

**Study Meeting**  
**Monday, March 24, 2014, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Bloomington Civic Plaza**  
**1800 West Old Shakopee Road**  
**Bloomington, Minnesota 55431-3027**

**Call to Order**

Mayor Gene Winstead called the study meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**Roll Call**

*Present:* Mayor Winstead, Councilmembers C. Abrams, J. Baloga, T. Busse, A. Carlson, D. Lowman, and J. Oleson.

**Study Meetings Discussion**

Abrams inquired if Council could discuss the item pertaining to study meetings ahead of Larry Lee's presentation of the Strategic Plan Update. She said comments were made at the last meeting about Council not having enough time to fully discuss study meeting items, the amount of presentation time vs. actual discussion time, the amount of time assigned to items, how and when items are put on the study agenda, and how Council members will know if a promised agenda item in the cue is ultimately out there.

Mark Bernhardson, City Manager provided background regarding the four or five meetings the City Council was conducting every month when he arrived in Bloomington as City Manager in 1991. In 1992, he said the Council pared back to two regular meetings and an occasional study meeting every month. He said in the mid 2000's, staff looked at scheduling study meetings from 5:30 – 7:00 pm ahead of regular meetings on Monday night to save Council from meeting on that extra Monday even though that extra Monday was kept in reserve in case a full study session was necessary. He said study meeting topics have been driven by issues the Council has raised and staff has worked up and presented when ready. It hasn't been a rigid framework. He said occasionally, study items have been pushed back if they weren't quite ready for staff to present. The ones that are time sensitive come forward. He said this is the third time since he's been the City Manager that a majority of the Council members have turned over. Because this is a new Council, he said staff has tried to anticipate that more time will be needed on certain study items and it's clear at this point, the Council is looking for more study meeting time. He said that can be handled by stretching out some of the topics but commented April's schedule is full. After that, he said things might slow down. He said staff can allow more time for items. He said conducting study meetings at 5:30 pm ahead of regular meetings was a trade-off for meeting on a third Monday of the month. He said if the study meetings ahead of the regular meetings were to start later than 5:30 pm that might not provide enough time. He said Council could go back to having a full study meeting on a third Monday and they could start at 5:45 pm or 6:00 pm. He said there are a number of options and he's open to whatever the Council wants to do.

Winstead said the previous Councils valued their time and determined adding 1.5 hours of study meeting time ahead of the regular meetings a couple of times a month equaled the 3 hours that was previously allotted for the off-night study meeting. He said the previous Council had been in the cue for a while so they were a little more familiar with the subject matter of the items that were coming up and felt 3 hours would be adequate. He said he's noticed and sensed over time that this Council has been rushed and isn't able to engage in the discussion to the degree that is probably necessary. He said many times the subject matter of the study items is driven by actions the Council will need to take in the future or to have the extra time and background on really big projects on the Council's horizon. He explained the Council can't take certain actions at study meetings but can provide a consensus for a particular direction they want staff to take. He said any formal action must be taken at a regular meeting where public input might be required.

**Study Meetings  
Discussion  
continued**

Winstead said some lofty subjects have been coming to Council and he too has noted there hasn't been enough time for them to chew up the subjects prior to having to take action on them. He sensed from the Council having off-night study meetings would be more valuable, as there is no time limit on them.

Carlson agreed the current approach isn't working and that too much is left on the table at the end of the 90-minute study sessions. He said April sets up well for a full study meeting on April 14.

Winstead said short study meetings could be set up ahead of the regular meetings when there is an item or two that can be handled within a 60-minute timeframe.

Bernhardson said study meetings will need to be held before the regular meetings on April 7 and 21 in addition to the full study meeting scheduled on April 14. He suggested making the transition to having full study meetings on an off-week Monday starting in May and asked if they should start at 5:45 or 6:00 pm.

Baloga suggested having a combination of meetings; a one-hour session ahead of the regular meeting for the less controversial and mundane items and the off-week meeting for the more complicated items.

Oleson suggested conducting a Needs Assessment regarding study meetings before a format for them is decided upon. He said items such as the legislative priorities that are quite involved and take longer to discuss should be scheduled for the off-week study meeting. He asked about the Al Farooq Youth & Family Center (AFYFC), which is currently scheduled as the last item to be taken at the April 21<sup>st</sup> study meeting. He'd like to flip that with the Imagine Bloomington item, as there needs to be a calm discussion about AFYFC to clarify some of the issues.

