

Roll Call

A special meeting of the Kalamazoo City Commission was held on Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. This meeting was held as an electronic meeting under the authority of the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976) as amended by PA 254 of 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss future goals and priorities.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mayor David Anderson
Vice Mayor Patrese Griffin
Jeanne Hess
Chris Praedel
Jack Urban

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Eric Cunningham
Erin Knott

All members present indicated they were physically located in the City of Kalamazoo.

Also present were City Manager Jim Ritsema, Deputy City Manager Jeff Chamberlain, City Attorney Clyde Robinson, and City Clerk Scott Borling.

Commissioners Excused

Commissioner Praedel, seconded by Commissioner Hess, moved to excuse the absences of Commissioners Cunningham and Knott. With a voice vote the motion passed, with Commissioner Urban voting "No."

Public Comments

An opportunity was given for general public comments, but no comments were offered.

2021-00

Discussion of Future Goals and Priorities

Next, the City Commission discussed future goals and priorities.

City Manager Ritsema provided opening remarks and introduced facilitator Demarra West of Change Agent Consulting.

Ms. West reviewed the retreat agenda and explained the purpose of the retreat was to have a discussion of overarching strategies the City Commission wanted to put in place for its priorities for 2022 and beyond. Ms. West indicated she had talked with each Commissioner prior to the retreat and received feedback. Ms. West urged Commissioners to consider whether the City's role in these priorities should be that of Connector, Advocate or Actor. Ms. West also urged Commissioners to consider whether the City should try to have a deep impact in these areas or a scattered impact.

During the meeting the City Commission addressed the goal areas that were not addressed at the March retreat and identified and prioritized strategies under each goal area. Ms. West began the discussion of each goal area by displaying the strategies provided by Commissioners during their pre-meeting conversations with her. Commissioners then discussed the proposed strategies, added new strategies, moved strategies between goal areas, and voted on which strategies should be prioritized. For each goal area, Ms. West asked Commissioners to identify their top five strategies and vote for those strategies when asked. Copies of the slides showing the proposed priorities for each goal area were filed with the papers for this meeting. During the meeting, Ms. West color-coded the strategies in the following way:

Yellow	strategies or markers of success that were already in-progress
Pink	strategies or markers of success where there was a question about the City's role and whether the proposed item was within the City's control
Blue	strategies or markers of success where there was a question about whether the City wanted to take on the project due to scope or cost of the activity
Green	strategies or markers of success that involved work that would be done internally, within the City organization

2021-00
Discussion of Future
Goals and Priorities
(cont'd)

Environmental Strategies

Ms. West shared a slide entitled *Environmental Strategies: Connect, Advocate, Act* and asked for Commissioner feedback.

Discussion took place about the prioritization of "in-progress" strategies versus new strategies. Commissioner Praedel expressed concern about the potential conflict between strategies the Commission prioritized and the Sustainability Plan that was under development, and what "prioritizing" would mean for activities that were already in-progress. Commissioner Praedel also expressed concern about the message that could be sent to staff if new strategies were given higher priority than the current work they were doing.

By consensus, the City Commission agreed that "in progress" items would not be harmed by the prioritization process.

Community Planning and Economic Development Director Rebekah Kik indicated development of the Sustainability Plan was the priority for staff, and she remarked that any new initiatives would need to go through the budget process. Director Kik stated City leadership needed to hear the Commission's priorities so that staff could evaluate them and come back with plans, proposals, and timelines.

City Commissioners prioritized the Environmental Strategies as follows:

- Complete the Sustainability Plan. A plan for measuring a base energy use across both the public functions and more broadly across the City to serve as a dashboard for regular progress. – 5 votes
(5 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Praedel, Commissioner Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson)
- Approval of the NFP2 Overlay District Map and associated zoning ordinance changes, substantially as proposed
(5 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Praedel, Commissioner Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson)
- Identify larger areas in the City where a commercial size energy generator capacity could be installed (solar farms on Brownfield sites we cannot use otherwise)
(3 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Urban, Mayor Anderson)

2021-00

Discussion of Future
Goals and Priorities
(cont'd)

