

Minutes of the City of Seaford Mayor, City Council and Leadership

Planning Session Meeting

February 22, 2019

Mayor Genshaw called the Planning Session meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with the following people present: Councilman Dan Henderson, Councilman H. William Mulvaney III, Councilman Orlando Holland, Councilwoman Leanne Phillips-Lowe, Councilman James King, City Manager Charles Anderson, Director of Public Works Berley Mears, Director of Economic Development and Community Relations Trisha Newcomer, Chief of Police Robert Kracyla, Deputy Chief of Police Michael Rapa, Director of HR and Finance June Merritt, Director of Electric Bill Bennett, Building Official Mike Bailey and Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Katie Hickey.

Mayor Genshaw greeted everyone and opened with a prayer. The Mayor stated that this year the planning session is geared to be different than it has been in the past. He would like for staff to provide some big ideas and to see how they can be implemented.

He then turned the Planning Session over to Charles Anderson, City Manager.

City Manager Anderson distributed a brochure showing a quarterly snapshot of some statistics for the City of Seaford. In a recent staff meeting, the Mayor spoke to the group about putting together some critical information. The information includes items such as economic development updates, the number of electric and water disconnects and information of participants for our parks and recreation programs. It was agreed by the group that this was good information to have in this type of format that can be shared with the public. Mrs. Newcomer added that the plan is to have this go out quarterly; the next one will go out in April.

An ice breaker game was then done for the group including leadership questions and personal questions.

Mayor Genshaw then discussed the rules for the big ideas. They must be achievable in the near term: 1-5 years, the idea must provide a positive impact to our City and grow jobs and/or provide other positive benefits and ideas must be within reach of the City and our budgetary constraints.

Mayor Genshaw presented a big idea that he came up with which is to invest infrastructure into the Ross Business Park. He added that is about 110 acres located within the park that has been sitting there for about 25 years. The land is currently being farmed by a local farmer. The City has attempted to sell and listed the property with a broker in the past with no success. He then showed a picture of a location in Maryland that has been developed by a private investor. This project consisted of about 120 acres that created approximately 1,200 jobs with no government involvement other than the infrastructure. Mayor Genshaw stressed that job creation needs to be a top priority for the City.

Mrs. Newcomer then came forward to present a big idea that consisted of a bio-tech space. Allen's Hatchery recently relocated out of the City, however, there is a location on their property that could potentially be used for this idea. Seaford is located in a largely agrarian area with thousands of jobs fueled by the poultry and farming industry. She suggested to create an environment that attracts high-

tech jobs of the industry. The State of Delaware and DPP are focusing on Biotech. The State is also participating in the 2019 BIO International Convention in June. Mrs. Newcomer then discussed what is needed, why there is a need and what is offered by the bio-tech space. She added that this would create good and highly paid jobs.

Mr. Mears then came forward to discuss rate comparisons as a whole. He compared rates for Sussex County, Tidewater Utilities and Delmarva Power to the City of Seaford rates. It was found that it costs a resident around 8% more to live in the County versus the City of Seaford. The rates used were for the months of October, November and December of 2018 for Mr. Mears's household.

Ms. Hickey then came forward to discuss a Riverfront Beer, Wine and Food Festival. Ms. Hickey stated that Seaford is one of the only local communities that does not have a festival such as this. There are many sister communities that have festivals that include beer and wine that have been very successful. She suggested using the Riverfront property that the City owns to hold the event. This is a way to showcase the river and bring people to the downtown area. She would reach out to local craft beer suppliers and food trucks to attend the event.

Members of the City staff from different departments were then invited in to share their ideas. The staff members included: Shannon Passwaters, Ashley Heinicke, Mike Stanfield, Gary Andrews, Dave Sattelberg, Bobby Holston, Greg Brooke and Pfc. Tyler Wyatt. The ideas given included pre-paid electric meters, being able to video and record items in the City to include putting infrastructure in place to have the space to store the data and creating downtown incentives to attract more businesses here for something to do. Other ideas included live streaming the City Council meetings on TV or Facebook, changing the decals on the police department vehicles to be more up to date and having a public sharing space for people to rent out for businesses. Another idea was a dog park as well as extending walking trails at the Jays Nest and Soroptimist. It was also suggested to spotlight local businesses on our Facebook page.

A break was then taken for lunch.

Mrs. Newcomer shared an idea of quality of life and corridor enhancement. She showed a picture of Soropotimist Park and added there is unused space out there that can ben enhanced. There are two sections in the front of the park that can be redesigned to add more space to the park and add to the walking trail. This would also help create a better view for people when they are coming into the City off of Sussex Highway onto Middleford Road.

