

City of Nevada, Iowa Goal Setting Report

December 7, 2009

Mayor:

Jerry Gull

City Council:

Andy Kelly

Jane Heintz

Tom Haller

Walt McDonald (out-going)

Mike Neff (out-going)

Gary Gardner (out-going)

Brian Hanson (in-coming)

Ray Schwichtenberg (in-coming)

City Staff:

Elizabeth Hansen, City Administrator

Teresa Peterson-Smith, City Clerk



Facilitated by:

Jeff Schott

Institute of Public Affairs

University of Iowa

**CITY OF NEVADA, IOWA
GOAL SETTING SESSION
2009**

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CITY OF NEVADA, IOWA GOAL SETTING SESSION 2009

Introduction

The City of Nevada requested the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) to assist the city with goal setting. IPA agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

1. Prepare a questionnaire to identify recent accomplishments, issues/trends/concerns, potential new initiatives/programs/policies and suggestions to improve organizational effectiveness.
2. Conduct a goal-setting session with the elected officials.
3. Preparation of this final report.

Goal Setting Work Session

City Council Members and the Mayor held a work session conducted by the IPA on December 6, 2009. In attendance and participating at this meeting were Mayor Jerry Gull and Council Members Andy Kelly, Jane Heintz, Tom Haller, Walt McDonald (out-going), Mike Neff (out-going), Brian Hanson (in-coming), and Ray Schwichtenberg (in-coming). Also in attendance and participating in this meeting were City Administrator Elizabeth Hansen, City Clerk Teresa Peterson-Smith, Deputy City Clerk Donna Mosinski, Street Supervisor Gary Flack, Water Supervisor Ryan Porath, Waste Water Supervisor Mike Neal, Parks and Recreation Director Tim Hansen, Library Director Beth Williams, Police Chief Mike Tupper, Fire Chief Dana Wipperman, Building and Zoning Official Shawn Cole, City Attorney Don Juhl, City Engineer Larry Stevens (Howard R. Green Company).

Mission Statement

The participants reviewed three proposed Mission Statements for the City of Nevada and selected the following:

“Our mission is to provide quality public services that effectively address citizen and community needs in a fiscally responsible manner”

Major Accomplishments

The following were identified as major accomplishments during the past two years:

- Resurfacing of S-14
 - Grant obtained
- Senior Center building project
 - Grants received
 - Financing well along
 - Obtained Creative Printing Building
- Cooperative work efforts between city departments have improved. Staff and equipment sharing across departmental lines implemented
- Completion of City Hall
- Sidewalk repair project - Phase 1 completed
- Quiet Zone implementation on the south track
- GIS/GPS data system started
- Fair Grounds land transfer completed
- New comprehensive web page implemented
- Water valves exercised and fixed
- Fire hydrant replacement project
- Better relationship with the School District:
 - Developing a Facility Use Agreement between the city and school
 - School Resource Officer well integrated in City/School
- City Equipment Purchased
 - Sewer line cleaning truck
 - Fire Department ladder truck
 - Backhoe
- Bike Trail Extension project
 - REAP grant for 8th Street to fairgrounds trail - Phase V
- Weed control in cemetery much improved
- Partnership agreement developed between the City and NEDC - strengthened relationship
- Sump Pump Ordinance - sump pump collector line policy established
- Nevada obtained a seat on the E911 Board

Major Accomplishments (continued)

