, Eric Jensen, and Jerry Fleshner.

Also in attendance and participating in this meeting were City Manager Gerald Clausen, City Clerk/Finance Director Laura Schaefer, City Engineer/Public Works Director Randy Krauel, Building Official/Safety/Fire Chief Greg Schreck, Police Chief Brad Burke, Parks and Recreation Director Jack Wardell, Library Director Brandie Ledford and City Attorney Dave Bruner. Also in attendance were City Council candidates Misty Boes and Brandon Vonnahme, Chamber of Commerce/Carroll Economic Development Corp. Director Shannon Landauer and Carroll Daily Times Herald publisher Doug Burns.

Mission Statement

The participants reviewed the city's current mission statement. After discussion, there was consensus to revise the mission statement as follows (new word inserted in the mission statement is indicated in **bold** font):

> The overall purpose of the City of Carroll is to enhance citizens' opportunities to enjoy a **safe,** superior quality of life, to deliver efficient services and programs, and to promote community growth and development, through a system of representative self -government and a highly trained dedicated staff.

Review of 2014 Planning Session Goals/Priorities

The participants reviewed the status of implementation of the 2014 planning session goals.

The participants then reviewed the status of implementation of the following 2014 action steps/policy agreements (revisions indicated in bold):

- Shared vision regarding importance of:
    - Community growth
    - **Steady moderate population growth**
    - Continuous improvement

- Council should continue to hold regularly scheduled work sessions on major issues for purpose of:
    - Identifying/agreeing on the decision-making process/format to be used
    - Identifying necessary relevant information
    - Providing an opportunity for Council "brainstorming"
    - Considering alternative actions
    - Giving adequate time for decision-making

After discussion regarding work sessions, the participants agreed to the following:

- Council will continue to hold work sessions on major issues as described above. If discussion of the issue involved is expected to take considerable time, or if the agenda for the regular council meeting is expected to be lengthy, a work session on a separate day would be held. It was agreed that one evening a month would be reserved/designated for holding such work sessions.

- There was consensus that for certain important issues, work sessions should be held early in the process for the purposes described above.

- The Council re-confirmed the need to move from discussion to making decisions and taking actions. There was consensus that following discussions/work sessions, agendas for regular Council meetings would include legislation setting forth for action items for the purpose of follow up and identifying Council decisions with regard to these issues under discussion.

  These action items would assist the City Manager and staff in assuring they have a clear understanding of City Council instructions/directions on specific issues/ items and City Council intentions and desires on these matters.

Strategic Focus Areas

The participants reviewed and confirmed the following strategic focus areas - key issues of paramount importance to the City that need to be addressed in terms of leadership direction, goals, programs, policies and resource allocation in order to achieve the City's mission and strategic vision, as originally identified in the 2013 Carroll Strategic Plan and reconfirmed in the 2014 Planning Session:

- City Services/Facilities/Infrastructure/Finance
- Community Development and Housing
- Community Leadership and Involvement
- Economic Development and Growth

Issues, Concerns, Trends and Opportunities

The following were identified as issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that may affect future city services, policies, finances or operations:

Demographics

- Carroll's population has flattened/slightly declined (U.S. Census Data: 2010=10,103/2013 estimate=10,013). Population – lack of growth in population
- Thoughtfully grow population numbers with eligible working class citizens and students
- Changing demographics - aging workforce and population in Carroll
- Urbanization of Iowa and slow or no growth in Carroll
- Immigration is a given and we're not prepared

Economic Development/Jobs

- Per the U. of IA Citizen Survey: "grow good paying jobs"/encourage investment in community to grow the tax base – (this helps keep property taxes low/reasonable)
- Long-term business sustainability
- Get past protectionist economic concept
- Low unemployment
- Very limited number of quality employees for businesses operating in Carroll
- Income inequality and the hollowing out of the middle class – fewer jobs making a living wage

Infrastructure

- Per the U. of IA Citizen survey keep investing in infrastructure; citizens want a clean, well-maintained, safe city
- Wastewater treatment update for 2018
    - Complying with disinfection and nutrient reduction requirements, paying for improvements
- Street Conditions – Need to move beyond patching and overlay to complete removal and replacement, paying for reconstruction
- $2.2 million from LOST all going to the maintenance street building?