Mr. Bennett came forward to present an idea of a community solar farm. He stated that members of the community would be able to purchase generation from the farm for a long-term contract consisting of 5-20 years. The City would maintain array and sell SREC's as well as manage participation. He added that the City can utilize a portion of the output as an Economic Development incentive for job creation. The City would also be able to sell electricity to "job creators" that are located within the City at a reduced rate if the load profile matches solar production. Mr. Bennett showed a view of a property where the farm could be located which is currently owned by the City on Ross Station Road. Mr. Bennett explained that based on the City's past solar farm project approximately 0.33 MW's of Solar can be placed on an acre of land. The site is approximately 8 +/- acres of land total. This could theoretically yield a capacity of 2.64 MW's of output. This could benefit the City in numerous ways and help create jobs to the City.

Mrs. Merritt discussed her idea of electric charging stations for vehicles. There are many people that are going to electric car options. These stations can be placed throughout the City and people would pay to charge their vehicle. It was also added that some employers may wish to have a station located at their facility. This could be a good marketing tool for the City.

Mr. Bennett discussed doing an update of the City-wide Christmas lights. The current lights are over 35 years old and don't reflect well on the image of the City. He added that image is very important in creating pride by the residences but also to the businesses looking to move or expand here. He suggested connecting with local organizations to help defray the cost of new lights. Any organization that donates could choose their light they like and we could rotate the lights throughout the City. The average cost per light is \$500 and we currently have 59 candles and 6 lights on Front Street for a total of 65 lights. Therefore, the estimated cost to replace these lights is \$32,500. Mr. Bennett added that there are 32 snowflakes lights on High Street that are newer and get many compliments on them. They don't need to be replaced but could be converted to LED bulbs. Mr. Bennett then showed some pictures of some options for lights that could be picked out by the organizations.

Mr. Bailey came forward with an idea to establish a high-end residential development within the City. He added that the City could foster a development of a high-end residential development with incentives. The City could take advantage of the in-migration to DE by retirees from the north. Mr. Bailey pointed out amenities that Seaford has to offer such as high-quality health care, tax free shopping, proximity to beaches and low-cost living. Mr. Bailey showed an aerial picture of Governor Grants development from 2005, 2011 and 2018. The development grew tremendously in that time frame which shows that our residents do desire that type of development.

Mrs. Merritt discussed a revitalization of Front Street. There have been some discussions with some local businesses as well as the hospital about the appearance of Front Street. She suggested forming a partnership with the hospital, manor house, LaRed, Habitat for Humanity and Delaware Land Trust and others in an effort to revitalize that area. She added that if the City focuses on code enforcement, sheriff sales, demolitions and land donations this could have an impact on this corridor leading into the downtown area. This concentrated investment could create a bigger impact and visible change. She added that there is also DDD funding available for properties on Front Street. Mrs. Merritt showed some pictures of some properties that were in bad shape on Front Street and the amount due on the properties.

Chief Kracyla came forward to discuss his idea of downtown security cameras. The implementation of security cameras is critical in creating a safer environment. The cameras would deter crime and allow the police department to share information, which is necessary to solve crimes and stop repeat offenders. This would also be an expansion of existing neighborhood watch that is currently in place. He added that there are potential grant opportunities for cameras. A neighboring police department recently received \$32K in grant funding to implement cameras in their downtown. As part of this process, the information can be backhauled to the police department for observation and existing fiber network could be used for the back haul. This could also expand to different areas around the City over time.

Mayor Genshaw asked for any input from the City Council. Councilman Henderson stated that he would like to see an economic development report along with more communications. He would also like a State of the City address to occur at least one time a year. He would like a garbage franchise

investigated. He would like the City to utilize the RDLG program. Over the next ten years he would like to see the City return to power generation.

Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe stated that she would like options investigated in the City for the same services that Comcast offers. She would like to get the hotel tax resolved and implemented in the City. She would like to have an event to invite the nay sayers to listen to the information that is going on in the City.

Mayor Genshaw thanked everyone for taking the time to attend today and present their ideas. He feels that all of the ideas brought forth today were great ideas. He would like these ideas to be an action item for the next year. It was added that some of these ideas need to be investigated more to get more confirmed pricing.

With no other questions or comments, Mayor Genshaw closed the Planning Session at 3:30 p.m.

Charles Anderson, City Manager