- Township Fire and EMS Agreement
- Established Ad Hoc committee to assist with allocation of Local Option Sales Tax and Hotel-Motel funds for Human Service groups
- Staff Water Department Supervisor position filled
- Fire/EMS Department functioning as a single community resource unit
- Regional Planning and Congressional attention focus on U.S. 30/S-14 interchange
- Knoll Ridge Public Area cleaned up
- Implementation of trade review board (Board of Appeals)
- Added street light at N. 11th St (dark dead end)
- City retained Gates Hall
- Implemented a Tobacco Free parks policy
- Eliminated Cemetery mowing contract
- Partnership with Ames Convention and Visitors Bureau to host tournaments
- State award for Get Fit Nevada wellness program
- Anytime Fitness Contract for Employees to support and promote wellness
- Residency policy revised in consideration for affected personnel excluding certain public safety personnel and City Administration
- Public Safety Facility complete
- 2” and 4” water main replacement plan being implemented
- Capital Improvements Program and Equipment Replacement Plans developed and adopted
- Water leak detection program
- Replaced furnishings and provided coffee corner at Library
- Implementing CodeRED Program
- FEMA and Disaster Recovery grants for Flood of 2008 repairs
- Projects designed for 2011 – K Avenue, 15th Street and Trickling Filter Rehabilitation projects
- Implemented a purchasing policy
- Implemented a storm water utility
- Adopted City Council Rules of Governance Procedures
- Employee evaluations are being conducted each year for all employees – new forms
- Established permits and licensing for work in right-of-way by contractors, utility companies and property owners
- Updated job descriptions with input from the department heads
- Water and sewer distribution replacement plan

Major Accomplishments (continued)

- Sharing mechanic, sharing equipment, and doing more with less. “One organization”
- Established a city-wide employee safety committee, health insurance committee, and wellness committee
- Promotion of positive image for City government
- Retained and increased the number of volunteer members of the fire department as call volume increases

Issues, Concerns, Trends and Opportunities

The following were identified as issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that may affect future city services, policies, finances or operations:

- Economy
 - State budget problems
 - School budget problems – impact on property taxes
 - Getting best bang for our buck and not over spending
 - Shrinking general fund and expanding services to the community at the same time, expenses in operations increase
 - Property Tax Roll Backs
- Repair of water system delivery system is ongoing
- 17th Street just south of H Avenue - expensive storm drain issue
- Extensive school construction is using local dollars
- Economic development seems to not extend to main street businesses
- Keeping downtown vibrant and alive
- Waste water plant is at capacity and over extended during heavy rains
- The City has more green space than is required or is needed
- City pool bringing in less revenue each year
- Gates Hall rental fees are rather high for “regular citizens”
- Lack of tax dollars
- Undefined direction in economic development
- Need a policy for the uses of the basement at City Hall
- Be careful to providing duplicate services, being in competition with local businesses or services that should be provided by the private sector
- Avoidance of knee jerk reactions by City leadership and the citizens to the economic downturn that undermine, inhibit or discourage city growth and expansion
 - Service or staff reductions in necessary service areas
 - “No risk” approach to economic development
 - Cutbacks on quality of life programs
- County economic development between Ames and Nevada

Issues, Concerns, Trends and Opportunities (continued)

- Economic Development – getting businesses the community wants and is a fit for Nevada
- Filling in land versus urban sprawl
- Being consistent on projects, i.e. sidewalk project
- Open communication about closing 8th Street crossing before it is a done deal. Could have an impact on the north side of town
- Declining school enrollment – fewer families
- Increased recreation programming challenges due to limited space and more demand to start kids in highly competitive activities at a younger age
- Expand the tobacco free policy
- Disposal of excess city property
- Harrington Park drainage issue – clean the ditches
- Accepting use of credit cards as form of payment for the public
- Local cable channel
- S-14/Highway 30 Interchange
- Indoor Recreation Center – mainly gym and multi-purpose space
- Due to Reichardt property purchase, less TIF funds available to economic development incentives
- Financing, grants, etc. for new projects, but hard to maintain what we have with a tight operating budget. You can't use these funding sources to operate and maintain
- Diminishing road use funds, will have to use all reserves and eventually general fund to support department
- Health insurance issues
- Downtown revitalization, i.e. Camelot Theater
- Aggressively sell the 100 acres of farm land
- Find ways to reduce engineering fees
- Increases in IPERS contribution rates
- Maintaining competitive wages and benefits for employees
- Consistent turmoil within Fire Dept./disgruntled volunteers
- Animal Control
 - Issues are immense and require significant police resources
 - Animal codes need revised
- EMS Services- budget buster
- 2nd water transmission line from well field to water plant - emergency water connection
- Water pressure, flows and loss
- Water Tower maintenance
- Utility expenses
- Library:
 - Space expansion
 - Budget constraints now and future
 - Middle school kids with no place to go after school and summer
- Condition of downtown utilities downtown
- Condition of infrastructure

