

2023 Council Retreat Minutes December 2, 2023

City of Washington Terrace

Minutes of a City Council Retreat Held on December 5, 2023

Public Works Shop, 575 East 5600 South, Washington Terrace City, Utah

MAYOR, COUNCIL, AND STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Mark C. Allen
Council Member F. Carey Seal – Excused
Council Member Jeff West
Council Member Jill Christiansen
Council Member Scott Barker -Excused
Council Member Randy Ferlin
Recreation Director- Carlos Grava
Finance Director Shari’ Garrett
Public Works Director Jake Meibos
Fire Chief Clay Peterson
Code Enforcement Officer Martin Nish
Lt. Colby Ryan, Sherrif Office
City Manager Tom Hanson
City Recorder Amy Rodriguez

Others

Cheryl Parkinson, Michael Thomas

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8:00 a.m. Welcome:

- Welcome
- Pledge of allegiance
- Overview of schedule

8:15 a.m. Review of City-Wide Survey results

- Correlation to Policy Priorities
- Exploring next steps

Council and staff discussed the reasons for the city-wide survey: reaching out to the community, communication, see if priorities are lining up with resident wishes, planning opportunities, and give residents a voice.

Hanson stated that the city used a professional platform for the survey. The overall objective was to get ideas for planning and get reputable data from a professional source. Council Member West stated that we tried to solicit empirical data that we could form an opinion from. He stated

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that the questions were not leading as to obtain raw data. Council Member Christiansen stated that the survey helped solidify the Council Mission Statement.

Hanson stated that the survey was statistically valid because it considered limits to distribution and collection.

Hanson stated that there are assumptions considered in the results. Council Member West stated that one of the concerns was to make sure that the survey was only taken by residents. He stated that they gave everyone an opportunity to respond to the survey and were able to classify themselves as a resident, or visitor to the city.

Hanson stated that there is still analysis going on, however, there are not a lot of cautions on people going in several times and taking the city.

Hanson stated that there is a valid number of respondents. He stated that we received 443 responses with a 96 percent response quality.

Hanson went through the results of the survey and linked the results to Council Policy Priorities. Council Member Christiansen stated that there have been a lot of surveys this year and was pleased that there was not survey fatigue and that the number of respondents showed that residents care about a city sanctioned survey. Council Member West stated that the verified residents was at 394, which is a valid number. He stated that we received an impressive response rate.

SURPRISE VISITOR

Representative Rosemary Lesser visited and stated that she will be a fierce advocate for Washington Terrace City. She thanked Council and staff for serving the community.

SURVEY RESULTS

Hanson went through the survey results question by question. Some of the discussion highlights include; but are not limited to:

Quality of Life:

There were citizen responses that focused on code enforcement and upkeep of property. Peterson noted that there is a lot to be done within the city and is not a one man job. He stated that residents noted that they don't want to pay higher taxes for the services that they feel lacking. Council Member West stated that the goal is to get the community involved to help each other out and the challenge is to get community outreach. He stated that there are probably a lot of people in the city who don't know we have a designated code enforcement officer making things better. He stated that we can show that we are addressing a common thread of the survey and what the city is doing about it. He stated that we can educate the residents on what we are doing to address their concerns. Council Member Christiansen stated that we need to make people aware of the long term planning that we have in place concerning budget and projects. She stated that we need to keep people informed on what we are doing and where we are at with the budget.

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City Satisfaction

There was discussion on the City Taxes value, with Garrett noting that perception may change if there was more education on the question and the education that our taxes are lower than neighboring cities, and they may not realize how much they are paying to the city and what it is being used for. Council Member West stated that it needs to be an educational opportunity.

How Residents find Information about the city

The results showed that the majority of respondents receive their information through the newsletter. Hanson stated that we can use the newsletter platform to push the residents to the website platform for more up to date information. Parkinson agreed, stated that the newsletter is shallow in the areas that it addresses and we should push people to the platform where we can get more in depth information. Peterson stated that we might have a lot more senior citizens who may not use the high tech platforms. Hanson stated that there is a significant effort to producing the newsletter. He asked what Council felt about having a the newsletter every two months and putting the cost and effort into maintaining the website and making the website more relevant. He stated that we are working on a new website design and can use the newsletter to push people towards the website.