City Facilities/Operations

- Keep the City's current facilities up-to-date and well-maintained; take care of what we have – this should be a top priority. (Per U. of IA Citizen Survey – 55% say the "City should make improvements to the Rec Center.")
- Rec Center
    - Not an appropriate drop off spot for children at the Carroll Rec Center. During busy times parents drop off children on the west side of the building where they proceed to "dodge" traffic to get inside
    - The Rec Center pool seems overcrowded and I have heard complaints that hours are limited
    - There is high demand for an added gym, if possible with a hardwood floor to allow adults to avoid younger children
- Library issue – differing opinions – drop the issue/no new plans or update and expand
- Add additional slide to aquatic center and replace one of the speed slides
- Maintenance – office – cemetery
- Review policies regarding replacement of Department Managers

Housing

- More thoughtful and deliberate plan to bring housing stock up and bring more online
- Consider alternative methods to help buyers move into and within the community rather than abating the property (and developer)
- Slow new housing starts in 2015
- Strong property values in a clean community
- Quality apartments with reputable management is needed
- Tight housing market
- Look for expansion of affordable lots to build homes
- Fairview Village Apartments and the questionable ethics of many of the residents. Police spend many hours each year dealing with issues at these apartments
- Housing – need projects to keep and attract major employers

Other

- Billboards frequenting the outskirts of town are unused and look shabby. If the City has any ability to regulate this it should be explored esp. since for newcomers this is the very first impression they may have of the City. Right now there is a billboard on the east side of town as an example
- Continue to push outdoor activities – especially bike/running trails
- Trails to connect north side to Sunnybrook (safety)
- Grants for trails

On-Going Commitments/Priorities

The following were identified as on-going commitments for the upcoming 24 month period:

- Council adoption of Financial Policies
- Continue street improvements
- Continue Corridor of Commerce streetscapes on planned basis
    - Phases VII and VIII
- Develop plan/strategy for Rec Center for long-term viability
    - Programming, membership, financing, operational and physical improvements
- Grant Rd/Hwy 30 improvements
- Merchants Park ballfield renovation
- Trails expansion
- Street maintenance building
- Housing study

New Priority Projects, Programs, Policies and Initiatives

The participants reviewed potential projects, programs, policies and initiatives for consideration and selected the following as new priorities for the upcoming 24 month period:

- Investigate enhancing the Community Endowment Fund to offset project expenses and/or operational expenses.
    - Promote the "collective impact" theory of city planning (i.e., organizations from different sectors adopting common agendas to combat community issues such as limited resources, poverty, crime, etc.).
- Investigate possibility of providing staff to develop new ideas and promote community events, theater and other community programs.
- Investigate Graham Park parking concept.
- Cemetery maintenance building.
- City signs at entryways to City.
- Review City sidewalk policy; investigate developing a sidewalk repair program.
- Evaluate compensation of Mayor and City Council.

A complete list of all programs and initiatives considered by the Mayor and City Council members is attached as **Exhibit A.**

Organizational Effectiveness

The Mayor and City Council reviewed a variety of ideas relating to improving organizational effectiveness to accomplish the selected goals and priorities. After review and discussion, the Mayor and City Council selected the following steps to improve organizational effectiveness:

- Council needs to receive timely reports and communications from boards/commissions regarding any significant discussions/issues/decisions with which they are dealing. Boards/commissions should provide periodic updates/presentations at Council meetings on such significant discussions/issues/decisions.
- Minimize handouts at meetings; if materials/information is not available by Thursday, the item should not be placed on the Council meeting agenda (unless it is an emergency, extremely time-sensitive matter).
- Review all City policies. Many policies pre-date the 21st century and may not accurately reflect current trends.
- Continue to host a chamber morning coffee as a group once a year.
- Open and honest work sessions - off cycle from regular Council meetings

Final Comments

It was a pleasure to once again assist the City of Carroll with this planning process. I was extremely impressed with the positive attitudes of the elected officials and City staff.