On-Going Priorities

The following were identified as on-going priorities for the upcoming 12 – 24 month period:

- Lobbying State and Federal agencies for Highway 30/S14 Interchange
- Continuing Sidewalk Program
- Bike Trail Expansion
- Nuisance Abatement
- Assistance with Business/Industrial Projects – Economic Development
- Enhance City Technology
- School Resource Officer Program
- Enhancing communications between City and Public
- Infrastructure Improvements – Street Maintenance, Water Main Upgrades, Water Valve/Hydrant replacements, Water Leak Detection Program, Sanitary Sewer Improvements
- Expanding South Track and North Track Quiet Zones
- Continuing to Enhance Image of Nevada
- Continuing water leak detection program
- Implementing program to replace 4” and smaller water lines
- Implementing sump pump collector program.

Priority Projects, Programs, Policies and Initiatives

The participants reviewed potential projects, programs, policies and initiatives for consideration and selected the following as priorities for the upcoming 12 – 24 month period (listed in priority order):

- 1 Sanitary distribution
 - Infiltration/Inflow testing and plan
- 2 Animal control
 - Look into licensing program, breed-specific ban, running at large, civilian animal control
- 3 Street Department Building
- 4 (Tie) Downtown revitalization plan
 - Infrastructure improvements, financing plan
- 4 (Tie) Yard waste
 - Actively seek solution to disposal, consider complete open burning ban, enforce restrictions on blowing clippings and leaves in street
- 6 Disposal of city property back on tax rolls

A complete list of all programs and initiatives considered at the session is attached as **Exhibit A**.

Organizational Effectiveness

The participants reviewed a variety of ideas relating to improving organizational effectiveness to accomplish the selected goals and priorities. After review and discussion, the participants selected the following steps to improve organizational effectiveness:

- Continue emphasis on “one organization”: Departments helping each other, sharing equipment, supplies, resources, and ideas
- Continue developing and adopting five-year Capital Improvements Program and one-year Capital Improvements Budget
- Encourage participation by council, mayor, administrative and supervisory staff in outside professional development and training opportunities to enhance city services and operations
- Continue to evaluate feasibility of accepting credit card payments for city services
- Continue program of enhancing communications with other nearby cities, Board of Supervisors, School District, NEDC, and Chamber of Commerce
- Review policy regarding access of council members to City Hall
- Consider annual goal setting sessions
- Accept leadership role in “right-sizing” and rebalancing the Nevada and adjacent communities’ fire and EMS Districts to deliver the fastest, most efficient services
- Conduct citizens survey
- Consider putting city council packets on-line
- Explore option of combining Parks and Recreation, Cemetery and Gates Hall Boards
- Research consolidation of fire and first responder services

Note: The agenda for the Goal Setting Session and the Preliminary Questionnaire are attached to this report as **Exhibits B** and **C** respectively.

Final Comments

It was a pleasure to assist the City of Nevada with this goal setting process. I continue to be very impressed with the level of cooperation and positive attitudes of the elected officials and city staff.

It is important to note that the prioritization of projects and initiatives is not “cast in stone.” They can be modified as new circumstances may occur.

It is recommended that city staff once again prepare an “action plan” for accomplishing the planning goals. The action plan would define the steps that would be needed to accomplish each goal, identify who is responsible for implementation, and establish a timeline for accomplishment. The action plan should then be presented to the Mayor and City Council for review and approval. It is also recommended that staff review with the Mayor and City Council the status of implementing the goals on a quarterly basis.

