

January 24, 2015

CITY OF NEBRASKA CITY, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
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Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Nebraska City was conducted at the Lewis & Clark Center, 102 S 67 Road, Nebraska City, with notice also posted at City Hall, 1409 Central Avenue, Nebraska City, on January 24, 2015. Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by posting in at least three public places, and availability of the agenda was communicated in advance to the media, Mayor and Commissioners of this proceeding. The meeting was open to the public and attended by the public as well as the media.

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. with the City Attorney publicly stating to all in attendance that a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available for review and indicating the location of such copy posted in the room where the meeting was being held. Commissioners Jim Stark, Jeff Crunk, Vic Johns, Mindy Briley and Mayor Hobbie were all present. The following City Officials were present: City Attorney David Partsch. The following special guests and facilitators of the meeting were introduced: Milan Wall and Craig Schroeder of the Heartland Center for Leadership Development.

The Council discussed several of the most important achievements of the community in the past five years. The facilitators tried to capture lessons behind the successes:

- LB840 funds being used for downtown revitalization;
- Passage of the swimming pool/tennis courts bond;
- Increased broadband capacity with Spiral Communications being a good community partner;
- Improved attractions and amenities;
- State transferring operations of Arbor Lodge State Historical Park to local leadership;
- Approx. 118 volunteers serving on various City committees, commissions and boards;
- Industrial park progress.

The facilitators then lead a discussion summarizing the themes of successful projects and activities in Nebraska City:

- A tradition of making things happen;
- Focus on balancing needs and resources;
- Concerns of retaining and recruiting industry and jobs;
- 1 Gig Broadband opportunity needs to be marketed;
- Engaging youth and adults;
- Increasing communication and cooperation;
- Needing more volunteers and public/private partnerships.

Following a fifteen minute break, the meeting was resumed with discussion of shared visions and values for Nebraska City, including:

Visions

- Thriving, growing community. More jobs. More young families;
- More volunteers who give their time, resources and passion;
- Being proactive vs reactive;
- Excellent quality of life;
- Life-long learners;
- Fiscal responsibility and low taxes;
- Improved communication

- develop a community calendar to help educate Commissioners and the public
- hear ideas of organizations and invite them to City Council meetings for reports

Values

- Mutual respect;
- Community pride;
- Trust;
- Heritage: civic, economic, educational, youth, alumni.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 11:40 a.m. and resumed at 12:30 p.m. with discussion about how the City can play a role in supporting community and economic development. The following five on-going activities were identified as being of immediate importance:

1. Comprehensive Plan. The development of the updated plan is in process and community involvement is crucial. The City needs to continue to encourage participation of all citizens in the process – including volunteers from local interest groups. A community meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10th, at 4:30p.m. Additional meetings should vary on days of the week and times of the day to allow for broad participation.
2. Budget Creation. Getting more input and buy-in from youth, organizations, and the public by ensuring people and groups are encouraged to express their opinions on the needs of the community.
3. LB 840 Funds. Encourage more applications and put to use the current balance of cash on hand (approx. \$600,000) for economic development. Create a list of those who have benefitted. Create a user-friendly application packet and develop a confidentiality statement. Prepare for the expiration or continuation of the program in 2016. Commissioner Briley agreed to be the liaison with Nebraska City Area Economic Development (NCAEDC). Commissioner Johns also expressed being very interested in helping.
4. Broadband Access. Promote 1 gig capability to existing and new businesses. Market Nebraska City as a “virtual industrial park”. Educate Nebraska’s new Governor, new Director of Economic Development, new President of UNL, RFI, etc. Commissioner Stark and Mayor Hobbie agreed to take the lead on this.
5. Collaborate with Nebraska City Public Schools and Lourdes Central Catholic Schools. Promote vocational education to address our community needs: technology, work force development. Engage youth in planning for the future. Consider meeting with school board members and students on a regular basis to share ideas. Commissioner Stark indicated a willingness to contact the schools on behalf of the Council.

Other ideas that were also discussed included:

- Certifying local inspectors. State fire inspectors are inconsistent and are hampering growth. Building inspections, elevator inspections, boiler inspections, etc. could all be done locally, keeping the fees in our community. Contracting out newly created services via Inter-local agreements should be explored.
- Annexation. Explore opportunities for broadening the tax base to include areas that are already benefitted by City services.
- Advisory groups. Encourage more citizen input and reports.
- Call on existing businesses multiple times each year to learn their needs.
- Follow up with new businesses after their ribbon cuttings. Support entrepreneurs.
- Explore various revenue sources beyond property tax.

After another break, the City Attorney briefly reviewed the Nebraska State Statues and Nebraska City Municipal Codes for each of the five commissioners. He explained that Nebraska City’s unique

January 24, 2015

Commissioner form of government which consolidates executive and legislative authority into one is different from a traditional Mayor/Council government. Discussion was had regarding providing the same Commissioner Orientation Packets that the two newly elected Commissioners received to the three mid-term Commissioners as well.

Discussion regarding the merging of executive and legislative authority included reviewing the process of putting an item on the City Council meeting agenda; discussion and an explanation of the City's agenda setting meeting; and the process of dealing with citizen complaints. Chain of command questions were reviewed regarding to whom questions should be directed when a Commissioner needs assistance, with each case varying dependent upon the circumstances.

Roles and responsibilities discussion further included talking about how to communicate openly outside of a public meeting about City issues without violating the Open Meetings Act. Attorney Partsch emphasized that the Open Meetings Act may not be circumvented with private discussions, emails or communications with more than one other Commissioner, but encouraged the Commissioners to share gathered information without seeking any feedback or creating any debate until the public meeting. Commissioner Johns pointed out that at Attorney Partsch's direction he found the Nebraska League of Municipalities to be a good resource for training, orientation, and compliance issues.

In relation to improving communication, the new City government website www.nebraskacityne.gov was discussed with the need to have a central hub created at www.nebraskacity.com to guide people to the City's site, NCTC's site and NCAEDC's site. A community calendar would ideally also be on the main page.

The meeting ended with a summary discussion on the need for more open communication; mutual respect of opposing views; and recognizing that all of the Commissioners have the best interests of Nebraska City forefront in all of their decisions, even when they do not agree. New Commissioners bring new dynamics and wish to focus on moving forward in a positive direction.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

David Partsch, City Attorney