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**City of Valdez – City Council  
Planning Retreat Report for July 2021**

**Session Focus:** Reviewing Goals and Refining Priorities for 2022

**Dates:** July 9-10, 2021

**Participants:**

- Sharon Scheidt – City Council, Mayor
- Susan Love – City Council Member
- James Devens – City Council Member
- Dennis Fleming – City Council Member
- Todd Wegner – City Council Member
- Alan Sorum – City Council Member
- Dawson Moore – City Council Member
  
- Mark Detter – City Manager
- Sheri Pierce – City Clerk
- Allie Ferko – Deputy City Clerk
- Brian Carlson – Finance Director

**Agenda:**

*Outcomes:*

- |                                   |                                     |     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| • I. Mission Statement            | (Review).....                       | p.2 |
| • II. SWOT Assessment             | .....                               | p.3 |
| • III. Goal Discussion Tools      | (Backdrop for goal discussions) ... | p.4 |
| • IV. 2020 Goals                  | (Status update).....                | p.4 |
| • V. Comp Plan                    | (Feedback on high-priorities).....  | p.5 |
| • VI. Long-Term Fiscal Strategy   | (Proposal).....                     | p.7 |
| • VII. Budget Priorities for 2022 | (Identify).....                     | p.7 |
| • VIII. Boards and Task Forces    | (Suggestions to Streamline).....    | p.8 |
| • IX. Parking-lot Topics          | .....                               | p.8 |



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What follows is an overview of outcomes from the City Councils Planning Retreat in July 2021

## Outcomes

### I. City of Valdez Mission Statement

- **Objective: Identify council action for the current mission statement:**
  - *To cultivate an environment of opportunity, sustained prosperity and wellbeing for all people of Valdez*
- **Process:**
  - Council members reviewed the following options for the current mission statement:
    - Adopt the mission statement
    - Refine the mission statement in this session
    - Refine the mission statement in a later session
- **Outcome: Adopt the mission statement**
  - 5 (out of 6 council members present) chose to adopt the current mission statement
- **Council Member Notes:**
  - Meet to decide what actions to take with the mission statement.  
(Ie: print and electronic marketing; email signatures; bumper sticker; develop a logo; etc.)
  - Consider revisiting the order of the 3 keys words:
    - Opportunity
    - Sustained prosperity
    - Wellbeing



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## II. SWOT Assessment

- **Objective: Identify where the City of Valdez is today, to ensure goals are on track**
- **Process:**
  - Council members identified and discussed their top 3 observations regarding the City of Valdez, in each of the following categories: strengths and weaknesses (for today/present); opportunities and threats (for tomorrow/future)
  - Council members prioritized each SWOT category
- **Outcomes: Top Prioritized SWOT Results**
  - **Strengths**
    - Personnel and Administration
    - Savings and Permanent Fund
    - Good momentum re: current Council / Well positioned for planning
  - **Weaknesses / Concerns**
    - Planning & Zoning
    - Housing Opportunities
    - Historical Spending
  - **Opportunities**
    - Government could be more efficient (not get in citizens way)
    - Savings and Permanent Fund
    - Look for efficiencies in each department
  - **Threats / Concerns**
    - Maintain current budget
    - Loss of oil/gas tax revenue
    - Community expectations



### III. Goal Discussion Tools

- **Objective: Identify primary tools to use as a backdrop for goal discussions**
- **Process:**
  - Consultant discussed the primary tools used as a background for goal discussions:
    - Mission statement (see p.2)
    - SWOT results (see p. 3)
    - Purpose of Goals:
      - Goals are broad stroke endeavors which do 1 (or more) of 5 things:
        - 1. Maintain the Mission
        - 2. Achieve or get the organization closer to the Vision
        - 3. Uphold Values
        - 4. Capitalize upon strengths and/or opportunities
        - 5. Address or guard against weaknesses / concerns / threats
  - Goal Qualifiers:
    - Qualifiers help filter top priorities by identifying goals that: use resources most effectively and make the most impact
    - Sample Qualifiers:
      - 1. Number of people impacted
      - 2. Benefits high-need areas of constituents (ie: safety, shelter, transportation)
      - 3. Cost to build
      - 4. Cost to maintain
      - 5. Risks

### IV. 2020 Goals

- **Objective: Identify the status of goals set in July 2020**
- **Process:**
  - City Manager provided status update on goals identified in July 2020
  - See attachment for complete ppt presentation:  
Vdz.Council2021.RetreatAgenda.ResoucesPacket, p.5 'B'
- **Outcomes: Major Projects for 2022**
  - Sewer Force Main - \$20,000,000 – low interest loan financing to be pursued
  - Small Boat Harbor Replacement - \$12,000,000 – grant funds requested via earmark; \$6,000,000 avail.
  - St Patrick Subdivision - \$5,000,000 – includes Whalen Ave. and other potential improvements including sidewalks, street lights, snow lots and various other amenities
  - New Water Well - \$2,000,000
- **Council Members Notes:**
  - Parking lot topic: Continue community development discussion focus