Reasons for Quality of life: Extremely Dissatisfied

Peterson stated that the common theme is education. Hanson stated that he is careful not to discount dissatisfaction, but is aware that it exists.

Code Enforcement

Hanson stated that 70 percent of respondents think code enforcement is extremely important. Council Member Christiansen stated that there is an interest in neighbors helping other neighbors. Peterson stated that education is the running theme. He stated that there may need a deep dive discussion on how we are going to do that. Nish stated that he is more on the consistent and fair approach. He stated that he works with people to find out their situation and noted that 90 percent of the residents he has been able to work with have complied. He stated that there are still concerns with some of the unsightly lots and there is a lot of work ahead. Nish stated that he estimates a third of the owners that he has dealt with are owners from outside of the community, but noted that they have mostly been quick to respond. Mayor Allen suggested the “City Pride, City Wide” motto for the city that was used years ago. Council Member West asked if there are funds or means available for people to make a donation to help those who can’t take care of their yard, possibly using local companies to help. He stated that we need to get creative for solutions. Nish stated that about a quarter of his work is complaint based, and the rest is what he sees driving around. Lt. Ryan stated that he has found that neighbors don’t talk to neighbors anymore and often fall back on the Sheriff Office , or city officials. He stated that if neighbors would talk to each other, a lot can get done.

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Council Member Ferlin stated that community outreach is a big focus on companies. He suggested that GWCU may be open to volunteering a day a service from their employees to help beautifying the community which surrounds them.

Volunteer Fire/EMS

The responses showed the majority are satisfied with the services, with only 9 respondents noting that they were dissatisfied.

Hanson stated that some of the respondents do not understand the partnerships that we do have with neighboring cities.

Chief Peterson stated that the last ISO rating we did was in 2015, and it put us in a level one. We have gone up 7.5 points this year. He stated that some of the requests that are needed to change our class are not feasible. He stated that we scored perfectly on the water infrastructure, hydrants, water flow, water feeds, and pressures.

Chief Peterson stated that many don't realize that even though we are a volunteer fire department we do not function as a volunteer department.

Police Services

The majority of respondents are satisfied with current law enforcement. Lt. Ryan stated that there are two officers on patrol specifically for Washington Terrace, with more delegated for calls for service. He stated that there are many shared resources that the city receives from the county, including school resources, search and rescue, street crime, flock cameras, and other services.

12:00 P.m. Working lunch

12:30 p.m. Continuation of discussion on City-Wide Survey results

Park Satisfaction

Meibos stated that the parks that we have are in good quality, and some parks are more of an open space. Hanson stated that there was a question concerning which parks needed attention.

Hanson stated that respondents answered that Rohmer and Little Rohmer are still a high priorities. Hanson stated that it will be great to wrap up the improvements on Rohmer Park.

Council Member West stated that the results are more of a planning guide showing the opportunities for planning purposes. He stated that people are excited about the improvements at Rohmer Park. He stated that once that is wrapped up, we will see a shift in priorities and need to use this as a planning tool.

Hanson stated that the results show that somewhat agree with more information, and strongly agree for more spending on parks, however, many strongly disagree to raise money for parks.

Feedback and Recommendations

Mayor Allen stated that many of the recommendations are things that we are trying to accomplish.

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1:00 p.m. Closing thoughts

- Break down highlights from the survey and put out information in the newsletter to let residents know we are meeting their needs.
- Educate residents on things (concerns) that are within the City control.
- Community needs to be involved and they will see that many of the concerns are already identified and are being addressed by staff and Council.
- Improvements to the website. Don't condense information too much or it is not meaningful. Need to engage residents.
- Education, communication, community involvements. There are opportunities to improve upon. Possibly an information officer. Whenever we are presenting to the public, we should include an element of education.
- Possibly an open house.
- Educate people on the grant projects that we utilize so that they know that we do as much as we can to minimize raising taxes.

2:00 p.m. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Date approved

City Recorder

This retreat is for information, discussions, and planning considerations. No motions were made at this meeting.