- Programs and investments across departments and budgets that support a less energy intensive approach to executing City functions, including more efficient buildings and transportation.
(3 votes – Commissioner Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson)
- Reduce emissions of City fleet emissions: electrification, alternative fuels. Continue to make the City fleet more environmentally friendly, add charging stations throughout the City.
(3 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Praedel, Mayor Anderson)
- Fund upgrades to the older housing stock with roofs, insulation, siding, etc. Programs to assist homeowners improve residential energy efficiency
(3 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Urban, Mayor Anderson)
- Develop a citywide composting plan
(2 votes – Commissioner Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin)
- Continue to prioritize non-motorized modes of transportation
(2 votes – Commissioner Praedel, Vice Mayor Griffin)
- Switch to weekly recycling
(1 vote – Commissioner Praedel)
- Looking at high-use energy areas to focus on energy efficiency or innovation approaches to those areas
(1 vote – Vice Mayor Griffin)
- Complete Graphic Packaging project
(1 vote – Commissioner Urban)
- Aggressive approach to tree management and repopulating the aging tree stock
(1 vote – Commissioner Urban)
- Invest in wastewater monitoring for pathogens at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
(0 votes)
- Set an ambitious target date to become carbon neutral (e.g. 2030/2035).
(0 votes)
- Improve all parks and Milham Park to reflect their most sustainable and educational features
(0 votes)

Recess

The meeting recessed at 11:27
The meeting resumed at 11:35

Environmental Success

Ms. West shared a slide entitled *Environmental Success: Act, Advocate, Plan*. Discussion took place about the definition of success for the environmental strategies.

By consensus, City Commissioners identified the following definitions of success for the environmental strategies:

- Completion of the Sustainability Plan
- Determine how we ensure our success based on direct support to partners who are working on environmental issues
- Environmental planning is integrated into our budgeting process
- Completion of current projects in the pipeline
- Achieved consensus on what is to be done to control speeding and aggressive driving throughout the city
- The deployment of electric vehicles into the City vehicle fleet
- Planning in place for the possible location of significant energy generating capacity in partnership with those with capacity and expertise in otherwise unused areas of the City

Infrastructure Strategies

Ms. West displayed a slide entitled *Infrastructure Strategies: Act, Convener, Advocate* and asked for Commissioner feedback. Discussion took place.

Commissioners and staff identified the following strategies as in-progress strategies:

- System-wide accessibility for individuals with disabilities
- Investments in water/wastewater infrastructure
- Traffic calming strategies on speeding hot spot areas and continuing to increase safety measures for non-motorized mode.
- Continue to repair/replace unsafe sidewalks and roads. Streets/walkability, neighborhoods. Improved streets with pedestrian and non-motorized focus.
- Safer, more beautified parks.

City Commissioners prioritized the Infrastructure Strategies as follows:

- Continue to repair/replace unsafe sidewalks and roads. Streets/walkability, neighborhoods. Improved streets with pedestrian and non-motorized focus.
(5 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Praedel, Commissioner Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson)
- Investments in water/wastewater infrastructure
(4 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Praedel, Commissioner Urban, Mayor Anderson)

2021-00

Discussion of Future
Goals and Priorities
(cont'd)

2021-00

Discussion of Future
Goals and Priorities
(cont'd)

- System-wide accessibility for individuals with disabilities
(3 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Praedel, Vice Mayor Griffin)
- Safer, more beautified parks. (add environmental & educational strategies for the parks here)
(3 votes – Commission Hess, Commissioner Praedel, Mayor Anderson)
- Traffic calming strategies on speeding hot spot areas and continuing to increase safety measures for non-motorized mode.
(3 votes – Commissioner Praedel, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson)
- Prioritize infrastructure building for neighborhoods that need it the most.
(3 votes – Commissioner Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson)
- Citywide broadband
(1 vote – Commissioner Hess)
- Tree planting in identified areas; move toward renewable energies (integrate planting from environment; remove)
(1 vote – Commissioner Urban)
- A critical review of whether or how the Inkster St. bridge is to be replaced
(1 vote – Commissioner Urban)
- Identify cutting edge infrastructure building opportunities
(0 votes)

Infrastructure Success

Ms. West displayed a slide entitled *Infrastructure Success: Leader, Convener, Community Collaborator*. Discussion took place about the definition of success for infrastructure strategies.

By consensus, City Commissioners identified the following definitions of success for infrastructure strategies:

- Accessibility for individuals with disabilities
- Having a more interconnected city congruent to Imagine Kalamazoo
- Safer streets, safer planned biking and walking options
- Beautiful parks including additional amenities like splash pads
- Proactively developing and consistent reviewing infrastructure benchmarks
- Upgraded water/wastewater infrastructure

Recess

The meeting recessed at 12:27 p.m.
The meeting resumed at 1:11 p.m.

