

NOTES
Common Council Organizational & Strategic Planning Session
January 28, 2012

Attendees

Ald. Lisa Subeck	Ald. Larry Palm (left at 12:45 p.m.)
Ald. Bridget Maniaci	Ald. Anita Weier
Ald. Lauren Cnare	Ald. Mark Clear
Ald. Mike Verveer (arrived at 11:59 a.m.)	Ald. Matt Phair
Ald. Shiva Bidar-Sielaff	Mayor Paul Soglin
Ald. Steve King	Anne Monks, Assistant to the Mayor
Ald. Scott Resnick	Katie Crawley, Assistant to the Mayor
Ald. Paul Skidmore	Gun Van Rensselaer, City Organizational
Ald. Chris Schmidt	Training & Development, Facilitator
Ald. Satya Rhodes-Conway	Lisa Veldran, Common Council Office staff
Ald. Sue Ellingson	Brenda Konkel, citizen
Ald. Tim Bruer	

Agenda Agreements

Use discussion format

Basics: 2 year terms, elected by district

Develop a way to move forward on issues identified

- CCOC
- Work Group
- Council discussion
- Leadership

Issues 1st Page:

Consensus amongst council

Plan of execution - doing it

Competing priorities

Leadership structure

Necessity to react to outside

Time (lack of availability)

Related: Number of committees that alders serve on (time commitment)

Alignment with Mayor's office

Limited resources compared with resources in Mayor's office

District focus vs. city-wide needs

Effective communications with each other

Issues 2nd Page:

Meeting structure

Public meetings

"Is it our job" unified agenda

Money ⇔ Budget

How alders use information from committees

Number of committees interrelated with efficiency of decision-making

Department vs. council agendas vs. Mayor's agenda

Staff drives committees

Communication with committees

Issues 3rd Page:

Email structure/system collection and aggregation

Alignment with citizen priorities

Council/other municipalities (alignment)

Ever-changing council (2 years)

Political nature

“How right” is an alder when representing district?

Other “voices” - How to balance

Does the citizenry believe the Council should have a unified agenda?

Considerations 4th Page:

How many “eggs” in the basket?

What things can the Council let go of?

What happens if the Council disagrees?

Risk of failure

Just “checking it off” of the Council's list

Pressure to do something

Remembering frontline staff will have to be onboard

Implementation

Considerations 5th Page:

City staff (realistic) input

- Managing the relationship with City Staff

Fear of “politicization”

Agency Priorities (interaction with alders and mayor)

Meshing with agency priorities

Longevity of agenda

Agenda that excludes you from working on other issues

Considerations 6th Page:

Caucus agenda vs. Legislative agenda

Committees (are they a + or -?)

- How, and if, to bring committee agendas forward
- Power dynamic between council and committees

Who really is in charge?

- Taxpayers

Who do we serve?

Collaboration on a council strategic/policy/legislative agenda

- Compelling message

Mayor Soglin: taxpayers, citizens, constituents, customers or comrades?

DISCUSSION

Strategic/policy/legislative agenda – Does the Council want to have one?

Collaborate on agenda

Compelling message (Ellingson)

Council should be professional (Rhodes-Conway)

How we do business (Cnare)

Gives council leadership a defined role (Bidar-Sielaff)

Word “agenda” is too restrictive – broader topic areas that need to be addressed (Schmidt)
 2 year terms and district specific vs. mayor 4 year term and city wide (Resnick)
 List of no more than 3 items that council agrees are city wide issues that affect all of our districts – work on (Rhodes-Conway)

There was a straw poll on whether the Council should develop an “Agenda” (strategic, policy and/or legislative): 10 “Yes” votes – enough desire to move forward

Approaches on developing a Council Agenda

Small group fleshing it out (Guy Van Rensselaer/Ald. Satya Rhodes-Conway)

Ald. Satya Rhodes-Conway saw it as a two step process

1. Discussion and formal vote on whether to pursue
2. Defining: What are the issues?

Free form discussion and more regularly (Ald. Bridget Maniaci)

Process on how council is going to reach unanimous agreement on those agenda items (Ald. Lisa Subeck)

Formal consensus process * everyone can have a veto on items (Ald. Larry Palm)

Majority of alders but not where one alder who can “tank” the whole process (Ald. Bridget Maniaci)

Ald. Lauren Cnare thought there was enough consensus that the Council wanted an agenda but now need to decide how Council goes about developing the process:

- CCOC
- 1-2 people work on an agenda proposal
- Work group develops the agenda
- All Council discussion
- Council Leadership

Vote on who should be charged with creating a proposal on how to establish an agenda to come back to the Council for a vote:

Clear	CCOC	Work Group	
Weier	CCOC		Council Discussion
King		Work Group	Council Discussion
Subeck	No Preference		
Schmidt	CCOC	Work Group	
Rhodes-Conway	CCOC		Council Leadership
Palm	CCOC	Work Group	
Bruer	CCOC	Work Group	
Skidmore	CCOC	Work Group	
Maniaci	CCOC		Council Discussion
Phair	CCOC	Work Group	
Resident	CCOC	Work Group	
Ellingson	CCOC		Council Leadership
Bidar-Sielaff	CCOC	Work Group	
Cnare	CCOC		

ACTION: CCOC is charged with creating a proposal on how to establish a Council agenda (strategic, policy, legislative) for the full Council to vote on.