Bernhardson reiterated that study meetings will be held before the regular meetings on April 7 and 21, plus there will be a full study meeting on April 14 regarding the solid waste discussion. He said AFYFC will be discussed at the April 21<sup>st</sup> study meeting along with a few other topics.

Lowman said it would be better for him if the study meetings could start at 6:00 pm rather than at 5:30 pm. He suggested pushing back the start time for regular Council meetings to 7:30 pm. He also asked how he could get an item on a Council agenda.

Winstead suggested Lowman send his topics to the City Manager or bring them up during discussion of Item 6.1 City Council Policy & Issue Update. If a majority of the Council is interested in discussing the topic, it could be added to a future regular or study agenda.

Lowman requested a copy of the Council's Rules of Procedure.

Bernhardson said copies of the Rules of Procedure will be provided to the Council.

Busse said he likes Baloga's idea of a hybrid approach to study meetings. He said it wouldn't hurt to have a one-hour session before the regular meeting to tick off one item. He suggested starting the off-week study meeting at 6:00 pm. He also suggested putting a time limit on the length of the meeting to keep them from going too long.

Abrams said as the Council becomes more seasoned, the time spent on slide presentations might not be as necessary so as to allow more time for discussion. Need to determine if study items are more of a complicated presentation item or more of a discussion item. She suggested indicating on the agenda if items are more of a "briefing" nature or more of a "discussion" nature adding it would be helpful if the PowerPoint presentations could be e-mailed to Council ahead of time.

Carlson said the expectation is that Council members will come to the meetings prepared so a presentation might not be the best use of meeting time.

Winstead said he's seen a variety in how people prepare for Council meetings. He said staff has historically presented the information to Council to cover all bases, as there have been members in the past that hadn't opened their packet prior to the meeting.

**Study Meetings  
Discussion  
continued**

Bernhardson said if this Council is committed to reading the materials ahead of time, the presentations could be shortened up to just highlighting the decision points.

Lowman commented he comes prepared but finds value in the actual presentations and requested copies of them be provided to Council ahead of time to reduce the time allotted for their presentation.

Bernhardson said staff is working towards an electronic agenda. He said the process will be put into motion in April with a dual tracking format (paper and electronic) until the kinks can be worked out of the electronic system.

Carlson requested staff's presentations focus on maps, graphs, and a synthesis of the data rather than a lot of words.

Oleson suggested reducing the redundancy in the materials provided and presented; including the Solid Waste Report. He also suggested constituents could sign up to receive information that will be presented on a particular subject matter.

Baloga commented he hopes paper will not go away completely with an electronic agenda, especially for maps and diagrams.

Winstead said his style is paper but wants the electronic agenda to move forward. He said he'd like to have the ability to write on the agendas in an electronic format.

Baloga said he needs print capability with an electronic agenda.

Winstead said study meetings will occur on an off-week. He said he wouldn't support starting a regular meeting any later than 7:00 pm because long meetings would also be hard on the public attending. He said the off-week meeting could start at 6:00 or 7:00 pm.

Baloga suggested starting both the study meetings ahead of regular meetings at 6:00 pm and the off-week study meetings.

Carlson asked for one exception; that the April 14 study meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

*(Council was requested to send the City Manager their questions relating to the Draft Solid Waste Management Plan ahead of the study meeting on April 14<sup>th</sup> to save time during the discussion of that item.)*

**STUDY ITEM #1 –  
Strategic Plan Update**

Larry Lee, Community Development Director presented an update on Imagine Bloomington 2025, a process which began with the 2008 Strategic Plan by the City Council between 2006-2008. His plan included the following slides:

- Why Plan?
- Carl Neu, Jr. (consultant): *(Discussed the relationship between the advisory commissions and the City Council and between the Council and City staff.)*
- Governance Iceberg
- What is a Strategic Planning?
- Strategic Plan Process: *(It's a circular process. Recommendation is to do an update of the current strategic plan for 2014-2017. The first step in the process is updating the Comp Plan, which is done every 10 years. The next full strategic plan will be taken on in 2018.)*
- Sources of Inspiration
- 2006-2008 Process: *(Lots of public input strengthened the plan.)*
- Plan Elements
- Seven Values

**STUDY ITEM #1  
continued**

Baloga said the second bullet point assumes the City has jurisdiction over the School District, which it does not. He suggested changing the focus on that bullet point to, “How we can support the School Board and the School system to provide educational opportunities.”

