



Town of Nederland

SUMMARY REPORT

TOWN BOARD AND STAFF RETREAT
at
Happy Trails Café

May 9, 2016

Suiter & Associates

INTRODUCTION

On May 9, 2016 the Nederland Board of Trustees and senior staff met at the Happy Trails Café to discuss relevant issues and set goals for the coming 2 years. In attendance were Mayor Kris Larsen, Mayor Pro Tem Charles Wood, Trustees Kevin Mueller, Stephanie Miller, Julie Gustafson, Dallas Masters and Topher Donahue; Police Chief Paul Carrill, Public Works Manager Chris Pelletier, Town Clerk LauraJane Baur, Community Center Coordinator Dawn Baumhover, and Town Administrator Alisha Reis. Gary Suiter facilitated.

The objectives for the retreat were agreed as follows:

- Get to know each other better
- Affirm the Town's vision statement
- Discuss/establish Board roles and protocol
- Identify and discuss major issues
- Establish goals and priorities for the next two years
- Humor and Candor 😊

Gary welcomed the group, and provided a bit of background on himself. He asked each participant to answer the following questions:

- What brought you to the town of Nederland?
- Where did you grow up?
- What skill sets do you bring to the table?

The introductions revealed some common elements among Board and staff members and identified an impressive set of skill sets, as follows:

- Aerospace engineer with experience at Los Alamos National Lab
- Systems and data analysis (2 participants have this experience)
- Information technology
- Bringing out the best in people
- Staff development
- Three participants had experience in communications, planning, building relationships, and partnerships
- Synthesizing large volumes of information
- Transportation planning
- Communications and public relations
- Environmental experience
- Planetary science – worked at Jet Propulsion Laboratory
- Outdoors and recreation experience

- Emergency response
- Nonprofits and partnering
- Law enforcement/criminal justice/criminal investigations/cybercrime
- Engineering and construction
- Accounting
- Management
- Mechanical aptitude
- Excavation
- HVAC and refrigeration
- Mechanical engineering
- Building LEED certified buildings

Gary noted the diversity of background and depth of experience with the Board and staff members, and encouraged the group to utilize that experience in moving the Town forward.

Gary briefly described his approach to **strategic planning**:

Purpose

- Clarifies your most important and compelling beliefs
- Provides overarching guidance for future leaders
- Prevents ending up where you do not want to be

Issues

- Surfaces conflict
- Shows differing perspectives
- Clarifies the problem(s)
- Can be emotional
- Takes the most time

Outcomes

- Visualize what success looks like
- Be clear on where you are going
- Be sure it is consistent with purpose
- Set your goals

Resources

- What do we have?
- What else do we need?
- How much will it cost?
- Quality, speed, and cost – pick two

Timing

- Provides context
- Brings goals closer to reality
- Allows for small successes early on
- Be realistic
- Be flexible

VISION REVIEW

The group spent some time discussing Nederland Vision 2020, developed by the citizenry in 2011.

The Chief of Police noted the importance of adding public safety to the vision statement. Discussion followed. The group generally agreed that the vision statement is a community-based document and that it should be left as is. One person noted that a commitment to the environment is also a safety issue. Quality of life was noted as being an important aspect of the vision statement. The Board thought it best to honor the work of the citizenry done in 2011 and not take on revising the vision statement at this time.

ROLES, PROTOCOL AND AGREEMENTS

The Board had substantive discussions on procedures and protocols for work sessions, regular meetings, staff contact, public involvement, etc.

Gary briefly reviewed the roles of Board and staff, including the difference between policymaking, and implementation (administration). He described it as the difference between the “what” (policy) and the “how” (implementation).

The point was made that staff also needs to respect the knowledge of the Board members. There was a discussion on trust and how to build and maintain trust through communication, sticking to your roles, and “how the message is delivered”. It was also noted that follow-through builds trust.

The Board and staff clarified expectations. Following are some of their preliminary agreements:

- Discuss and clarify roles of staff and consultants
- Establish timelines on a project to clarify expectations
- Stick to the “rule of four”. That is, affirming staff direction with a nod of four trustees
- Staff will ask for clarification if unsure of Board direction

- Staff to create and maintain a running list of Board requests
- Discuss, agree, and stick to formal and informal communication rules in advance of the meeting
- Staff to provide “equal time and equal information” to the Board of Trustees, to the extent possible

GOALS AND THEMES

Three major themes were identified. Discussion occurred on how the Trustees’ goals align with, or are supported by, the various plans that have been adopted by the Town. For example, Vision 2020, the Master Infrastructure Plan, and the Comprehensive Plan. The Board will work to collaborate with advisory boards and community groups working on these items, in line with the expressed policies of these plans.

1. **Infrastructure** – Schedule a study session on the whole plan in July. Include streets, storm water, and funding for the 2014 Master Infrastructure Plan. Discussed the “how” in developing infrastructure improvements. Consider future generations in design and development. How do we implement the plan without culverts and ditches? Consider other, more natural methods of storm water control. Identify the needs to be addressed by each project. Budget accordingly.
2. **Housing** – Schedule a study session, aiming for August. Discuss:
 - Available land for housing – what are the goals? The Town of Nederland needs to formally commit to developing the existing Town Shop site on 5th Street for affordable housing, per the original intention of the Mud Lake IGA
 - Staff to draft the definition of affordable housing to be adopted by the Board
 - Land use code changes to be considered in support of housing
 - Density code to be considered soon
 - Set expectations with the Planning Commission – look at the codes and suggest changes to the Board
 - Meet with landowners and developers to encourage housing development, particularly for those with moderate incomes
 - Be proactive with the public in discussing these needs
 - Develop a baseline. What’s the current building footprint? What’s our build-out scenario for the community?
 - Consider VRBO impact – shared economy -- on affordable housing availability
3. **Economic Sustainability**
 - a. Schedule a study session for June
 - b. Calendar should aim for August ballot referral at the Board and November vote

- c. Priority is to pass the Downtown Development Authority debt authorization in 2016
- d. Clarify the purpose of the DDA; improve the “messaging” of the master plan update currently being completed
- e. Consider the Economic Development Task Force report recommendations
- f. Reinstitute the Chamber of Commerce
- g. Support local job growth
- h. Consider the environment
- i. Remote “location neutral” jobs
- j. Consider land use code changes – what are the barriers?

Other Discussion Items:

- How meetings are run. How to deal with public misconduct? Board will discuss further at a Study Session.
- The Police Chief noted the need to update the criminal code, including camping, traffic, and parking. A suggestion was made to increase public outreach in consideration of these codes. How do we address complaints of marijuana odor?
- It was also suggested that recruitment and retention of staff be established as another goal. This would include updating the compensation and classification plan. It was also noted the importance of volunteers in conducting the work of staff that they do not have the time or resources to get to.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

- *Schedule a study session on meeting protocol for May 25. Discuss and agree to formal and informal communication guidelines.*
- *Economic Sustainability – Schedule study session in June*
- *Infrastructure – Schedule study session on the whole plan in July*
- *Housing – Schedule a study session in August*
- *Staff to maintain a running list of Board requests*

Gary thanked the group for their ideas, participation, and commitment to move the Town forward in a positive manner.
