

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING – STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION**  
**June 27, 2007**

The Special City Council Meeting – Strategic Planning Session was called to order by Mayor Muschell at 1:00 p.m. at Cheboygan Memorial Hospital on June 27, 2007.

Present: Council Members Muschell, Tebo, Riddle, Lepp, Sangster and Boardman

Absent: Councilman Charboneau

Also present were members of the Strategic Planning Task Force and various stakeholders from the City of Cheboygan and surrounding area. The facilitator for the Strategic Planning session was Mr. Phil Alexander, the MSU Extension Director from Otsego County.

The Strategic Plan adopted by the City Council on February 15, 2005 was reviewed. Mr. Alexander used the acronym SMART, noting that goals must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. There are ten goals within the Strategic Plan that was adopted:

- Continue and refine the Capital Improvement Planning Process and implement the Traffic System Master Plan
- Remove conditions of junk and blight within the City
- Improve Water Quality
- Create a City Park and Recreation System that meets the needs of the Community
- Establish a centralized Cultural Arts and Education Center that is financially sound and adequately staffed
- Focus on the Hyett-Palma Cameo Projects regarding the redevelopment of Downtown, which include primary projects such as the footbridge and the F. W. Woodworth building
- Develop an effective marketing plan to promote the City of Cheboygan as a place to visit, raise a family, and do business
- Continue and enhance intergovernmental communication
- Refine the Land Use Plan
- Develop and implement a Staffing Plan which will effectively accomplish the mission of the City of Cheboygan

The meeting continued with a review on the status of the Strategic Plan and goals were classified as either primary or secondary. An overview of each goal was provided by City Manager McNeil. The primary goals include the Sidewalk Master Plan, and discussion included funding sources and how to best achieve that goal financially. Another issue that was discussed pertained to blight, and City Manager McNeil commented that enforcement is well underway with over 500 complaints registered with the Department of Public Safety. Water quality issues were discussed at some length, including concerns brought up by Mr. Craig Beachnaw, a local realtor, who sited concerns regarding selling property because of water quality issues. City Manager McNeil outlined the planned upgrades to the water system which include water main replacement on the Alphabet Streets, Duncan Avenue, and Main Street. Parks and Recreation was then addressed, specifically the best use of City property and an overview was provided by City Manager McNeil on the status of park maintenance. The former F. W. Woolworth building was also discussed, with an overview provided by City Manager McNeil on the status of the building. It was noted that the Northern Lakes Economic Alliance is actively working with a committee to research funding sources and is in the process of obtaining an assessment of the property. Intergovernmental Communication has expanded to include regularly scheduled meetings and discussions on areas of mutual concern. Mr. Jim Conboy commented on the

number of services, specifically recreational services, that the City provides to those residing outside the City limits and that the intergovernmental meetings may be an opportunity to possibly broach obtaining financial support for programs that are offered to County residents. City Manager McNeil then provided an update on the Land Use Plan and a status report on the river corridors.

The secondary goals were discussed. Ms. Joanne Leal commented on the possibility of utilizing the former F. W. Woolworth building as a site for a Cultural Arts and Education Center. Chief Jones pointed out that the Gold Front is also available as a possible site. General discussion was then held on what could be housed in the buildings such as a maritime museum, dance studio, and other items. The next secondary goal that was discussed was a marketing plan for the City of Cheboygan with Ms. Kim Pappas, Executive Director of the Cheboygan Area Chamber of Commerce, discussing promotional activities through the Chamber. These activities include promoting Cheboygan's waterways and the concept of a four-season community, as well as sponsorship of the Cheboygan Today magazine. Issues of way-finding and branding were also discussed. City Manager McNeil then provided an overview on the last secondary goal which pertained to a staffing plan. Mr. Bob Spinella pointed out the advantages of being able to obtain adequate staffing levels and the financial resources needed to do so. It was noted that the City of Cheboygan will have to maintain the current staffing level while at the same time assuming even more increased responsibilities.

After reviewing and discussing each of the current goals, Mr. Alexander asked if there were any new issues that the Strategic Planning Task Force should address. Items recommended include affordable housing, specifically for low income residents, rental properties, and home repair. Also discussed were property taxes as related to the Downtown businesses that are not exempt from homestead tax, which is a detriment to attracting new businesses to the downtown area. The possibility of incentives was discussed to attract more business. Mr. Spinella noted the blighted rental properties, which is currently being addressed through the City's Blight Ordinance. Mr. Jim Granger recommended consideration of a City income tax similar to that which has been in effect in Grayling, Michigan for the past several years, to enhance City revenues. He briefly explained the concept in recouping revenue from those that are employed within the City but reside outside the City limits, and yet enjoy the amenities that the City provides such as Gordon Turner Park, the Ice Rink/Pavilion and the Major City Park ball fields.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

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Mayor James Muschell

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City Clerk Kenneth J. Kwiatkowski

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Councilman Richard B. Sangster

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Councilman Gerald R. Boardman

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Councilwoman Winifred L. Riddle

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Councilman Charles Charboneau

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Councilman Leslie A. Tebo

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Councilwoman Theo Lepp