

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**October 4, 2007, 8:30 a.m.**

**CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ABILENE, TEXAS**

The City Council of the City of Abilene, Texas, met in the Basement Conference Room of City Hall, 555 Walnut Street for a Workshop on October 4, 2007, at 8:30 a.m. Mayor Archibald was present and presiding with Councilmen Anthony Williams, Sam Chase, Stormy Higgins, and Councilwoman Celia Davis. Also present were City Manager Larry Gilley, City Attorney Dan Santee, Interim City Secretary Danette Dunlap, and various members of the City staff. Councilwoman Laura Moore and Councilman Spano were absent.

1. Mayor Archibald called the meeting to order.
2. Mayor Archibald gave the invocation.
3. Mayor Archibald led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flags of the United States of America and the State of Texas.
4. Mayor Archibald requested that City Manager Larry Gilley brief the Council on today's presentations. Mr. Gilley stated the Workshop today was for the City Council to review the Four Strategic Objectives. These Objectives were established in 2005 and have served as a guide during budget time and on a day to day basis.

**Strategic Objective: Comprehensive Plan**

**We want to fully implement the Comprehensive Plan to aid and encourage the growth of the city in a systematic manner for present and future generations.**

- Develop infill strategies through incentives and public services designed to provide long-term fiscal gain for the community.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) adopted tax abatement policy; 2) Reestablished Sears Park; 3) Public services – passed bond election to repair and reconstruct streets in the infill areas; 4) Planning – researching comparison list of what other cities are doing; 5) Land banking; 6) Updated the landscape ordinance with the ability to allow change and offer incentives to infill areas; 7) Growth in the ETJ; 8) Fee study for building inspection and planning permits; 9) \$180,000 set aside for infill incentives, set in the budget but not spent in last years budget, this money has been rolled over and set aside. Council would like to have guidelines set up for the use of the money and to let the developers know what those guidelines are; 10) TML creative financing would allow for a Municipal Management District. If a citizen couldn't pay for sidewalk repair they could apply for assistance and then pay back the loan money to the fund over time.

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- Develop a plan for Lake Fort Phantom that balances all interests to the community for the benefit of the region.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) The steering committee has met and has been taking input and getting a revised set of plans from consultants. The plans will come as a recommendation to the city council; 2) Plans will address infrastructure strategies, sale of the leased land. City staff will handle the sale of the lease land. Legal has reviewed the way San Angelo handled their sale of their property. We will need to look at the possibility that those that are leasing may not want to purchase the property; and 3) Sweetwater youth have become excited now that the Sweetwater Lake is now full and will be a potential recreational place for them to go. Lake Enhancement will be critical for families and youth in the area.

- Develop an annexation plan that is fiscally responsible, ensures quality development and is compatible with community desires.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) Currently in the process of annexation from the City's three year plan; 2) the property is located in the SE section of the City; 3) There will be a Public Hearing October 11 and October 25; 4) Pursue Airport Zoning around the City Airport and Dyess Air Force Base; 5) Legislation has changed and will now allow cities to develop agreements with land owners outside the city limits. If the landowners decide to develop then they would voluntarily enter the city limits; 6) Inventory of Services has been developed along with a Service plan.

- Complete the parks master plan and begin its implementation.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) The City has hired a firm to develop a 10 year Master plan, the firm has had interviews, done surveys, and held public hearings; 2) The 10 year Master Plan will go before the Park Board at their next meeting with a draft; 3) The draft will come before the City Council in the January Workshop and will be completed in February; 4) Waiting on Carter & Burgess to finalize the plans for Fort Phantom Lake; so that they will be consistent with the Park Master Plan and to be on the same page; 5) Will be looking to apply for grants to move forward with the plans. The Parks Master Plan has to be in place for the city to be eligible for grant monies; 6) The Plan will outline sources of specific funding from various agencies; and 7) There has been discussion of a Linear Park along Cedar Creek. Several Linear parks have been looked at and proposed in the Parks Master Plan.

- Use the established planning process to identify Comprehensive Land Use Plan priorities for review and ratification.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) Review of list of items to accomplish was: Landscape Ordinance, procedural process reviewed and updated; 2) Part of the sign

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ordinance has been updated; 3) Land development; 4) Ordinance review committee; and 5) Several items have been added for other areas for review.