Lee said the Council considered itself the catalyst organization and that if the City Council and City organization didn’t set a community-wide vision, then nobody would. That vision was set so that the dozen strategic partners could fit in behind it, as there was consensus among the partners on the shared vision.

Baloga said he still has a problem with that bullet point.

Lee said the two-year preparation of the strategic plan boiled down to the following seven values.

- Community Vision: *(What the City and other organizations are going to achieve.)*
- Organizational Mission: *(City of Bloomington vision that fits under that umbrella and for which the City and Council are responsible for carrying out.)*
- Our People are ...
- Neighborhoods
- Businesses
- Government: *(Applies to both the City of Bloomington and the School District)*
- Top 10 Ranked Goals

Carlson suggested having some metrics for this strategic plan that could gauge where the City’s at compared to where it was. He asked if a new baseline will be set to determine whether or not the City is successful in its strategic planning efforts.

Lee said at the next meeting, he will report on what’s happened with the strategies in the last five years. He said in terms of metrics, he will be presenting what the survey data says and how it aligns with this. He said what people told the City in the survey has not greatly changed the order of priorities from what the Council heard in 2006-2007.

Carlson said there might be some other sources of data available to provide further information, i.e. depreciation schedule for park equipment compared to the needs, etc.

Abrams suggested while staff is presenting what has been accomplished by the Council, it could be brainstorming as to what those metrics might be or how to find data in the next two years. For example, if it’s enhancing City park and recreational assets, one way to measure that is to look at whether or not the housing prices around Bloomington parks has rebounded. Are they market-based shorter periods of time vs. just pure residential kinds of housing stats?

Winstead said this is the type of conversation Lee wants from Council for the second loop.

Bernhardson said once Lee presents what’s been done on each of the goals with regard to strategies, Council will need to prioritize the strategies it wants to undertake over the next 3-5 years within the context of what organizational and financial capacity is available to do them.

Carlson said the public needs to know the City heard them, take their ideas and make them goals, show them what’s been done, and here’s what the City did to achieve those goals.

Lee said staff will try to be as specific as possible regarding the goals.

- Next 5 Ranked Goals

Bernhardson said cities have realized how critical education is to their long-term success. He said successful suburban communities of Bloomington’s size have also had successful school systems so they don’t need to try and take them over. They’ve realized successful education programs in the community have been a key to their success.

**STUDY ITEM #1  
continued**

- Strategy definition: *(This is the strategy definition approach that should be used into the future. "A combination of actions intended to shape the future and is an attempt to get to desirable ends with available means.")*
- Sustainability Theme
- Key Goals and Strategies
- Land Use
- Land Use Plan Diagram
- Transportation
- Housing
- Utilities
- Organizational Strength
- Anticipated Review
- Meeting #2: Gather Facts. *(Provide more details on the outcome for strategies in the 2008 Plan and what the survey says about those strategy areas.)*

Abrams said the only survey data she has is what's available online and asked if Council could get some of that data drilled down to show the differences in the opinions of the younger people vs. the older crowd to help Council better make reference to those who think the City can do better. She asked when the next survey is going out and if custom questions can be added.

Bernhardson said staff will need to get the questions out within the next couple of weeks so requested the Council send him their ideas for custom questions. An example he gave is to have a broader range of choices regarding the question pertaining to solid waste and recycling; "Are you opposed to organized collection?"

Carlson inquired if this is tied to the Comp Plan Update.

Lee suggested not tying this strategic plan to a Comp Plan Update because it will good for the next three years. He said beginning in 2016, the Council will work on a more complete strategic plan review, which will be the first phase of the next Comp Plan update.

Winstead asked if the Comp Plan Update contains what the Council really wants to do. He said the Council needs to do a good job on this strategic plan to ensure it aligns with the next Comp Plan Update.

Lee explained the Strategic Plan has been the first chapter of the City's Comp Plan, which was well accepted by the Met Council.

