

**Gardiner City Council Meeting**  
**Workshop session on setting Council agreements on working together**  
**Wednesday, January 17, 2007**  
**7:00 – 9:00 pm**

**Meeting summary:**

The members of the new and former Councils and the City Manager met to provide an introduction for new Councilors to Council customs and agreements and for the new Council to establish its own guidelines for working together.

The new and former Councilors and the Manager identified what they would save and improve in how they all work together. Several people mentioned saving the Bank Treaty and the clear understanding of roles for the Council and Manager. The ability to have open, respectful discussions also received more than one mention. More than one person looked for improvement in redoing the mission / values work, building better communications with the staff / Department heads and ending the meetings on time. The two questions posed led to a discussion on how to deal with constituent complaints/concerns. Suggestions encouraged Councilors to listen and find out the full story, to promise to find out about the situation not to fix it, to work through the manager and make sure that neither the Council nor administration is surprised by a controversial issue. The Council agreed to come back to the subject at a future Council meeting to explore it further.

The Council reviewed and discussed the chart outlining the roles of the Council and the Manager and discussed the fine (and sometimes gray) between the Council's policy role and the Manager's administrative role. Councilors agreed on the outline of roles, but felt that it would be a ongoing discussion as different situations arose.

The Councilors identified what is important to them around how they work together and then turned to setting their own guidelines. They agreed to work from the Bank Treaty as the base of the Council guidelines. Councilors began the discussion of possible changes, starting with bullet #5 on defining when a Councilor was looking for information or help as any citizen would. There was a suggestion to remove that bullet. However, the Council did not have time to complete the discussion.

The Council agreed to complete the work on the guidelines along with the mission/values statement at a subsequent meeting within the next month. Subsequently, the Mayor will put on future agendas the items mentioned for improvement and the other issues, which were put in the basket.

## Meeting Notes:

**Workshop Purpose:** to provide an introduction for new Councilors to Council customs and agreements and for the new Council to establish its own guidelines for working together

### Desired Outcomes:

- An understanding of previous Council working agreements and customs
- A list of what participants suggest should be saved or improved going forward
- A list of new Councilor's questions
- An outline of Councilor and Manager roles
- An agreement on the Council's Guidelines for working together
- A list of next steps

### Agenda:

7:00 pm	Meeting Introduction: introductions; review purpose, outcomes, agenda and ground rules
7:10	How have we worked together in the past and what is the "Bank Treaty"?
7:20	What is important to save going forward into the new Council? What should the Council work to improve? What do the new Councilors want to ask the experienced Councilors?
7:50	What is the role of a Councilor? How does that relate to the role of the Manager?
8:20	For the new Council: What do you want for your agreements on how to work together as a Council and with the administration?
8:55	Wrap up
9:00	Adjourn

### Ground rules for the meeting

- One person talks at a time; no side conversations
- Disagree without being disagreeable
- Stick to the subject
- Recap and summarize as needed to make sure we are all on the same page
- Be clear about the facts before starting the discussion

### What is important to save going forward into the new Council?

- Mission statement
- Bank Treaty or a variation
- Save the bank treaty as presented
- Bank treaty
- Open decision making in Council Chambers
- Transparency
- Decisions/discussions are conducted in open meeting
- Clear policy / administration differentiation
- Roles of Council vrs the role of City Manager (day to day operations)

- Continue limiting communications between individual councilors and department heads
- Awareness of healthy roles and responsibilities
- Council's role as policy maker; manager's role as administrator / manager
- Community investment efforts
- Citizen involvement
- Come with an open mind
- Disagreeing without being disagreeable – remaining respectful and collegial
- Personal respect for each other
- Open discussion – everyone gets to talk at least once on every issue, if they wish, but not more than 3 times
- Chocolate at meetings

### **What should the Council work to improve?**

- Re-do mission / values statement
- Review mission statement
- Better communication with department heads
- Timely review and feedback from council to city manager
- Allowing manager to manage – oversee outcomes rather than processes
- More open process for agenda development
- Shorter meetings
- Have meetings end at 9:00 PM
- Promotion / marketing of assets
- Improve, enhance, enlarge the consent agenda
- Improve isolation of Council from city staff and employees – without (!) council getting involved with daily activities

### **Questions?**

- How have you handled disgruntled citizens' concerns?
- What is the process for bringing citizen complaints to the attention of the City Manager? What is the role of other councilor, if any, in review?

Responses to the questions:

- Take citizen concern to the Manager
- If the person is from a different district, inform that Councilor
- Listen; say "I'll relay the problem and get back to you." Not "I'll fix it."
- Get the full story, entire picture
- Meet in a public place with another person with you in very contentious issues
- No surprises

### **What is important to you about the Council's guidelines?**

- See the Manager and the Council as on the same team
- Not take anything personally
- After a vote is done, let it go and move on
- Open, public dialogue, but don't drag it out
- May need to seek middle ground to move on

- Transparency with the public and each other
- Keep focused on the big picture
- Not a rigid rule on how many time a councilor can speak, but limit repetition
- Community development – engage the public more
- Reasonable
- Fair
- Ambassadorship; help constituents to become ambassadors
- Have meetings end on time at 9:00 PM

**Basket**

- Have department heads make periodic reports to the Council - ***ACTION: add to the list of “improvements” when they come back to the Council***
- Come back to the question of handling constituents’ concerns to look at the feedback loop and recording concerns and handling complaints about specific personnel – ***ACTION: the Mayor will put the subject on a Council agenda***
- How to engage and inform the public - ***ACTION: the Mayor will put the subject on a Council agenda***
- Manager’s evaluation process - ***ACTION: the Mayor will put the subject on a Council agenda***

**Next Steps**

WHAT	WHO	BY WHEN
Put on an agenda for the Council the “improvement” issues so that the Council can decide which ones it wants to work on and what to do about them	Mayor / Manager	Within 2 months
Put the Bank Treaty on an agenda for any changes along with the Mission statement	Mayor / Manager	Within the next month
Notes	Pam	1/18/07