- Use the Office of Neighborhood Services to support and develop neighborhood associations town-wide.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) A new neighborhood Association has been created. The City is helping them get involved; 2) would like to have a plan where by they are able to bring forth suggestions, not only when they are unhappy but when things are good also; and 3) a plan that has been developed is working with groups for mowing in their associations. The program is a partnership between the city and the neighborhood association, whereby the city contacts the association in regard to lots that need to be mowed. This occurs after the regular process has occurred. The City is hiring the association to mow these lots.

- Promote and develop strategies that are compatible with the Comprehensive Land used plan that utilize our proximity to I-20.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) Sales increasing along the Interstate; 2) Updated FEMA flood plain maps coming; 3) Pre Wal-Mart what value has been added since they built along this corridor; 4) Southwest Drive development growing, showing great progress; 5) TX DOT studies project the increase of traffic between Merkel and Clyde by 2020 will be in comparison to traffic between Austin and Round Rock; and 6) The City should be pro active in promoting what is happening in Abilene.

## **Strategic Objective: City Management**

**We want to be inclusive and efficient in our stewardship of Council perspective, staff expertise, and capital resources to continuously improve the delivery of city services.**

### **Council Optimization**

- Develop a plan for better communication with the public through the possible use of: evening meetings, question and answer sessions, surveys and forums.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Citizen Survey coming out soon; 2) council meetings are now televised; 3) encourage citizens to get involved through board participation and being educated about city services; 4) addition of a new employee a Webmaster Videographer will complement our public information office; and 5) more programming on Channel 7 – public service announcements, new programming etc.

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- Improve communications among Council members and between Council members and staff.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) Workshop Meeting has been added that enables staff to meet with council. This has been helpful before budget process; 2) would like to continue with workshops that allow for dreaming and visions; 3) Budget update in January Workshop; 4) the development of Abilene411. An online tool for citizens and staff to be able to search for answers to about 555 questions regarding the city. Citizens will be able to fill out service requests online. The program will be up and running in a couple of months. Staff will be able to track hits and extract reports from program; and 4) City University is going strong, a positive from the University is participation of citizens becoming involved with the city, through for example being board members.

### **Staff Effectiveness**

- Maximize staff efficiency by completing the organizational reviews focusing on: Manage Competition, Rightsizing, Structure and Revenue.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) This step has been completed; 2) Institutionalized some of the process used in the task force, but it is not the same type of structure. For example during the budget process we look at these thing from a task force setting as far as managed competition making sure we have the right number of people to do the right types of jobs; 3) Fire Department has just completed organizational review and changes, their focus is going to be directed on more internal training and a more defined training; 4) Yellow pages – a managed competition where the city looks at the services the city provides is there a private sector service that can provide that same function and can they do the function cheaper or more efficiently or both better than we can; and 5) we have tried to institutionalize that thinking in everything we do.

- Implement a process to review and monitor city reports and guiding documents such as the ACE, Wadley-Donovan, and Moskin reports.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) ACE has disbanded; 2) Wadley-Donovan and Moskin reports are geared toward Economic Development; 3) Combined with the next bullet.

- Develop a plan to make the City Abilene the employer of choice.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) City has updated the compensation plan; 2) Maintenance plan for future; 3) Health benefits plan; 4) Engaged in excellence plan – a training program for city employees; 5) Turn-over rate of approximately 10.9% to 11%; 6) The city has participated with Job Fair – having inquiries; 7) Positive feed back from

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the public some citizens seeking employment with the City; 8) Positive feed back from Fire Fighters that have just retired about the benefits and the people that they have worked with over the years; and 9) Trend seems to be with young people that they are changing jobs regularly.

- Promote and encourage employee development by creating a long-range plan to recruit, retain and reward employees, focusing on: training, technology, pay for performance, flexible scheduling and other benefits (health, daycare, etc.)

Council and staff discussion included: 1) Flexible scheduling has been successful; and 2) Training program – is allowing employees to update their skills and is very important for employment development.

- Improve our cultural image and reputation by striving to help the customer accomplish his objective. Think outside the box to attempt to say “yes” to the citizen whenever possible.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) CRM Program – is designed to improve customer relations and the image of our organization. 2) Striving to be responsive to customer relations and to actively think outside the box; 3) Employee Health Clinic have received positive feedback from employees, the Clinic is basically running at a break even point; and 4) looking at ways to increase utilization. An example of thinking outside the box occurred when the City worked with Kenneth Musgrave at the North side Wal-Mart development.

### **Capital Resources**

- Develop a long term Budget Plan by using a capital development process that allows the Council to plan 3-5 years in advance (CIP, and other financing tools and mechanisms).

