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THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA
Assembly Committee Of The Whole Work Session

January 3, 2011

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Deputy Mayor Merrill Sanford called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Assembly Chambers.

Assemblymembers Present: Jonathan Anderson (telephonic), Mary Becker, Bruce Botelho, Karen Crane, Ruth Danner, Bob Doll, Johan Dybdahl, Merrill Sanford, David Stone.

Assemblymembers Absent: None.

Staff present: Rod Swope, City Manager; Kim Kiefer, Deputy City Manager; Laurie Sica, Municipal Clerk; Greg Browning, Police Chief; Page Decker, Assistant Police Chief.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Monday, December 13, 2010 Committee of the Whole Meeting

Hearing no objection, the minutes of the November 1, 2010 Committee of the Whole meeting were approved as amended with corrections and the addition of, "Mr. Sanford said this is a matter for Docks and Harbors and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to work out," on page 6.

Mr. Sanford switched the order of business on the agenda to accommodate the availability of JPD staff.

III. ASSEMBLY GOALS DISCUSSION

Mr. Doll said the goals sub-committee met, following the retreat, to revise the goals and objectives according to the direction of the Assembly and the results are in the packet.

Mayor Botelho said more discussion should take place on execution of the top ten goals. There may be ongoing committee work. How will the Assembly achieve results?

Mr. Doll said the committee gave some consideration to the assignment of goals to the committees. As chair of PWFC, he was willing to place the committee's assigned goals on its agenda.

Mr. Sanford asked the committee to review each goal separately for comments.

Ms. Danner suggested either striking the numbers one through ten or ranking the "top ten" goals. The committee agreed to eliminate the numbers one through ten.

Ms. Danner suggested re-naming the columns "Advisory Committee" and "Assembly Committee" to "Preliminary Action" and "Final Draft."

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Support funding of a new state office building.

The committee discussed this goal and agreed to substitute “Lobbyist” for “Alaska Committee.”

Promote greater availability and affordability of day care for young working parents.

The committee discussed ongoing activities of the “HEART” coalition of local day care providers, a potential funding request from them and a referral for the group to work through the SSAB. No changes were made to this goal.

Write a climate action plan and achieve Assembly adoption before the end of 2011.

Ms. Kiefer said the RFP for the project was received and scored, and once insurance was reviewed the contract for the work would be signed with an estimated project completion date of December 2011, following review by the Assembly. No changes were made to this goal.

Actively promote Juneau as the best location for a world class climate research facility.

Without objection, the Committee amended the goal to read, “Actively promote Juneau as a world class climate research facility.” The committee agreed to add “JEDC” to the assignment list.

Continue to support fisheries development in Juneau through infrastructure development.

Without objection, the committee agreed to add “Docks and Harbors” to the assignment list.

Facilitate and support a non-profit led effort to address homelessness in Juneau.

Ms. Danner referred to the Assembly’s recent support of funding for the respite care program for homeless sick and said this program will be evaluated for long term needs. Ms. Kiefer said the Homeless Coalition is active and will do the annual homeless count event soon. Ms. Danner said that members of the SSAB had approached her with in interest in expanding the board’s focus beyond grant issuance to provide a central focus for social service groups in Juneau. Ms. Kiefer discussed the Affordable Housing Commission’s efforts to develop a grant application for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. No changes were made to this goal.

Review the large mine ordinance.

Without objection, the committee changed the goal to “Review the potential development of the AJ Mine.” Mayor Botelho said the mine is a local asset with a majority of shares owned by CBJ. CBJ is a part of a unit agreement with AJT Mining Properties, the holding company. Every couple decades a review of the mine and its potential operations is done. Mayor Botelho said the last review led towards the development of the Kensington mine. He asked the Assembly to wrestle with the question – under what circumstances, if any, should CBJ promote the development of the mine. He suggested a volunteer body review whether the idea should be pursued and said he was ready to appoint a committee to do the review. Much has changed regarding technology and performance of existing mines. The location of the mine was the major issue in previous discussions as it is in the heart of the downtown area. He is willing to explore

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this because he recognizes technologies have changed and the impacts outside the mine may have changed since the last review.

Ms. Crane said she recalled the last discussion and had heard from more people on this goal than any of the others. The people who commented were upset. All segments of the community need to be involved if this moves forward. Diverse opinions are needed from the beginning.

Mr. Doll said he is interested to hear about alternative technologies and the ability to generate revenue for the community.

Mr. Dybdahl likes the change of the wording of the goal. There are few issues that do not raise the ire of some in the community and the Assembly is responsible for doing the research.

Mayor Botelho said he understands Ms. Crane's concerns, and transparency and many voices are needed in the review. Some ire must be risked to get the information that leads to good decisions. We have to weigh the long term benefits and detriments, and there are ways to conduct a responsible review.

