

# City of Johnston, Iowa Goal Setting Report

January 14, 2010

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**Mayor**

Paula Dierenfeld

**City Council**

Gerd Clabaugh

Bob Culbert

Jim Hibbs

Jon Kallen

Dave Lindeman

**City Administrator**

Jim Sanders



**Facilitated by:**

*Jeff Schott*

*Institute of Public Affairs*

*University of Iowa*

# CITY OF JOHNSTON, IOWA GOAL SETTING SESSION 2010

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# **CITY OF JOHNSTON, IOWA**

## **GOAL SETTING SESSION**

### **2010**

#### **Introduction**

The City of Johnston requested the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) to assist the city with goal setting. IPA agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

1. Prepare a questionnaire to identify recent accomplishments, issues/trends/concerns, potential new initiatives/programs/policies, and suggestions to improve organizational effectiveness.
2. Conduct a goal-setting session with the elected officials and staff
3. Preparation of this final report.

#### **Goal Setting Work Sessions**

City elected officials held a work session conducted by the IPA on January 14, 2010. In attendance and participating at this meeting were Mayor Paula Dierenfeld, City Council Members Gerd Clabaugh, Bob Culbert, Jim Hibbs, Jon Kallen and Dave Lindeman. Also in attendance and participating in the session were City Administrator Jim Sanders, Assistant City Administrator Stephanie Reynolds, Finance Director Teresa Rotschafer, Community Development Director David Wilwerding, Chief of Police Bill Vaughn, Public Works Director Dave Cubit, Park and Recreation Director Ron Ward, Library Director Willona Graham Goers, Fire Chief Jim Krohse, City Clerk Cyndee Rhames, Senior Planner Aaron Wolfe, Planner II Deb Schiel-Larson and Communications Specialist Pat Howard.

## **Major Accomplishments**

The following were identified as major accomplishments during the past two years:

- Annexation of Crosshaven
- Fiber optic project continuing
- Completion of NW 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue reconstruction project
- Increase in personnel of Police and Fire Departments
- Completion of watershed assessment plan and stormwater management plan
- Initiated update of comprehensive plan
- Senior dining site at Crown Point Community Center
- Continued development of neighborhood parks and trails
- Continuation of joint fire/rescue service agreement with the City of Grimes
- Hiring of new police chief
- Updated solicitor/panhandling ordinance
- City's role (TIF, Zoning, Building Permit) in expanding and supporting commercial tax base (record year in 2008)
  - Significant new and expanded commercial development (John Deere Credit Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.)
  - Development at West Park, Johnston high-rise
- Building Code update
- Achieved AA bond rating
- Taxable valuation increase (during recession)
- Supported developer in attracting 2009 Homebuilders Association Home Show to Johnston and provided assistance
- Establishment of Merle Hay Road redevelopment task force
- Balanced the FY 2010 budget with no levy increase
  - Responsible management of city resources and revenues
- Greater use of technology to inform public and receive input
- Expansion of bus service and greater ridership with residents
- Successfully reduced property tax increase by DART
- Effectiveness of efforts in attracting federal road monies for various projects
- Successful response and post-response to 2008 flood and other weather related events
- Numerous successful regional coordination efforts (salt storage, school fiber optic project, Grimes Fire contract)
- Modified TIF policy to encourage "green" development and construction projects that incorporate public art
- Implemented policies to address deer population issues – expanded bow hunting, no feeding
- Construction of Parks Department maintenance building and Water/Sewer Department Building
- Removal of Crown Point Community Center pool
- Completion of trail connection to Urbandale
- Completion of Trestle to Trestle trail
- Purchase of new fire rescue engine
- Water service extension to Elmerodo Estates and Schultz Acres

## **Major Accomplishments (continued)**

- Utilizing *Johnston Living* Magazine for distribution of City newsletter
- Removal of Winwood lift station
- Participation in county-wide pre-disaster mitigation plan
- Writing a grant for the construction of a new fire station
- Continuing infrastructure improvements (e.g. streets)
- Maintaining quality services overall for a growing population
- Adoption of new water rates
- Close-out of FEMA
- Auditor selection
- Continued City Council support for professional and non-union compensation plan to provide comparable pay and benefits to Johnston employees
- Providing improved internet/LAN connection via one connection throughout city buildings
- Continued updating of city website
- C.A.R.E. program
- Neighborhood watch program (Newport Vista)
- Updated policies and procedures (i.e. employee handbook, technology resources policy, and police department SOGs)
- Conversion from DARE to Code 411 program
- City's five (5)-year MS4 permit from the Iowa DNR renegotiated and renewed
- Received \$299,518 Watershed Improvement Review Board (WIRB) grant and \$100,000 I-Jobs Grant to fund stormwater quality improvements in Green Meadows
- Little Beaver Creek sanitary sewer trunk extension to NW area
- NW 86<sup>th</sup> Street reconstruction project design completed and bids received
- NW 86<sup>th</sup> Street & Birchwood Court project plans completed and bids received

