

**City of Oskaloosa, Iowa
Goal Setting Report
March 31, 2008**

**Mayor:
David Dixon**

**City Council:
Aaron Ver Steeg
Tom Jimenez
Wesley Wills
Pamela Blomgren
Janet VanDerBeek
Lori Smith
Jimmy Carter**

**City Staff:
Brian James, City Manager**



**Facilitated by:
Jeff Schott
Institute of Public Affairs
University of Iowa**

CITY OF OSKALOOSA, IOWA
GOAL SETTING SESSION
2008

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CITY OF OSKALOOSA, IOWA

GOAL SETTING SESSION

2008

Introduction

The City of Oskaloosa 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 March 31, 2008. In attendance and participating at this meeting were Mayor David Dixon and Council Members Aaron Ver Steeg, Tom Jimenez, Wesley Wills, Pamela Blomgren, Janet VanDerBeek, Lori Smith, and Jimmy Carter. Also in attendance and participating in this meeting was City Manager Brian James.

A preliminary session with department heads was held earlier on March 31. In attendance and participating in this meeting were City Manager Brian James, City Clerk Marilyn Miller, Police Chief Jake McGee, Fire Chief Francis Glandon, Library Director Suzann Holland, and Public Works Director David Neubert.

Major Accomplishments

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

- Refurbished, expanded and added water park features to Swimming Pool
- Downtown Streetscape
- Equipment Replacement
- Lacey complex (Recreation fields)
- Grant and Lincoln Schools sold to Developer
- Updated Personnel Manual
- Progress on Recreation Trail, including completion of Hwy 92 underpass
- Hiring of City Engineer and City Manager
- Storm Water Utility
- Purchase of new fire truck
- DOT approval of Market Street resurfacing project
- Approved zoning and infrastructure for new nursing homes
- Approved development plans and roads issues for new redemption/recycling center
- Hope VI Grant Project
- Supported rehab of old Iowa Building
- I & M Street projects designed
- RISE Grant for extension of industrial street in industrial park
- Completion of \$4 Million sanitary sewer project
- Global Positioning System for Engineering Dept – partnered with Musco and Garden & Associates Engineers
- Adoption of Dangerous Animal Ordinance
- Turn signals on N Market and A Ave
- Street crew performance with winter weather
- FEMA Funding on ice storms
- Parkview and Arbor Trace subdivision
- Conversion of traffic signals to LED resulting in utility cost savings
- Moving departmental budgets back to previous years funding levels
- Agreements on multi-year union contracts
- Hiring Building Official working toward certification
- City documents scanned using Work Search
- Facilitated expansion of Clow Manufacturing
- Housing demolition program
- First-time home buyer program

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:

- CIP schedule that is realistic in replacing equipment, facilities, and infrastructure
- Inadequate staffing levels in some departments causing concern for community and employee safety
- Economic development issues:
 - Need to expand tax base
 - Lack of new businesses
 - Loss of old businesses
 - Encourage Musco expansion project in old Spencer Building to revitalize project (Future Plans for Musco overall)
 - Lack of tourism promotion
 - Marketing of Oskaloosa and Mahaska County/ Establishing presence with Iowa Department of Economic Development
 - Is Oskaloosa business friendly and what does that mean?
 - Is progress stymied by attitude of not caring about community?
 - Do partnerships in community need to be strengthened?
 - Need Marketing Plan and guidelines for incentives in a plan for City Manager to use for economic development
 - Capitalize on existing businesses in community
 - Loss of Retail in Downtown
- Airport issue
- Future of Edmundson Golf Course
- Disagreement among council members
- Housing Department Status
- Budget constraints
- Southeast Bypass
- Signage on Hwy 163 South directing traffic to Hwy 92
- One cent city sales tax going to schools
- Stagnant population growth
- Street conditions/paving
- Condition of sewers
- Left turn signals need to stay on longer at A Ave & Hwy 92
- Businesses and chambers need to support fairground activities
- Combine the Sheriffs Dept and City Police Department four County Law enforcement
- Hold contractors accountable for completion date and quality for City projects.
- Loop water main back into the City from Wal-Mart area
- Quality of Life issues - recreation opportunities
- Reducing tax levy - high property taxes
- Possibility of annexation areas around Oskaloosa

Issues, Concerns, Trends and Opportunities (continued)