Homelessness Strategies

Ms. West displayed a slide entitled *Homelessness Strategy: Connect, Act, Advocate* and asked for Commissioner feedback.

Discussion took place regarding zoning restrictions that blocked homeless shelters, financial assistance for home improvements, and the City's ability to create a governing body around a homeless zoning space.

In response to questions from City Commissioners, City Attorney Robinson stated the City could not pay for improvements to private property, directly or indirectly, unless the improvements served a public purpose. City Attorney Robinson indicated there was some room for experimentation on this issue, and there were certain exceptions.

Deputy City Manager Laura Lam suggested staff do research and make recommendations to the Commission regarding a governing body for a homeless zoning space. Deputy City Manager Lam noted it might take six months just to create such a body.

Discussion took place regarding the City's roles as both a collaborator and provider of services/solutions to address homelessness.

By consensus, City Commissioners agreed to prioritize all the Homelessness Strategies and add them to the Housing Strategies and Priorities developed on March 13th:

- Provide financial support to assist with efforts to create a range of appropriate interim responses so that homelessness is as short as possible and basic health and safety issues are addressed.
- Work as a collaborative partner in the creation of a County-wide plan to address homelessness for both single persons and families who are unsheltered.
- Reduce barriers to transitional housing, homelessness solutions (e.g. staff recommendations as a first step)
- Increase investment in updating housing/rehabilitation.

Housing Success

Ms. West displayed a slide entitled *Housing Success: Connect, Act, Advocate*. Discussion took place about the definition of success for the housing strategies.

By consensus, City Commissioners identified the following definitions of success for the housing strategies:

- Development of a communications plan to help address housing crises.
- The activation of existing housing resources to create a specific set of physical responses including temporary and permanent units created and in process.

2021-00

Discussion of Future Goals and Priorities (cont'd)

2021-00

Discussion of Future
Goals and Priorities
(cont'd)

- # of housing developers partnering with the City to increase access to affordable housing.
- Advocacy with legislators for low-income tax credits so we can leverage developments.
- The completion of a County-wide plan that includes a range of responses, target numbers for housing success and identified resources to be allocated.
- The leverage of Brownfield Development funding to support projects that increase access to housing.

Employment Strategies

Ms. West displayed a slide entitled *Employment Strategies: Connect, Act, Advocate* and asked for Commissioner feedback. Discussion took place.

City Commissioners prioritized the Employment Strategies as follows:

- Expand employment/training/ internship opportunities with local employers through enrollments beginning initially in one or more summer youth programs. Strong internship opportunities with local higher education.
(5 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Praedel, Commissioner Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson)
- Accelerated and increased frequency of training of trades and other high paid professions including support the certifications and licensing part.
(4 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Praedel, Commissioner Urban, Mayor Anderson)
- A strong positive organization staffed by caring individuals who are representative of the community they serve.
(4 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson)
- A pipeline of neighborhood residents with the skills they need to do the things that we need the most around the city like replacing our sidewalks, roads, lead services, water and wastewater lines, storm water improvements
(4 votes – Commissioner Hess, Commissioner Urban, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson)
- Support for small and large businesses that provide good paying employment and opportunity for growth and wealth building.
(3 votes – Commissioner Praedel, Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson)
- Increased financial & capacity building support for micro businesses.
(2 votes – Commissioner Praedel, Vice Mayor Griffin)
- Be intentional about barrier removal in the hiring process.
(2 votes – Vice Mayor Griffin, Mayor Anderson)
- Engage neighborhood associations and other key stakeholders in addressing employment gaps.
(1 vote – Commissioner Praedel)

- Have an external process in place to evaluate internal employment engagement.
(1 vote – Vice Mayor Griffin)
- Internally increase the # of promotions for people of color.
(1 vote – Commissioner Urban)
- Increase the quality of our public services.
(1 vote – Commissioner Urban)

The meeting recessed at 2:13 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 2:18 p.m.

Employment Success

Ms. West displayed a slide entitled *Employment Success: Connect, Act, Advocate*.

