

**PLATTEVILLE COMMON COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**  
**May 20, 2014**

The special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Platteville was called to order by Council President Eileen Nickels at 4:01 PM in the Community Room at the Platteville Police Department.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Eileen Nickels, Barbara Daus, Ken Kilian, Amy Seeboth, Dick Bonin, Barb Stockhausen.  
Excused: Mike Denn. Absent: None.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE CITY OF PLATTEVILLE**

The meeting was facilitated by David Berner. Berner introduced himself to the Council. He was the City of Platteville City Manager from June 2007 to January 2011. Currently he is a consultant with MSA Consulting Services. Council members then introduced themselves to Berner.

**Purpose statement:** Carefully laying out **how** the strategic goals will be accomplished. It includes specifying **objectives** with each strategic goal. It includes specifying **responsibilities** and **timelines** with each objective or who needs to do what and by when. It should also include methods to monitor and evaluate the plan. These work plans should be included in the annual Budget and CIP.

**Overall vision statement** (From the *City & Town of Platteville Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan*)  
The Platteville community is a safe, accessible place with a small town atmosphere that values open space, education, recreation, culture, and wellness for all its citizens. The community is a regional center for business and higher education. The community embraces, promotes, and preserves its history, agricultural economy, and scenic rural landscape. The community's focus is on planned growth, affordable housing, economic development, and sustainability initiatives.

Seeboth asked what the City's goals were from two years ago as there was no Strategic Planning session in 2013. Berner replied that the City could do a retreat to revisit who you are, your mission, your previous goals, what's been accomplished and what hasn't and why.

The goal with the Council and Department Heads is to determine 3 – 5 goals and set the methods/hows. Berner suggested holding another session on HOW prior to budget setting. (Budgets are due 8/1.)

Next each Council member went over their goals and was asked to prioritize them.

**Eileen Nickels**

1. Address housing needs to attract and retain new residents and accommodate retiring residents. Population is aging. We need sustainability as a community and need to attract new people to have a good workforce pool to encourage employers. We lose out on tax base, population growth, and employers. People are moving to other nearby communities. We gave money to developers a few years back and we got three subdivisions. Individual school debt leads to people not being able to get home loans.
2. Establish a long range plan to increase revenue for the City's Operating and CIP budget. We rely heavily on state revenue at every budget discussion. The State is not increasing revenues and is decreasing revenue sources. For example, the EDA \$800K grant – we need to get more grants like this. We need to look for other sources and grow our tax base. EMS – change to non-profit? (part of CIP budget)

3. Explore how the city can partner with the public schools, the university and business owners to address issues that are limiting Platteville as a location for new and/or expanding businesses. When businesses hire new employees, help those employees get homes.

### **Barb Daus**

1. Primarily concerned with resident safety. First statement is of mission statement is that we'll have a *safe* environment.
2. Examine city's fiscal position (revenue sources).
3. Develop a plan to return to and continue street replacement on the 50-year (she thinks it was 50) cycle. (Be able to take care of our infrastructure.)

### **Amy Seeboth**

1. Improve housing quality, specifically single-family homes and rentals WITHIN the city (not on outskirts) (allowing us to better attract and retain employers and employees to live in Platteville). Encourage building within the City rather than on the outskirts. Can we create housing within walking distance to UWP? People want to be able to live in mixed communities with all types of different ages. It is important to invest in nice looking homes/upkeep in the downtown.
2. Target & attract value-added agricultural manufacturing to the city (to capitalize on our local assets and a growing industry). These are good jobs to create, and we are well situated for this type of recruiting.
3. Hire a graphic design company to improve City's marketing and communication (overhaul website... again). As an example, this local company is quite affordable and produces high quality work: <http://kristinmitchelldesign.com/>  
We need to improve our branding message. The website is a first impression for many young people looking to come to Platteville. This would be the quickest way to start improving.
4. Prioritize sustainability initiatives as part of our identity and use it as a branding/marketing tool for our community – once we have more communication methods down, we can use sustainability as part of our branding. We already do so much for sustainability (trail, bike racks, energy audits) it would be nice to communicate this better as part of our identity to, again, better retain employees to live in Platteville.  
Gunderson Lutheran and LaCrosse worked together to make the LaCrosse community “special” to attract employees. What makes Platteville unique? We can use this message as a recruitment tool for employers. Currently we have a huge number of students coming to Platteville. This is an excellent time for us to try to retain these students. Integrate sustainability within all City goals.