Mr. Anderson said the idea of an ad-hoc group was interesting and asked why this would be better than Planning Commission hearings.

Mayor Botelho said having people that can spend focused time on a specific matter to map out next steps is helpful. Any actual project would be reviewed for multiple years. In 1989 we called it the Scoping Committee, to map out approaches. Regarding membership, it should be small but representative, with some expertise by the members to know who to ask for further feedback.

Mr. Anderson said his concern regarding the committee is appointing people to such a divisive task and the appointments becoming divisive itself. Could the Planning Commission invite experts to do this review.

Mr. Doll said the subcommittee suggested the Planning Commission be assigned, but he felt that the PC was not the right venue. He did not feel the Community Development Department had the resources to do the work.

Mr. Dybdahl agreed and the information will be technical regarding the actual mining.

Hearing no objections, Mayor Botelho said he would limit the task force to no more than seven members. He was prepared to appoint members and asked for recommendations for such membership. He said framing the charge and setting a time limit for the work would be the biggest challenge. The assignments were changed to "Volunteer Body Appointed by Mayor" and "Committee of the Whole."

Review Assembly intent for a North Douglas Crossing

Ms. Danner suggested changing the word "review" to "determine."

Mr. Sanford questioned the goal due to the vote.

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Mr. Dybdahl said he thought the vote was as much about the financing method as it was the crossing itself. There has been a lot of study. This needs to remain a goal and the Assembly needs to figure out a way to get this done.

Mr. Stone agreed with Mr. Dybdahl and said the approach may have been flawed, but the Assembly has consistently listed this as a goal.

Mr. Anderson agreed with both.

Mayor Botelho said it was agreed in the retreat that the Assembly should decide on a course of action to advance the objective, the phasing, etc.

Mr. Doll said he was not a fan of the ballot proposal but he would like to see an ad hoc committee of the Assembly, perhaps with other participants, discover what might be possible. Ending discussion on the topic is not satisfactory. There are needs and the question is how to address them and in what time.

Mr. Sanford said he thought the issue is dead for now since the funds are not available, and the city is not ready to provide its own funding. There is a time frame for this project and it may be for our grandchildren. He thought the topic should rest and it will come forward when the needs arise again.

Hearing no objection, it was agreed to change the goal to “Determine a multi-year Assembly course of action for the North Douglas Crossing.” Assignments were made to the Lands Committee and Committee of the Whole.

Review options to manage and dispose of Juneau’s solid waste:

The committee discussed this goal and made no changes.

Continue seawalk / waterfront improvements, including from the Douglas Bridge.

The committee discussed this goal and agreed to change it to read, “Continue seawalk / waterfront improvements between the Douglas Bridge and the Rock Dump.”

Recess: 6:25 p.m. – 6:32 p.m.

Mr. Sanford noted the arrival of JPD staff and without objection, the committee suspended its discussion of the goals and requested that Chief Browning and Assistant Chief Decker present their report to the committee.

IV. JUNEAU POLICE DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY REPORT

Chief Browning and Assistant Chief Decker thanked the Assembly for the support given to JPD. The 2010 Annual report he provided to the Assembly is on the website. He cautioned readers that in general, Uniform Crime Report statistics are inherently inaccurate because of the variations in data collection and input variations between officers and between communities.

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Chief Browning said that most people in Juneau feel safe and that is because there is not a lot of violent “stranger to stranger” crime. There is a high rate of theft in the community, which is partly due to the level of comfort here, with people not locking their homes or cars. The other issue that stands out is the alarming rate of sexual assault and this is also present across the state. There are many reasons. JPD’s major focus for enforcement is theft, assault, and vandalism. They have added crime prevention tips to their annual report of statistics. JPD has a mapping feature on their website to show what is going on with crime in various neighborhoods.

Mayor Botelho asked if the picture changes from year to year. Chief Browning said yes, but generalizations can be made that there are higher rates of crime in certain areas, such as the trailer park communities. The statistics can be skewed since the numbers are low.

Mayor Botelho said that pending state legislation addresses tax breaks for high crime areas and he was concerned about making such definitions. Chief Browning said he did not believe that Juneau would meet federal levels for crime for these types of programs.

Chief Browning said calls for service have declined. He attributed this to providing more information through the website. 9-1-1 calls have stayed stable.

The committee discussed DUI cases and Mr. Sanford asked for information on how many vehicles in Juneau have been equipped with breathalyzer devices.

Ms. Danner asked for information on changes in the rate of minor consuming charges and if that reflected a change in behavior or enforcement. Chief Browning said he would find that information.

Chief Browning said the drug enforcement unit is very active, with marijuana being the main drug seized in terms of street value and oxycontin/oxycodone second. When drugs that are taken off the street, the price goes up and the burglaries increase, or the other drugs become more active.

Ms. Crane asked how drugs that were not longer needed for evidence were destroyed. Assistant Chief Decker said that they are destroyed in a supervised burn.