## **Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities**

The following were identified as issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that may affect future city services, policies, finances or operations:

- Budget/economic recession/overall economic condition (foreclosures, reduced growth, etc) and their impact upon city finances
- Merle Hay Road redevelopment
- Need for new city buildings (public safety and city hall)
- Comprehensive plan review and update
  - Resident involvement in process
  - Need for more commercial development
  - Presents opportunities for the future
- Failed recreation complex referendum and the existing need for recreation facilities
- Increased collaborative efforts between governmental agencies to provide services
- Amount of debt service levy (high debt service levy)
- Staff retention
- Commercial and residential expansion
- Stormwater issues
  - Identification of stormwater erosion issues
  - Adoption of stormwater management plan – implementation timeline and funding sources, community education and buy-in
- Continued growth in bus ridership
- Need for ongoing focus on commercial growth and development of a strategic plan
- Balancing growing demands for a growing community against fiscal restraint
- More efforts to create transparency for residents in city's work
- Eastside infrastructure
- Lack of central park
- Traffic issues – NW 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue rush, speed limit on NW 70<sup>th</sup> Avenue, NW 86<sup>th</sup> Street and Merle Hay Road backups
- Slow/stagnant growth; slowing of commercial growth due to economic conditions
- Lack of ability to pass a referendum – rec complex, pool referendum
- Expectations of our citizens vs. willingness to pay; general public feeling of “no more taxes” regardless of the value the project/program adds to the community
- Lack of affordable housing
- Need for improved public transportation services; suburb to suburb commutes, etc.
- Creation of annual budget allocation for trail maintenance
- Finding correct balance of commercial/residential growth in the community
- Few, if any, viable options for annexation
- Reduction in hotel/motel tax revenues

**Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities (continued)**

- Attempt by Home Builder's Association to eliminate a city's ability to require residential sprinklers
- Intergovernmental funding issues – e.g. funding for library services
- Capacity to continue to provide quality services if budgets are reduced
- Increased number of delinquent utility bills
- Decreased interest income and increased banking service costs
- Environmental or working conditions concerns (City Hall building)
- Strive to focus on providing and/or improving key public services rather than reacting to citizen complaints
- 2009/10 general fund levy is lowest it has been in nine (9) years yet the number of employees and the level of services provided has increased significantly
- Space issues for all departments at City Hall
- Professional and non-union employee compensation continues to lag behind metro area comparables
- Space issues at Police Department (evidence, equipment, staff)
- Security issues at Police Department (prisoner processing)
- No relief factor for School Resource Officer (SRO)
- Concern regarding funding for capital improvement program (due to high debt service) and stormwater projects identified in Watershed Assessment
- Stormwater utility user fee development
- Unfunded MS4 compliance costs

## **On-Going Priorities**

The following were identified as on-going priorities for the upcoming 12 – 24 month period:

- Continue to proactively pursue effective partnerships, including service-sharing, with other governments
- Continue efforts and policies to attract and retain quality staff
- Continue to identify and maintain strategies, methods, practices and policies designed to ensure effective growth management, to include consideration of sustainable design policies/green community initiatives
- Crown Point – Phase I
- Develop utility and infrastructure master plans for areas lacking service
- Comprehensive Management Plan for Beaver Creek natural area
- Update Comprehensive Plan
- Rittger’s Oaks/Johnston Commons storm water improvements
- Continue to connect and extend trails, including development of a long-range trail plan
- Continue strategies to improve public information efforts
- Promote economic development
- Develop annexation agreements with Granger, Grimes, and Ankeny
- Implement Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Plan including identification of economic development tools to promote development
- Develop Storm Water Management Plan and present funding alternatives to City Council, including storm water utility
- Fiber optic network (in conjunction with Johnston Community School District)

## **Priority Projects, Programs, Policies and Initiatives**

The participants reviewed potential projects, programs, policies and initiatives for consideration and selected the following as priorities for the upcoming 12 – 24 month period (listed in order of priority):

- 1 (Tie) Conduct recreation needs analysis and develop recreation program for City of Johnston to promote quality of life
- 1 (Tie) New Public Safety Building
- 3 Infrastructure updates on east side
- 4 Work with Chamber of Commerce, schools and others to organize more community events/activities – e.g. spring kite tournament, bike trail ride, outdoor concerts at GMW gazebo or Simpson Barn

A complete list of all programs and initiatives considered by the Mayor and City Council members is attached as **Exhibit A**.