Bernhardson said it also plays into the financials. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) looks at how the Council's long-term guidance plays out in the City's financials, budget, and CIP.

Lee said most of the cross tabs Council is requesting weren't initially provided to the City. The vendor keeps the data but they would provide any data Bloomington requested provided the City pays for it. He said most of the cross tabulation done compares Bloomington to all of the 500 cities that have administered the same question in their city. Bloomington is compared to 21 peer cities.

Winstead asked about getting the demographic data.

- Anticipated Review: Meeting #3 – Analyze. *(Council to read a few articles. They will then be asked to list their vision and strategy changes, text changes they'd like to see in the vision, and any specific strategies they'd like to add, modify or delete.)*

**STUDY ITEM #1  
continued**

- Anticipated Review: Meeting #4 - Aspire and Strategy: *(Review the Plan text changes and develop a list strategies supported by at least four Council members.)*

Meeting #5: Allocate Resources

Meetings #6 & #7: Review and Adjust

Baloga asked if this item was planned, what caused it to be brought up now, and how did it get to this point.

Bernhardson stated this is five years into the Plan so now it's time to step up and see what additional things needs to be done three years before it's time to start a new plan. He said this strategic format is the best way for seven new Council members to determine where it wants to take this organization.

Baloga asked if all of the departmental work plans are geared to accomplishing this.

Bernhardson said Larry Lee and Lori Economy-Scholler, Chief Financial Officer, and the other department heads are working to pull this together. He said this is for 2015-16 and beyond.

Baloga asked who is going to accomplish this and what impact does it have on City departments.

Bernhardson said this process leads up to the next two-year budget cycle (2015-2016), which rolls into the work plans of the commissions.

Abrams inquired how Markegard's plan fit into this. She said when she was on the School Board, the Assistant Superintendent was very good at explaining how the action items before the Board fit into the plan.

Busse asked how this plan works into the study meeting timeline.

Lee said he wasn't sure how the plan will fit into the Council study meeting schedule.

Bernhardson replied it will dovetail into the next five or six months during the budget process.

Winstead said other things will come to the surface during the budgeting process.

Lee said if the Council doesn't like this process, they need to let him know. If Council generally believes this process will work for allowing them to review the plan and suggest updates, this process will be followed. He asked if Council thought it could be done a better way.

Lowman stressed the ability to have a dialogue that allows for Council discussion. He said the background has been helpful so it doesn't need to be repeated again.

Winstead said these are mission and vision statements. He said Council doesn't need to recreate them, just continue from what's there. He said the ship is heading in a pretty good direction. He said this won't involve public engagement to the same degree it did before but staff will want to go back and involve the partners. He said the citizen surveys will provide a lot of public opinion.

Busse commented the public surveys weren't available during the past strategic sessions so they will be helpful this time.

Lowman said he wanted to get a context for some of this from the town hall meetings.

Lee said he'll go back and see what is valuable to include in the next round of materials.

Winstead said the Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP) came to the surface last time but the Council will have to go forward with guts in order to value its views.

Abrams said in looking ahead to meeting #2, she requested staff provide copies of the census maps and some of the comparable data that's available on the Internet to refer to during the meeting.

**STUDY ITEM #1  
continued**

Carlson said his focus is on goals and asked when they will come into the process. He said if goals are set, there needs to be a way to measure success. Council should be able to identify how the different departments tie into the goals and departments should think about how they will achieve the goals. He asked if those goals were up for discussion.

Lee said he assumes they are up for discussion. Council will need to serve up ideas in meeting #3; contemporize and update what is there.

Oleson said in terms of input from the stakeholders, it might be easier to get some longitudinal thoughts from those same groups by giving them a copy of this document and to ask them what is their thinking so many years later. He said it could be an endorsement for the direction this process is heading or it could be reveal the direction needs some correction.

Winstead suggested the stakeholder groups be given the input they provided in the previous strategic planning process to see if they think it should be turned up, turned down, or turned off.

Oleson said he likes to be able to show accountability without going overboard with numbers. He suggested staff lighten up the blue areas on the presentation so his handwritten notes would be more visible.

Winstead commented this group is going to do a great job of being engaged. It will be a great process that will serve the public for a long time.

**Adjourn Meeting**

Mayor Winstead adjourned the study meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Barbara Clawson  
*Council Secretary*