By consensus, City Commissioners identified the following definitions of success for employment strategies:

- Supervisors are all DEI trained/qualified (internal focus)
- Positive recruitment/retention numbers (internal focus)
- All 600+ employees have a positive assessment of being employed by the city (internal focus)
- Equity would be reflected through all levels (internal focus)
- Strong relationships with our community partners around business (external focus)
- Increase our small business grant and incubation efforts (external focus)
- Increase in new trades professionals (external focus)
- A streamlined, easy process for businesses to engage with the city (external focus)

Mobile Nuisance Strategies

Ms. West displayed a slide entitled *Mobile Nuisance: Connect, Advocate, Act*. Discussion took place regarding the proposed strategies.

By consensus the City Commission agreed to prioritize all the Mobile Nuisance Strategies:

- Use community development and organizing tools to work with the neighborhoods, residents to create plans to end such parties. Prioritizing diversity, and youth in the work of finding solutions.
- Further conversations about creative enforcement strategies.

2021-00

Discussion of Future Goals and Priorities (cont'd)

Recess

2021-00

Discussion of Future
Goals and Priorities
(cont'd)

- Significant outreach with community about expectations, structured processes for events and enforcement.
- Create safe and secure spaces in neighborhoods that are open twenty-four hours that the public can access.
- Intentional building of community partnerships (i.e. conversations with community partners about resourcing some alternative opportunities for gatherings and activities.)

Law Enforcement Success

Ms. West displayed a slide entitled *Law Enforcement Success: Connect, Act, Advocate*. Commissioners did not offer any changes to the proposed success indicators

By consensus, City Commissioners identified the following definitions of success for law enforcement strategies:

- The city of Kalamazoo's marketing efforts should be nationwide to include our liveability, affordability, educational prestige so as to attract quality candidates.
- The report on the community/police interactions that occurred in the summer of 2020 is made public.
- Deep and meaningful DEI integration in the hiring process and organization culture. More diversity, cultural competency for hires and promotes.
- A diverse department staffed by a committed, broadly trained and adequately supported public safety team.
- Rebuilt trust with the community.
- Improved internal/external communication.
- An increase in neighbors reporting feeling safe.
- Clear, functional relationships with multi-disciplinary partners including trauma response, mental health, and temporary housing assistance. Strong, positive, broad community relationships tied to neighborhoods, neighborhood watch, block clubs and faith-based partners.

Update on the Use of
Federal Stimulus Funds

City Manager Ritsema reported staff were creating a short survey to get community feedback on the City's use of stimulus funds received from the federal government. City Manager Ritsema indicated the survey would ask people to prioritize a list of items that could address community needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and stated the items on the list would be taken from Imagine Kalamazoo 2025, the City Commission priorities, stimulus fund suggestions already submitted, and data from the United Way COVID Relief Fund. City Manager Ritsema stated the survey would be launched on June 18th, and people would have 30 days to respond. City Manager Ritsema stated the survey would be available online through the City's website, and paper copies would be available at over 20 locations throughout the City.

In response to a question from Commissioner Praedel, City Manager Ritsema stated people who had one or two ideas for the use of stimulus funds and did not want to complete the survey could call 311 with that idea or send an email to Commissioners or the City Manager's Office.

Ms. West and Deputy City Manager Lam proposed the following next steps:

- Ms. West to compile and provide information on all priorities identified, both from this meeting and the March retreat, within two weeks.
- staff to integrate the City Commission's priorities into the 2022 budget process as part of the criteria for evaluating departmental requests.
- staff and Commissioners to have follow-up discussions to bring greater clarity and specificity to the priorities, the definitions of success, and the tracking of results.
- staff to report back to the Commission with specific next steps and timelines during upcoming Committee of the Whole meetings.

Mayor Anderson noted Committee of the Whole (CoW) meetings could be used for deeper, more in-depth discussions on specific topics.

City Manager Ritsema stated he had polled Commissioners, and a majority wanted to continue having the CoW meetings.

Commissioner Urban stated this level and depth of long-term planning was unprecedented in Kalamazoo's history and was very impressive.

City Manager Ritsema thanked staff and Commissioners for participating in the retreat.

Mayor Anderson thanked Ms. West for her help facilitating the meeting, which allowed him to be a participant.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott A. Borling
City Clerk

For City Commission approval on November 8, 2021

Approved by: _____
David F. Anderson, Mayor
Dated: November 8, 2021

Update on the Use of
Federal Stimulus Funds
(cont'd)

Discussion of Next
Steps

Adjournment