As in previous years, it is recommended that City staff prepare an "action plan" for accomplishing the planning goals. The action plan would define the steps that would be needed to accomplish each goal, identify who is responsible for implementation, and establish a timeline for accomplishment. The action plan should then be presented to the Mayor and City Council for review and approval. It is also recommended that staff review with the Mayor and City Council the status of implementing the goals on a quarterly basis.

Jeff Schott
Institute of Public Affairs
University of Iowa
September 1, 2015

Exhibit A

City of Carroll
Planning Session – 2015

SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES OR PROGRAMS CONSIDERED

- Community centered development and pride
- Reinvigorate Carroll Fest and other community events
- Investigate possibility of providing staff to develop/promote community events, theater and other city programs
- Investigate enhancing the Community Endowment fund to offset project expenses and/or operational expenses
- Expand or enhance space at Library
- A resolution to the Library situation even if "doing nothing until something else happens" is the resolution
- Investigate Graham Park parking concept
- Consider urban renewal/TIF projects downtown - to provide additional parking
- Signage for parks, facilities
- Hard surface parking lots in parks, rec facilities
- Be more inviting to sustainable and renewable energies to attract businesses, students and improve bottom line of citizens who choose to use them – establish commission/task force
- Work with private and community based day care on quality and competitive pricing
- Cemetery sexton building
- Update City Hall's restrooms; they need to be ADA compliant
- Considering partnering with the two high schools, DMACC + Regents' schools – internships in the various departments. This may lead to hiring these individuals for future positions. Mentoring young people and giving them on-the-job experience may lead to their returning to/remaining in Carroll.
- City signs - entrances to city
- Repairs to the exterior of the Historical building
- Train horn mitigation
- Review sidewalk policy – investigate developing sidewalk renovation plan
- Develop plan for improvements to aquatic center
- New attractions at the aquatic center
- Crime free housing program More outdoor winter activities
- Market the benefits of living in Carroll vs. the smaller communities within the county.
- Utilize the "collective impact" theory in city planning (i.e. organizations from different sectors adopting common agendas to combat issues in the community like limited resources, poverty, crime, education) the city could definitely have a seat at that table or get it started

- Investigate alternatives to the current ward system/number of council positions
- All elected officials receive memberships to City facilities
- Investigate compensation of Mayor & Council

Exhibit B

AGENDA

CITY OF CARROLL
PLANNING SESSION - 2015

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29
8:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Fire Station

1. Opening Comments and General Overview of the Meeting
    a. The Ground Rules for this session
    b. Introductions

2. Review/discuss City of Carroll Mission Statement

3. Update regarding status of 2014 goals/priorities

4. Identify/Confirm "Strategic Focus Areas"
    - Strategic Focus Areas - Key issues of paramount importance to the City that need to be addressed in terms of leadership direction, goals, programs, policies and resource allocation in order to achieve the City's mission and strategic vision.
        a. Review questionnaire responses – issues, concerns, trends, opportunities

5. Identify/Develop Goals for each Strategic Focus Area
    - Goals – General statements of intentions, aspirations or where the organization wants to be in terms of addressing the major issues (Strategic Focus Areas)
        a. Review questionnaire responses – significant new initiatives or programs

6. Develop Strategies/Initiatives to be Implemented within the Upcoming Two Year Planning Period to Accomplish Goals
    a. Discuss implementation strategies
    b. Discuss roles/level of engagement of Council Members regarding implementation

7. Discuss/select organizational effectiveness initiatives
    a. Review questionnaire responses – organizational effectiveness initiatives

8. Other Issues/Concerns

9. Adjourn