



**CITY OF LA CENTER COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING ~ RETREAT
February 27, 2016**

SPECIAL MEETING ~ RETREAT:

1. Mayor Thornton called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

2. **ROLL CALL:**

Council:

Councilmember Birdwell-Currey	Present
Councilmember Luiz	Present
Councilmember Williams	Present
Councilmember Valenzuela	Present
Councilmember Cerveny	Present
Mayor Thornton	Present

Staff:

Naomi Hansen, Administrative Assistant

Guests:

Lloyd Halverson, Facilitator
Doug Boff, Planning Commissioner

3. **NEW BUSINESS**

Mayor Thornton briefly welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the retreat. He introduced the meeting facilitator, Lloyd Halverson. Mr. Halverson was the City Administrator for the City of Camas for 23 years. Mr. Halverson briefly introduced himself and explained how La Center is facing a lot of the same challenges the City of Camas faced when the paper mill was the main industry in Camas. Both communities have a lot of potential and with careful planning La Center will grow and diversify our economy.

Mr. Halverson introduced the ten topics to be discussed throughout the day and the council members discussed how many of the topics are interconnected. As the day continued Mr. Halverson, Mayor Thornton and each of the Council Members collaborated and discussed each of the topics. The following is a summary of the items discussed and the key components/action items that were identified.



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When discussing what makes La Center such a wonderful community, Mr. Halverson asked everyone why they moved to La Center. The key reasons were:

- Quiet Community
- Parks & Trails
- Beautiful Setting
- Micro-Climate
- Great Schools
- Ability to work from home
- Wide Streets
- Sidewalks
- Small Town Feel
- Safe
- Moved to La Center to be close to family.

The City Council was excited about the recent intergovernmental agreement with the tribe and spent a great deal of time discussing their vision for the interchange area. Some of the ideas discussed were:

- Good Paying Jobs
- Professional – Office Jobs
- Bio-Medical Focus
- High End Retail
- Bank
- Coffee Shop
- Cohesive and Attractive Building and Landscape Designs
- Develop Design Review

The City Council was clear that they did not want a lot of fast food businesses or warehouses.

Throughout the meeting the City Council identified the following action items:

- Fast track construction projects
 - o Build 4th Street & Pacific Highway Roundabout as soon as possible.
 - o Perfect the sewer agreement and fast track the construction of the sewer line to the interchange.
- Fast track zoning changes to develop design standards for the interchange and Timmen Road areas.



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- Align the Comprehensive Plan, Capital Facilities Plan, Zoning & Design Standards to ensure the high quality developments the City Council envisions.
- Get the City's Consulting Planner, Mr. Eisemann and the Planning Commission on board and make the changes a top priority.
- Facilitate an open house for commercial developers.
- Promote the redevelopment of the downtown core as well as the I-5 junction on the city website.
- Ensure a consistent permitting process and review for land use and building permit applications.
- Create an economic development committee/task force comprised of community members, council members and the Mayor. Council member's Cerveny and Valenzuela volunteered to serve on the committee.

The City Council discussed general dissatisfaction for how the budgeting process is conducted each year. To City Council felt strongly that they would like to start the process earlier in the year and reduce the number of meetings at the end of the year. Mayor Thornton explained how the City of Ridgefield has a budget committee and would like to create something similar. The City Council agreed. They decided they would like to create a budget committee task force comprised of citizens, business owners, council members, Mayor and Finance Director. Council Members Cerveny and Birdwell-Currey volunteered for the positions. The Mayor anticipates implementing the task force by May. The City Council committed to hire an outside consultant to plan for three different long-term forecasting scenarios in the event of lost revenues. The goal is to have this completed in time for the mid-year check in with the task force and Council.

The City Council discussed the increased need to network and collaborate with our neighboring cities, county and legislators. Recognizing that the Mayor and Council Members all have varying levels of time they can dedicate to networking everyone agreed to report to Mayor Thornton how much time they have to network with the greater community. The City Council would like to accomplish the following tasks to meet their networking goals.

- Attend more events
- Engage in more casual meetings with legislators
- Be more visible
- Attend more AWC meetings and the legislative action days



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- Incorporate upcoming events on the three month calendar that is included in council packets.

The City Council briefly discussed how they can better communicate with each other and citizen's. They decided they would like staff reports provided ahead of time and for them to be read during Council meetings. In addition they would like intermittent updates as necessary in the event of construction or other items that are of importance to the community.

The City Council wrapped up the meeting discussing how positive and productive the retreat was. They agreed to have a follow up retreat in June or July of 2016.

4. **ADJOURNMENT.**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:43 p.m.