### **Dick Bonin**

1. To make a quick disposal of Kallembach Properties (get them back on tax roll)  
Get this out of the way to address other issues.
2. Make a bigger effort to construct a stand-alone EMS building, at its present location  
It has been at the present location for 30 years.
3. Help to make sure we get the library block ground broken in 2015, no later.  
The City Manager emailed a recent update. We have received \$9 million with removing the hold hospital from TIF and also \$2 million from Jenor Towers.

### **Barb Stockhausen**

Primarily concerned with quality of life.

1. Hire an architect for City Hall remodel
2. Obtain a grant for Mining Museum
3. CIP for museum
4. Continue to keep certain Kallembach houses that can be used at a future time (convert to parking lots) to help with financing.

This is an opportunity the City needs to review. For example, the Kallembach property by the EMS could be used to add on in that location or use the entire spot for redevelopment. The City should keep land internally because we cannot get it back once it's sold. Put some in a 10-year plan for the future. Barb would like to keep three of the houses. Two of the Kallembach houses are in future development plans.

**Ken Kilian**

1. Concerned with the image of Platteville – making it a nice place to live. Create affordable housing for young families – place emphasis on home ownerships.
2. Fire & EMS – improve fire & EMS facilities
3. Image of City Hall – Improve the Municipal building. Poor statement of what Platteville is.  
(Ken noted he has changed his mind from his previous goal submissions)

**Mike Denn** (Note Mike was excused so the discussion of his topics was from what he had submitted and opinions of others from talking with Mike)

1. Do major street repair within one-half mile of TIF #7 (downtown) with money transferred from TIF #5 (Wal-Mart)  
Shift money from Wal-Mart TIF to improve downtown. Shift as in a gift, not a loan. Pay off TIF #5 fast, but our downtown is blighted. There is a relationship to donate money from TIF #5 to #7. And improve the streets in and around TIF #7.  
Nickels thought Mike felt that since we are short in street repair money, this was where we could get funding. It would be a source for infrastructure improvement. Bonin stated that if we use TIF money to improve streets, there is not any return on the investment.
2. Take care of our shortfall and failure to update our computer system and equipment in full. No more piecemeal work.  
Don't keep fixing issues a little at a time. Do it all at once.  
(Note: The group was not sure if Mike's concern was funding. The City does have a plan for updating IT equipment, but finding the money is an issue.)
3. Treat all people in Platteville the same – individuals and developers. No more special favors for a select few. Then you won't get into trouble.  
Per Larry's discussion with Mike: The City of Platteville helps developers with incentives for sewers/infrastructure. However, individuals have to pay for improvements themselves.  
The group was unsure if Mike does not want to give developers any incentives. Individuals are not privy to TIF money to help them.  
City policy on development: Is there a City policy on loaning TIF money? We have a TID incentive policy. Perhaps a review of TID policies is in order for the Council. It was referred to PAIDC about 2 years ago. See what happened.  
Should Mike's goals be added to an agenda for further discussion? Without knowing exactly what Mike's intent was, perhaps they should be revisited.

Next the goals were grouped by the ones getting the most "votes"

1. Housing – Address housing needs, improve housing, create affordable housing
2. Safety – Fire/EMS buildings need improvement
3. Infrastructure – Street improvements
4. Increasing City revenue
  - a. Create/identify new revenue sources (grants)
  - b. Expand the tax base – Library block development, Kallembach properties
  - c. Communication – improve/expand. Improve image/branding/marketing of City (PAIDC is doing some but they are only addressing the Industry Park.) The City should provide uniform

- direction to the Chamber, PAIDC, Main Street Program, Grant County Economic development, etc.
- d. Wheel tax – Room tax – When you register with the DOT, they collect tax per wheel for the City. Concern that vehicles might be registered elsewhere with the student population.

Basically, the City's fiscal capacity is related to everything on the list.

The next step in the meeting was to discuss Department Head goals.

The City Manager is concerned with the fact that 1/3 of current City Staff will be eligible to retire soon and would like to have a plan to deal with upcoming vacancies. Stockhausen thinks that the staffing (retirement) issue could be better handled by staff rather than Council. Bierke mentioned that he would like a study to help guide the process and that would require funding. Nickels was at League of Wisconsin Municipalities and there were four communities are looking at a study like this. Raises were specific as to length of service. Bierke stated the City is lacking a guide for what to pay and at what points to give increases. Why doesn't the League do this? The State used to do this. Valerie Martin, Finance Director, said the state recently requested information on wages so perhaps they will be doing something. Killian asked if City employees have gotten together to discuss wages? Larry knew some were continuing to meet after the union was dissolved; however, employees are not allowed to discuss these issues on work time.

Daus stated that Joe Carroll's goals mentioned developer incentives, single-family homes and facility improvements. She thought his goals mirrored what the Council had discussed. Daus was encouraged that the Fire department is coming together as a whole and not changing directions with Fire Chief changes.