## V. Comp Plan – High Priorities

- **Objective: Council provide feedback on Comp Plan ‘High Priorities’**
- **Process:**
  - Council reviewed two documents:
    - Comp Plan – Overview of High, Moderate and Low priorities
      - (See attachment: Vdz.CompPlan)
    - Comp Plan – Overview of all High Priorities
      - (See attachment: Vdz.Council2021RetreatAgenda.ResourcesPacket, p.10 ‘D’)
  - City manager provided introduction and explanations (re: who will be responsible for what) for ‘high priorities’ within the Comp Plan
  - Council members discussed high priorities items within the Comp Plan
- **Outcomes:**
  - **First Focus High-Priorities (within the Comp Plan)**
    - *Please note: The number in ( ) indicates how many council members (out of 7) identified this as a first-focus high-priority*
    - (7) 2.1 (Plan for Responsible Growth)
    - (7) 2.3 (Promote, Protect & Build Quality Housing)
    - (5) 1.1.C Annual planning review of all adopted master plans
    - (5) 1.3.A Develop a Public Participation Plan
    - (4) 5.1.A Maintain a high quality educational facility
  
    - (2) 1.1.A Complete a review of Plan Valdez every 5 years
    - (2) 1.2.E Provide annual training for Council and Planning/Zoning Comm’n
    - (2) 1.3.D Strengthen relationship with Valdez Native Tribe
  
    - 1.3.C Develop an ADA self eval and transportation plan for City owned facilities
    - 4.1.E Continue to advocate for reliable ferry and air service
    - 7.1.A Make hazard mapping easily available to public
    - 7.1.J Continue to implement and update Emergency Opts Plan & Hazard Mit. Plan



- **Ideas-to-Action items:**
  - **Comp Plan**
    - City Manager: Each Department will identify a high-priority within the Comp Plan to focus on each year
      - Need to identify process for this
      - Need parameters of Financial Plan first
    - Need a long range plan where all-the-plans within the Comp Plan come together
    - Focus on to-do's within the plan to generate forward movement
  - **Projects / Plans**
    - Council needs 'Work Sessions' where Departments can present projects (one-at-a-time)
    - If a Project or Plan is brought forward; identify how to fund it
  - **Planning Department**
    - Identify resources / consultant / training to help improve:
      - Code enforcement, Communications; Speed;  
Being more of a: Facilitator-of-processes vs. Road-block
    - Within Code Enforcement need to identify:
      - How to set up process; Prioritize and How-to-Enforce
- **Council Members Notes:**
  - **2.1.C. Create Destination Resort District**
    - Access study completed
    - 5 (out of 7) council members identified the need for a Master-Plan before additional forward movement. (Development of Master-Plan responsibility of builder/ proposer)
  - **Study Borough Formation / or Boundary Change**
    - Add language into Plan
  - **Museum**
    - 5 (out of 7) council members identified this as a low-priority
      - Council Member Notes:
        - *If the Comp Plan identified this as low priority, then it should remain as such*
        - *It should remain as low priority until Museum raises/match funds*
    - 2 (out of 7) council members identified this an no-priority
  - **General:** If new taxes are ever allocated: identify how monies will be spent



## VI. Long-Term Fiscal Strategy Proposal

- **Objective: Hear Finance Directors long-term fiscal strategy proposal (fundamentals, concepts, modeling)**
- **Process:** Finance Director presented long-term (5yr) fiscal strategy proposal
  - See attachment: Vdz.longterm.FiscalStratProp (for ppt presentation notes)
- **Outcomes:** To be continued in a future session

## VII. Budget Priorities for 2022

- **Objective: Identify budget priorities for 2022**
- **Process:** Council discussed and identified budget priorities for 2022
- **Outcomes:**
  - 20 Mil ..... No change
  - Schools..... No change / Review within 5year Plan
  - Energy Assistance.... No change
  - Personnel #'s.....
    - Find efficiencies (without any proactive lay-offs)
    - Evaluate position when vacancy occurs
    - Consider balancing requests for new positions with departures
  - CSO's  
No change (re: Budget)  
Adjustments (re: Process)
  - Mill levy allocation? -Pause-
  - COLA Some
  - PFD Address in another session



## VIII. Boards & Task Forces

- **Objective: Identify suggestions for streamlining boards, commissions and task forces**
- **Process:**
  - See attachment: VdzCouncil2021.RetreatAgenda.ResourcesPacket (p.17 'E')
  - City manager identified reasons for this agenda topic:
    - High number of boards and task forces (consider some consolidation?)
    - Some have not identified purpose and parameters
  - Council members discussed suggestions for streamlining
- **Outcomes:**
  - Schedule a future session to:
    - Develop form for short-term task forces -to include: purpose, scope and parameters
    - Ensure permanent-formal boards and commissions have clear purpose, scope and parameters
  - Ensure formal boards/commissions stay (as close as possible) to code
  - Boards/Commissions/Task Forces provide (quarterly?) progress-reports to Council
  - *Mayors Beautification Task Force*
    - 5 (out of 7) council members acknowledged this task-force could submit consideration for becoming a Commission
  - *Mayors Flood Task Force*
    - Work through current project; then remain 'on-deck'
  - *Mayors Hospital Expansion Task Force*
    - Once scope is completed; responsibilities move to: *Providence Health Advisory Council*

## IX. Parking-lot Topics

- **Objective: Identify topics to be put on future city council agendas**
- **Outcomes:**
  - Mission Statement (How to adopt)
  - Community Development (Housing / Land / Planning)
  - 2022 Budget – 5yr plan
  - PFD – Budget Priority?
  - COLA
  - Boards & Task Forces (Identify purpose, scope and parameters)