DISCUSSION

Method for CCOC and Alder Appointments

Cnare: Alders would like to appoint themselves to committees – manage own destinations

Rhodes-Conway: the answer to the Council job description question ties into this issue

Maniaci: Table this issue

Ellingson: should further expand on job description before discussing this issue

Rhodes-Conway: there are three big pieces: constituent service, city policy and committee service

Everyone agreed to table discussion on who appoints until the discussion on alder “job description” occurred.

Cnare: this is a simple question of “yes” or “no” - Do alders want council to appoint alders to committees?

Rhodes-Conway: Before addressing council appointments first deal with job description – before she can answer “yes” or “no” she wanted to the alternatives were to the status quo

DISCUSSION

Palm – no matter the process the appointments would still be political

Bidar-Sielaff – skills, etc...go into it blind, ability to have a better discussion among alders about balancing it out – who wants what and then make a recommendation to mayor

Weier – supported mayor still making appointments but develop ground rules – number of appointments

Resnick – ability to switch committees was helpful, watched senior alder on committee to develop his role on committee

Soglin – Mayor makes appointments, 2nd recognize that for himself there is a lot of balancing that takes place – different geographic areas, tenure, knowledge vs. giving new people an opportunity to serve on committee, diversity, gender.

Cnare – Noted that any of those balancing processes could be followed by the council if they were appointing. Likes the thought of alders appointing at the committee level – have the ability and enrich relationships. Council forwards a slate to the mayor, possibly eliminate the “horse trading”

Subeck – She found alders appointing unappealing as a new alder – unrealistic that council could make those appointments with new alder

Rhodes-Conway – agrees with mayor on balance, learned things on committees that she was appointed vs. her picks, question of better training on role, more important things to talk about committee structure in general and better functioning alders on those committees – not going to make a difference on who makes appointments

Phair – politics go into appointments

Maniaci – likes Cnare’s idea of making recommendations to mayor give new mayors a working baseline.

Bruer – create a work group to come back to CCOC with alternatives

Alder Appointments

- Ranking
- Process
- Mayor (ground rules)
- Balance
- Politics
- Create list to forward to mayor

Areas of Discussion

Job Description Ties into Code of Conduct

Ties into Leadership Structure

Internal Knowledge

External Knowledge

Ties into Orientation & Training

Analyst Role

Appointments

DISCUSSION: JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Constituent services

Rhodes-Conway - Catalyst for capacity building:

- Information from city to constituents
- Information from constituents to city
- Advocate for our constituent (ombudsman)
- Facilitate between organizations (neighborhood associations) and city (mayor, staff)
- Opening the door to government

Resnick

- Best practices
- Perception as a “representative” in a democracy

Phair

- Training

Cnare

- Community organizer role

2. City-wide policy

- Budget
- Large issues/City-wide
- Ordinances
- Relationships - inter-governmental
- Recognize that you are representing the council in different environments (committees, conferences, etc.)
- Information sharing
- Structure

- Personnel role (approve managerial contracts)
 - Advocacy
3. Committee service
 - Liaison between committee and council
 - Knowledge of procedures: Roberts Rules, Legistar, how decisions get made
 - Bring information to the table * seek out information (empower chair/vice-chair and connect them to resources)
 - Sponsor ordinances or resolutions that a committee wants to move forward
 - Participate in discussion and work of committee
 - Setting legislative policy agenda for committee (or facilitate)
 - Take back educational component from committee members to the council
 - Attendance/be prepared
 - Advocates for committee
 - Assist committee in achieving goals
 4. Representing Government
 - Intergovernmental communication and action
 - Representing the city to other non-governmental organizations (professional organizations)
 - Media relations
 - Recognize that your “Nametag” is on – modeling behavior
 5. District Service
 - Move district things through process – informal and formal processes
 - When appropriate that the entire council has the information
 - Know your district, know your neighborhood, neighborhood leaders
 - Knowing the process: regulatory, city, etc...
 - Knowing the public work projects going on in your district
 - Cross district/border issues
 - Planning issues: neighborhood, parks, allocation, etc...
 - Intergovernmental communication

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED/ACTION STEPS:

1. What is **knowledge base** necessary to do your job well?
Cnare: Survey alders on knowledge base, compile the responses and send out results before next Council discussion (research best practices of what other communities do)
2. What **resources** are needed to do your job well?
Focus next discussion on this question. Lisa Veldran survey alders on another meeting date for a Council discussion (dates over a two week period)