Kilian stated that he likes the idea of having the Rountree Gallery housed in the new Library. He also agreed that Carroll's memo has a lot of good ideas – single-family homes, convention center, Fire/EMS, property maintenance.

Regarding property maintenance: The City hired an inspector in 2013 at half time and tapered down. There was no money in the budget for 2014. There are lots of City codes regarding property maintenance issues that the current inspector does not have time for. He has dropped concern for over-occupancy issues and prioritized property maintenance. They need more help. Most departments feel that way. What about contracting out for this? Duane Borgen, Director of Administrative Services, thought rental housing contracting was working well. It was stated many areas are laying off employees and rehiring as consultants (without benefits) for 3-year periods (like IT).

Nickels mentioned the Cops grant program that the City has used that in the past. It is police officer funding, but you have to agree to hire them long-term. The School Resource Officer used to be funded by the schools. She's concerned with heroin usage. If the City applies for a grant, it must be expressed that the officers will be kept long term. Bierke stated that if a city runs out of funding and cannot continue to employ, they would need a grant waiver.

Concern was expressed regarding EMS volunteer staff as noted in the Brian Allen's report.

The Council expressed an interest in Lean Government and wanting to do training. Still waiting to hear if the State will reimburse the cost of Lean Government training. Software can improve efficiency and make better use of people's time. Repetitive tasks can benefit from software.

Basically, the City has old infrastructure and no money or staff to repair.

Stockhausen stated she was happy to see the new Police Station and thinks we can do more again. She expressed lots of concern regarding City buildings – City Hall, EMS, Fire Station.

Regarding Kallembach properties – Joe Carroll’s idea to trade them to add to the City property base – acquire properties in more strategic locations. Agreed we need to get rid of them, but we need to be strategic with our decisions. Seeboth mentioned they collected RFPs from communities that had similar Kallembach issues. We want to make sure that we consider these properties as an asset rather than a liability and to look at each property individually. Perhaps a trade for property by the fire station is in order. Use EMS location with parcel for development and use tax money from that for a new EMS facility. Use Jenor Tower Park and the house for development. The Council needs to set direction for staff/committees.

Per City Manager’s Highlights from staff notes:

- Parks (Howard Crofoot) – Legion Park has a comprehensive plan for redoing with an Art Hall remodel and there’s money budgeted for a soccer field. You don’t want to put the soccer field by tractor pull area so the entire effort needs to be coordinated. Bonin mentioned removing the warming house and rebuilding Art Hall with new bathrooms and a stage.
- Decommissioning the Davis Water Plant is an important priority. Brick actually fell off the roof during a visit with a council member.
- Code enforcement: Stay on top of this with absentee landlords (rental property).
- Police: Trend across the State is for mid-size SUVs. It’s a practical trend and they are four-wheel drive. State bids for interceptor cars and SUVs are only about \$1000 different (long term).
- Likes idea of installing more security cameras so we can see what happened after the fact. Current cameras lack pixel clarity. The City is applying for grants.
- Endowment fund – Main Street Program to pay for Music in the Park which is a good attribute for our community.

Seeboth was concerned with amount spent on cemetery maintenance. What do other communities do? Can we use chemicals near headstones to kill weeds? Raise plot cost? Answers: Other communities use City employees for cemetery maintenance. It costs more to contract out for mowing than to pay seasonal help. Seeboth mentioned planting native grass to replace grass in the cemetery that would require less mowing. She thought Cindy Robles had done a study on this and there are grants available. Berner mentioned that Madison has done this.

It was suggested that the EMS should merge with hospital and develop that area to get more tax base.

### **In summary**

The City has limited resources so we have to prioritize where we can have the most impact. All goals are important.

### **Final Priority by Council Consensus:**

1. Housing (needs, affordable, single-family)
2. Fire/EMS (City Hall, and other City buildings are important too, but more immediate focus needs to go to the fire/EMS buildings)
3. Street Improvements

4. Increase Revenues
5. Communication and Marketing the City

Maybe the City should provide incentives to turn rentals back to single family/owner occupied houses.

Need to set another meeting to help define the HOW.

*Tentative Target date:* First Council Meeting in July (8th) as a work session or hold prior to council meeting. Dept Budgets due by 8/1.

The City Manager will need direction from Council on Fire/EMS, street improvements. He needs to focus on revenue sources to fund the projects.

Priorities will be shared with Department Heads. Ask what they can do to address these issues.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Bonin, second by Stockhausen to adjourn. Motion carried on aye vote. The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Leighty  
City Manager Administrative Assistant