

Present: Council President Downey; President Pro-Tem Woodrow; Members: Domzal, McCleary, Mooney, Pfeifer, Schmitt

Absent: None

Also Present: Village Manager, Murphy

President Downey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Village municipal building at 18500 W. 13 Mile Road.

The purpose of the study session is to hear a presentation from Tom Sipila on behalf of Detroit Executive Service Corps (DESC) on a Strategic Plan Process Proposal for the Village of Beverly Hills. DESC has been serving tri-county nonprofits for more than 20 years. Its mission is to enhance the effectiveness of nonprofits, governmental organizations and schools by transferring the knowledge, skills, and expertise of retired and working executive volunteers.

Sipila highlighted his background and presented information and qualifications of DESC. He proposed two fundamental objectives with respect to what he would like to accomplish at this meeting. One is to gain Council's endorsement of a path that would lead to developing a strategic plan for the Village with DESC facilitating the process. Secondly, he will share his thoughts on how to select a core team that is representative of all factions of the community.

Sipila presented an overview of the strategic planning process and discussed three stages – fact and information gathering, writing the plan, and implementation and follow-up.

A core team of about 15 people is selected in the early phase of the process. DESC would lead this team through a detailed orientation of the process and provide examples from their experience. Stakeholders are identified. It may be relevant in preparing a strategic plan for the Village to consider focus groups, surveys, or a town hall meeting to enlist participation from residents in all areas of the Village to achieve a balanced perspective of the input being gathered.

The next step is to brainstorm in order to establish core values of the Village. Core values are those values that do not change over time. The core team then defines the mission of the Village, which is what we do today. Secondly, the group attempts to develop a vision for the Village in terms of where Beverly Hills wants to be in a certain time frame. Plans are typically prepared for a three to five year time frame. During this phase, the core team does a SWOT analysis – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Writing the plan involves three key points: Determine key strategic issues, identify strategic objectives, and define action plans. Sipila elaborated on the essential ingredients of an action plan. The last stage of the process is implementation and follow up.

Sipila presented the mechanics of strategic plan development and the nature of the final product. A succinct and focused 8-10 pages is usually adequate to cover the salient issues. The plan should be viewed as a living document and should be referenced as other community issues surface to help set priorities for the future.

Comments and questions from Council members were addressed by Sipila. There was concern expressed with possible overlaps in terms of the Village Planning Board and Master Plan issues. Sipila agreed that the core team should be cognizant of the Village Master Plan and other committee structures to make sure that there is not a redundancy of efforts.

There was some unease among members of Council in terms of 15 people being perceived as setting the agenda for the Village. Sipila responded that Council would have the opportunity for input and participation throughout the process. The goal would be for Council to buy into the strategic plan.

Council understands that the key strategic issues are determined by public input through town hall meetings, surveys, or focus groups. It was assumed that it would be the job of the core team to draw the key strategic issues from that information. Sipila affirmed that this would be the way to proceed in his experience. A decision on whether to conduct surveys, town meetings, or focus groups is made by brainstorming with people on the core team about issues confronting the Village and by weighing the experience gained by DESC from other projects. Sipila emphasized that DESC will provide guidance to the core team in terms of sorting through input and defining key issues. The written plan is prepared by the core team with DESC offering guidance and examples of how the plan should be formulated.

Council questioned how a strategic plan drafted by the core team is adopted. Sipila stated that Council is involved in the process, adding that one or two members may sit on the core team. Council will have a good understanding of the strategic plan. The core team will approach Council for its endorsement of the plan.

Sipila outlined criteria for core team selection. Approximately 15 members are selected to ensure adequate representation and resources to support the strategic planning process requirements. Members should be enthusiastic about the process and attend a minimum of 80% of all meetings. Core team members should include those most responsible for executing the plan to ensure ‘buy-in’ to both the strategic planning process and the resultant plan.

Murphy addressed a concern expressed that the core team may not necessarily represent the interests of all groups within the Village. He suggests that the core team should be comprised of people who do not have a personal agenda but who are genuinely interested in making sure the process does what it is designed to do. The team members’ focus should be to look at the larger Village picture considering the public input gained through surveys, focus groups, or town hall meetings. The job of the facilitator is to make sure that bias does not enter into the process.

The financial commitment for conducting a community-wide strategic plan was discussed. The fee from Detroit Executive Service Corp would be \$3,000. The Village would also incur costs for printing, meeting costs, and surveys. It was mentioned that DESC would assist the group with developing a survey if that approach was taken.

Murphy concluded that he received sufficient direction from Council this evening. He will meet with Sipila and others from DESC to review tonight’s discussion and prepare a work plan for

Council consideration. If Council concurs with the proposal, a contract with DESC will be presented as an agenda item for approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.