Chief Browning said JPD’s website has been updated significantly and they are trying to make it more interactive. The “Ask a Dispatcher” column has become very popular. Mobile data terminals are installed in all vehicles now and upgrades have been made to the radio system. Regarding criminal investigations, they have changed the “service delivery model,” from one officer working on a case from beginning to end, to an officer making an initial report, forwarding it to a detective unit with specialized skills. The officer can then do patrol work, and the right person is working the investigation. JPD has done significantly more crime analysis with a records management system that enables the work.

JPD was the first and is still the only accredited agency in Alaska, so Juneau is leading the way.

There is a high, disturbing rate of domestic violence. A police crisis intervention specialist – a social worker- works in the police department to assist the families with follow-up.

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Mr. Doll asked if any cross reference is done between assault and domestic violence and alcohol consumption. The chiefs estimated at minimum 75% of the cases involve alcohol.

Mayor Botelho said it is understood there is an epidemic of domestic violence but it does not translate in the UCR statistics – where does DV get picked up in the UCR matrix. Chief Browning said it is either referenced as simple or aggravated assault, and specific DV statistics have to be gathered from the JPD’s record management system. Chief Browning said that there is a difference between reported crime statistics and actual crimes, with sexual assault being notoriously under – reported.

Mr. Anderson asked about radio security and scanners hearing police communications. Chief Browning said that most of the radio equipment has been replaced, but the voting system in use for Juneau’s geography will not allow for any type of encryption. With mobile computing, the dispatchers are able to send a text encrypted message. This is not done with routine calls and this goes over the radio. Sometimes communications, when sensitive, go to cell phone. Encryption is desired but much more difficult to achieve. ALMR, a statewide system, can be used if a major disaster and statewide communications are needed, our system is compatible with the ALMR system. The issue of “dead spots” inside buildings in Juneau has been identified as a problem. The new high school and Bartlett Regional Hospital are two of the buildings that block communications from the building, including emergency communications. Systems need to be put in place as buildings are constructed, and the current fire code already requires installation of these systems, so this problem may be solved eventually through code enforcement.

Mr. Anderson asked if the Diamond Park Pool was constructed to be a “live spot” and Chief Browning believed it is not.

Ms. Danner asked about collaboration with other law enforcement agencies in Juneau. Chief Browning said occasionally there will be cooperation on specific cases and he appreciates the good working relationships that exist, including State Troopers and the U.S. Forest Service.

Mayor Botelho thanked Chief Browning for JPD’s work on the prescription drug round up and said it was a very successful event.

Mr. Sanford thanked the chiefs for their presentation.

ASSEMBLY GOALS DISCUSSION – continued:

Other changes to the Assembly goals document include:

“Facilitate development of rental housing.” The committees of referral was changed from HRC to Lands.

“Develop a vibrant and diversified economy...” was changed to “Develop a *more* vibrant and diversified economy...”

The referral for “Promote Juneau as a federal scientific research center...” was changed to add JEDC and lobbyists.

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The Assembly discussed the goal “Pursue the creation of a healthy, year round downtown business environment and historic district.” Ms. Danner asked about tax assessments and an issue of jewelry stores being identified as the highest and best use for downtown with regards to the vacant land next to the parking garage. This seems to be a conflict with the goals.

Mr. Sanford asked if there has been an update on the property tax issue on South Franklin St. regarding the assessment methods.

Mayor Botelho said this is still unclear. Ms. Crane said that so much of downtown is closed during the winter and asked if there is anyway to promote some use of those buildings year round rather than just seasonally.

Mr. Dybdahl said that the mixed use district was an attempt to address this by adding living units to many of the developments, and a few residential units were built.

Mr. Swope said that there is not much you can do to compel or incentivize those who do not live here in the winter. One of the great deterrents were the people hanging out on the streets and the downtown patrol officer has done a lot to address this situation. We have made good strides towards upgrading downtown, including Gunakadeit Park, the new parking garage, and filling the pit. These are all good strides.

Mr. Doll said the “fee in lieu of parking” ordinance allowed property owners to renovate their properties without carving out parking places and this helped some.

Mr. Swope said the Public Works Department took one open management position and made two full time positions available to manage the sidewalks, clearing them of trash and snow. The positions are partly paid from Marine Passenger Fees in the summer months.

There was no objection to adding a goal, “Assist in establishing a Lt. Governor residence in Juneau.”

Regarding the goal ‘Explore “Circuit Breaker” option for capping property tax...’ the committee removed “Manager” from the assignment list and said it was open to hearing information about the topic but did not want the Manager to focus efforts on the project.

There was no objection to adding the words “Action Items” after “Top Ten.”

The committee discussed distribution of the goals to the assigned parties.

V. ADJOURN: 8:20 p.m.

Submitted by,
Laurie Sica, CMC
Municipal Clerk