- Fiber optics/communication infrastructure
- Increased voter awareness
- Unfunded state and federal mandates
- Library materials budget
- Types of businesses being attracted to Oskaloosa (Example pawn shops along Ave A or Hwy 92)
- Recreation Trail and Golf Cart Issue
- Rural Residential Development
- City/County Relationship
- Staffing levels in some Departments
- Public Works Site improvement or replacement
- Impact of winter weather on roads and trees in community
- Changing State regulations regarding wastewater and storm water
- Growth of Southeast Industrial Park with extension of road access
- Technology Plan for replacement and improvement of all technology in City
- Staff improvement for technology position and City Hall staff
- Retention of employees – competitive wages
- Impending retirements of key employees
- Cultivation of new leaders in the community

On-Going Priorities

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

- Downtown revitalization, including streetscape project
- Partnering with community groups to enhance recreational facilities and programs, including Lacey Complex and recreation trail
- Market Street resurfacing
- Street improvement projects: I St, M St, Mabel St
- Determination of Housing Department status
- Determination of Golf Course status
- Development of Capital Improvements Program
- Economic development, including: review of economic development strategies, marketing plan, and focus on existing industries/businesses (including Musco expansion)
- Updates of job descriptions

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 Increase funding for street repairs
- 2 (Tie) Review development standards within two miles extra-territorial jurisdiction
- 3 (Tie) Stronger nuisance enforcement
- 3 (Tie) Evaluate future of airport operations

A complete list of all programs and initiatives considered by the Mayor and City Council members is attached as **Exhibit A**.

Organizational Effectiveness

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

- Work to enhance relations with the County
- Enhanced council involvement in community-visibility issues
- Tie realistic goals to budget document
- Educate council on roles of Manager, Mayor, and City Council
- Define Council expectations as to when issues need to be taken to committee
- Seek City Manager to become ex-officio member of key groups to enhance communications and relations
- Evaluate options to optimize communications with citizens
- Hold quarterly work sessions to review progress toward implementing priorities
- Develop program to recognize employees, members of city boards and commissions, volunteers
- Review Comprehensive Plan with Council
- Enhance coordination between Water Department and city departments
- Review city fee structures

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 Oskaloosa with this goal setting process. I was extremely 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 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
April 2, 2008

Exhibit A

City of Oskaloosa, Iowa
Goal Setting Session – 2008

SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES OR PROGRAMS CONSIDERED

- Combine sheriff and City law enforcement to create County wide law enforcement
- Consider using reserve officers to reduce budget cost for Police Department
- Stop spending money on studies when we have citizens that are capable and part of community
- Annexation study
- Build new Public Works facility
- Evaluate future of airport operations
- Increase funding for street repairs
- Allow open burning for leaf, grass and city tree dump
- Develop city technology plan
- Adoption of policy for compensation for City Council (COLA)
- Intern program
- Find ways to raise firefighters' staffing levels
- Create Parks and Recreation Coordinator position
- Stronger nuisance enforcement
- Review development standards within two miles extra-territorial jurisdiction
- Review and revise Subdivision Ordinance
- Develop city policy manual for Council approval
- Study consolidation of Water Department with city operations
- Establish city planner position to promote better planning and zoning for growth
- Complete rehab of 3rd floor of City Hall
- Study need for new fire station
- 2nd Phase of Streetscaping
- Curb Side Recycling Study

Exhibit B

AGENDA

**CITY OF OSKALOOSA
GOAL SETTING SESSION - 2008**

MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2008

4:30 PM – 9:00 PM

City 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. Review Recent City Accomplishments (2006 - 07)
4. Review Issues, Concerns, Opportunities, and Trends
5. Identify On-Going Priorities
6. Programs, Policies, Projects and Initiatives
 - a. Review Results of Questionnaire
 - b. Explanations, clarifications, revisions, deletions, additions of Programs, Policies, Projects and Initiatives
 - c. Ranking of Priorities
7. Organizational Effectiveness
 1. Review Results of Questionnaire
8. IPA Report to the Mayor and City Council – 2008 Goal Setting Process
 - a. Development of Action Plan
 - b. Importance of Quarterly Updates
9. Questions, comments, and suggestions
10. Adjourn

Exhibit C

**CITY OF OSKALOOSA
GOAL SETTING SESSION – 2008**

QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

The City of Oskaloosa’s Goal Setting Session will be held on Monday March 31 or Wednesday April 2 or Wednesday April 9, 2008, 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 Brian James by **Monday, March 10, 2008.**