Jeff Schott
Institute of Public Affairs
University of Iowa
December 7, 2009

Exhibit A

City of Nevada, Iowa Goal Setting Session – 2009

SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES OR PROGRAMS CONSIDERED **(listed in order of votes received)**

- Sanitary distribution (13)
 - Infiltration/Inflow testing and plan
- Animal control (12)
 - Look into licensing program, breed-specific ban, running at large, civilian animal control
- Street Department Building (11)
- Downtown revitalization plan (10)
 - Infrastructure improvements, financing plan
- Yard waste (10)
 - Actively seek solution to disposal, consider complete open burning ban, enforce restrictions on blowing clippings and leaves in street
- Disposal of city property back on tax rolls (9)
- Televise Council meetings (7)
- Develop Storm Water Master Plan (7)
- Library addition (5)
- Turning lane – Lincoln Highway/W. 18th St (5)
- Promote volunteer city-wide beautification projects (4)
 - Adopt program to plant trees in new housing additions; replace old/damaged trees with new
- Increase police staff to keep up with service demands (3)
- Look into police reserve officer program (2)
- Analyze space needs at Fire Station (2)
- Schedule all gravel roads within city limits for hard surfacing (2)
- Look into merging Public Works (1)
- Extensive repair to Lincoln Highway (1)
- Indoor community center for all ages (1)
- Develop plan to expand Waste Water Treatment Plant (0)
- Increase downtown activities (0)
- Schedule and promote (through IDOT) overpass for the south and north tracks (0)
- Work with NEDC to develop land use (determination of best use – commercial/residential), marketing, annexation study for property surrounding Nevada (0)
- Address Harrington Park drainage issues (0)
- Ordinance on striking railroad crossing barriers (0)

Exhibit B

AGENDA

**CITY OF NEVADA
GOAL SETTING SESSION - 2009**

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2009

4:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Gates Hall

1. Introductions and Opening Comments
 - a. Name, Tenure, and Background
2. General Overview of the Meeting and the Goal Setting Process
 - a. The Ground Rules for this session
3. Progress Report and Update –2008 Goal Setting Report
4. Review proposed City Mission Statement
5. Review Recent City Accomplishments (2008 - 09)
6. Review Issues, Concerns, Opportunities, and Trends
7. Identify On-Going Priorities
8. Review Proposed Programs, Policies, Projects and Initiatives
 1. Review Results of Questionnaire
 - b. Ranking of Priorities
9. Organizational Effectiveness
 1. Review Results of Questionnaire
9. IPA Report to the Mayor and City Council – 2009 Goal Setting Process
 - a. Development of Action Plan
 - b. Importance of Quarterly Updates
10. Questions, comments, and suggestions
11. Adjourn

Exhibit C

CITY OF NEVADA
GOAL SETTING SESSION – 2009
QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

The City of Nevada Goal Setting Session will be held on Monday December 7, 2009, at City Hall. The purpose of the session will be to identify and prioritize the City’s overall goals and objectives for the next two years.

In order to prepare for this session, you are requested to identify key issues and potential objectives that will be reviewed and discussed at the session. Please complete all sections of this questionnaire. If you need additional space, please feel free to attach additional page(s).

Major Accomplishments

Please list the major city accomplishments over the past two years. These accomplishments could be as large as a street project or as simple as a newly adopted city policy. The items do not need to be in any particular order.

Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities

Please list specific issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that affect future city services, policies, finances or operations (for example, loss of population, major new economic development success or resolving a policy question). You do not need to identify potential solutions to your concerns.

Significant Initiatives or Programs

Please list any initiatives, programs or policies that you think the City should consider in the next two years (for example, downtown revitalization, updating employee job descriptions, adopting a policy on open burning, conducting an annexation study, reviewing water and sewer rates, etc.)

Organizational Effectiveness

Please list several things that the Mayor/City Council and/or staff could do in the future to improve organizational effectiveness, decision-making process, teamwork and the ability to accomplish the City's stated goals and objectives.

RETURN OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Please return this questionnaire to Elizabeth Hansen by **Monday, November 30, 2009**.