

City Commission Special Meeting – Strategic Planning Workshop

June 9, 2020

All Commissioners were present. City Manager, Khalid Resheidat introduced Natalia Eckroth, the new Finance Director and Heather Kidd, the new HR Director. He then introduced Peter Seichler, from GAI Consultants who oversaw this project.

Mr. Seichler gave an overview of the process which began in Dec 2019 with two public meetings. The next steps included meeting individually with the mayor and city commissioners and at a round table meeting with City department chairs. The focus was on what makes New Smyrna Beach great, and what is needed strategically to keep it that way. He cited a submission from a grassroots consortium of business owners and residents laying out a common vision, mission statement and strategy to include integrity, accountability, communication, and teamwork in the plan. He read the Mission and Vision Statements, saying they exemplified our city's inclusiveness and desire to work together to preserve our community and quality of life.

The following five points became the focus of the 2020 Strategic Plan:

[See Draft Strategic Plan Elements](#)

- **Communication and Trust** – Allow the Mission Statement to guide in discussing and resolving complex issues in a thoughtful manner. Compromise is required to allow buy-in by all on seemingly single-minded issues.
- **Quality of Life Measures** – The community consistently stated it wants to retain the charm and character of our town. We need to find a balance among the definitions of this including:
 - Improved and more parks and beach access
 - Thriving local businesses
 - walkable streets and maintenance of defined neighborhoods
 - community connectiveness via community events.
- **Growth Management (Beachside, Town and West Areas)** - We must look at how we can “accommodate new growth and investment while maintaining its distinct community character, quality of life and environmental resiliency.”
- **Environment and Resiliency**- Look at existing plans to develop finding strategies to deal with:
 - possible tidal wave impact
 - storm surge
 - floodplain protection
 - stormwater management
 - Maintenance of water supply and quality
- **Transportation and Circulation (Traffic)**- We must consider a more balanced solution to transportation and circulation that is safer and friendlier for pedestrians and human mobility vehicles ie. bikes and golf carts. This will require balance as we recognize there are different perspectives.

Mr. Seichler stated that the report shows starter ideas and actions under each of the five topics and then addressed how we might benchmark, monitor and measure each of them.

The team took the five strategic elements and categorized each one's starter ideas in a tracking system online and in real time.

The City has been investigating software that could show which items are being addressed and how. Items can also be added and changed to show progress is being made. This tracking method allows transparency. The public can see what the City is doing in real time on each of the metrics.

Commissioners seemed impressed but voiced some questions/concerns.

- Vice Mayor Kolody wanted to be sure that any software used would allow for public input (it will) and he had some reservations on who and how the action plan elements would be kept up-to-date (input is manual on the part of the City).
- Mayor Owen asked about read only access and read-write and how to make it so not just anyone could add information, and response was this is one area they need to address. He asked if dollar amount tags could be added, and the response was it would be investigated.
- Commissioner Hartman asked if time-line reminders would be available, and the answer was yes, if notifications are turned on.
- Commissioner Hartman asked if the tool was affordable for this year's budget, and the response was it was free for one user, but after that it wasn't expensive with Mayor Owen saying he saw it to be under \$250 per user.

City Manager Resheidat reported that an important part of the Action Plan, which will be the next step is to identify and test a program that will meet the need to publicly monitor the elements for each strategy. If software is tested, recommended, and approved for use, then the action plan items will be prioritized according to cost funding moving forward. Mr. Seichler brought up the difference between measuring qualitative data and quantitative event data. The City needs to identify the tangible items that can be tracked and successfully completed for tracking. Meeting the five goals is an ongoing and never-ending challenge.

The Commission approved using the software Mindgenius to track the 2020 Strategic Plan.

[See full presentation on Report](#)

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