Council and staff discussion included: 1) The Capital Improvement Project budget is now in place; 2) the process is in place beginning at the staff level right through Planning and Zoning Commission straight through to the City Council; and 3) are projects moving forward or back based on the city budget process.

### **Strategic Objective: Water**

**We want to fully implement a water management plan that adequately provides water quantity and assures water quality for current and future needs.**

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- Support regional efforts to develop future water supplies by developing and maintaining strong relations with other entities such as: West Central Texas Municipal Water District, Brazos River Authority, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Corps of Engineers, cities and counties, Texas Legislature, and U.S. Congress.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) The City has joined Brazos River Authority and West Central Texas Municipal Water District which has strengthened the West Texas Water supply and prevented BRA from restricting the scalping of water into Fort Phantom; 2) Dyess will be conducting a water vulnerability study in conjunction with Abilene Police Department and the Abilene Fire Department, Taylor County, TCEQ – to guarantee that the water supply for Dyess is dependable and safe. This will allow for an interface with Dyess officials and City staff.

- Consider all potential resources in development of future water supplies, including treated effluent, creeks and detention facilities, scalping operations and groundwater.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) The City has been instrumental in getting some bills passed at the legislative level; 2) Supported the Senate Bill 3 coming from the Legislation that designated our site for a potential water site; 3) evaluation to determine if the treated effluent can be diverted to Fort Phantom, what will the cost be and how much treatment would be needed; 4) through the CIP contracts – a computer modeling program tool that will be able to look at water treatment, wastewater collection, water distribution, wastewater treatment; 5) the modeling program will allow for adjustment in CIP projects for the future.

- Build and maintain water treatment and distribution facilities capable of meeting or exceeding federal and state water quality standards and capacity for present and future needs of the community.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) Reservoir System Operation Plan – will be complete around the 1<sup>st</sup> of November; 2) system will look at the cost of treatment, cost of distribution, plant capacity from each water plant; 3) cost of treatment of water from Fort Phantom, Lake Ivie, Lake Hubbard; 4) Recreational use of Fort Phantom; 5) Cedar Ridge vs. Possum Kingdom, lease of intake structure at Possum Kingdom vs. building a intake structure at Cedar Ridge, cost to treat the water from Possum Kingdom (high salt content) vs. Cedar Ridge; 6) Seymour aquifer; and 7) ground water around Sweetwater.

- Include flood control and flood plain management when developing new or maintaining existing water resources.
- Consider recreational uses as a part of water resource planning.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) discussed in bullet above.

## **Strategic Objective: Economic Development**

**We want to focus our resources to create an environment conducive to expansion of existing business and the attraction of new business and capital investment.**

- Have the DCOA report to the City Council on the top priorities for Economic Development identified in the Wadley-Donovan Study action items.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) DCOA will come before the City Council in the next couple of months to give a report; 2) Having been pursuing the kind of businesses that have been recommended; 3) Service companies; 4) Wind Energy; 5) Plastics – continue to work in that area; and 6) Call centers operations are doing well in the area.

- Create opportunities for the City Council to interact with other elected officials and interest groups, (e.g., Texas Midwest Community Network, Texas Municipal League Region #6, regional Workforce Board), on common Economic Development issues.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) What level of development does the city council want to have; 2) The level of involvement with Texas Midwest Community Network; 3) The City is an area resource; and 4) A regional Economic Plan.

- Recognize that tourism is an important component of the economy and deserves our support.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) Tourism deserves the City's full support; 2) Convention activity does well considering there is only one downtown hotel; 3) Logistics can be difficult sometimes when you have to move people from the south side of town to the downtown area; and 4) TIF funding the branding and destination way finding is maximize the tax funds.

- Discuss and analyze the most effective use of the ½ cent sales tax for Economic Development.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) how would council like to have feed back on use of the ½ cent sales tax?

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- Facilitate private (and possibly public) investment to put Abilene in the forefront of technology for our city and businesses; for example, development of a citywide Wi-Fi network.

Council and staff discussion included: 1) City has not moved forward on this due to the fact the City has become a test bed for the wireless market; and 2) The City does not have a franchise for wireless.

After hearing from members of the city staff on each item other discussion included: 1) State of the City – a report to the citizens of what the city has accomplished the last year. This report would be a highlight of the programs the city operates with Directors, Supervisors and City Council in attendance; 2) Brain storming once a quarter; and 4) 1 day retreat or a 2 half day retreat.

No Council action was required.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

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Danette Dunlap  
Interim City Secretary

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Norm Archibald  
Mayor