## **Organizational Effectiveness**

Mayor and Council reviewed and discussed a variety of ideas relating to improving organizational effectiveness to accomplish the selected goals and priorities. After this review and discussion, the following initiatives were to improve organizational effectiveness:

- Continue to host city department open houses for residents
- Continue to hold joint meetings with adjacent communities and school district
- Develop volunteer opportunities
- Hold joint meetings between City Council and Boards and Commissions
- Explore use of electronic City Council/Board packets
- Evaluate feasibility of annual revenue projections in September/October prior to next budget cycle
- Review ISU's Simplified Parliamentary Procedures – provide to mayor, Council and staff and consider adopting as council parliamentary rules
- Improve follow-up once an issue has been addressed to ensure the issue has not been forgotten and the service/communication has been provided to the citizen/business
- Explore alternative programs to Mayor's Youth Council

**Note:** The agenda for the Goal Setting Session and the Preliminary Questionnaire are attached to this report as **Exhibits B** and **C** respectively.

## **Final Comments**

It was a pleasure to assist the City of Johnston with this goal setting process. I was extremely impressed with the level of cooperation and positive attitudes of the elected officials and staff.

It is important to note that the prioritization of projects and initiatives is not “cast in stone.” They can be modified as new circumstances may occur.

It is recommended that staff prepare an “action plan” for accomplishing the planning goals. The action plan would define the steps that would be needed to accomplish each goal, identify who is responsible for implementation, and establish a timeline for accomplishment. The action plan should then be presented to the City Council for review and approval. It is also recommended that staff review with the City Council the status of implementing the goals on a quarterly basis.

Jeff Schott  
Institute of Public Affairs  
University of Iowa  
January 19, 2010

Exhibit A

**CITY OF JOHNSTON**  
**Goal Setting Session – 2010**

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**SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES OR PROGRAMS CONSIDERED**

- Work with Chamber of Commerce, schools and others to organize more community events/activities – e.g. spring kite tournament, bike trail ride, outdoor concerts at GMW gazebo or Simpson Barn
- Construct flood gate in the levy east of NW Beaver Drive
- Promote the recreation opportunities available due to our proximity to Saylorville Lake
- Develop and fund capital equipment replacement plan
- Continue to prepare for emerald ash borer infestation
- Review and enhance websites for the City and the Public Library
- Ban open burning
- Implement online bill paying options for utility bills, fees, fines, etc.
- Establish a citywide Neighborhood Watch program
- Explore law enforcement accreditation
- Expand and enhance crime analysis function
- Increase police officer ratio to 1.5 officers/1,000 population
- Develop recreation program and needs analysis for City of Johnston to promote quality of life
- New City Hall
- New Public Safety Building
- Energy conservation program for city facilities
- Infrastructure updates on east side
- Consider implementation of utility franchise fee with corresponding reduction of property taxes
- Begin redevelopment of Terra Lake Park
- Develop public Art Master Plan

**Exhibit B**

**AGENDA**

**CITY OF JOHNSTON  
GOAL SETTING SESSION - 2010**

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**THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2010  
4:00 PM – 9:00 PM  
City Hall Council Chambers**

1. Introductions and Opening Comments
  - a. Name, Tenure, and Background
2. General Overview of the Meeting and the Goal Setting Process
  - a. The Ground Rules for this session
3. Progress Report and Update –2009 Goal Setting Report
4. Review Recent City Accomplishments (2008-09)
5. Review Issues, Concerns, Opportunities, and Trends
6. Identify On-Going Priorities
7. Programs, Policies, Projects and Initiatives
  - a. Review Results of Questionnaire
  - b. Explanations, clarifications, revisions, deletions, additions of Programs, Policies, Projects, and Initiatives
  - c. Ranking of Priorities
8. Organizational Effectiveness
  - a. Review Results of Questionnaire
9. IPA Report to the Mayor and City Council – 2010 Goal Setting Process
  - a. Development of Action Plan
  - b. Importance of Quarterly Updates
10. Questions, comments, and suggestions
11. Adjourn

Exhibit C

**CITY OF JOHNSTON  
GOAL SETTING SESSION – 2010**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The City of Johnston’s Goal Setting Session will be held on Thursday January 14, 2010, at City Hall. The purpose of the session will be to identify and prioritize the City’s overall goals and objectives for the next two years.

In order to prepare for this session, you are requested to identify key issues and potential objectives that will be reviewed and discussed at the session. Please complete all sections of this questionnaire. If you need additional space, please feel free to attach additional page(s).

**Major Accomplishments**

Please list the major city accomplishments over the past two years. These accomplishments could be as large as a street project or as simple as a newly adopted city policy. The items do not need to be in any particular order.

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**Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities**

Please list specific issues, concerns, trends and opportunities that affect future city services, policies, finances or operations (for example, loss of population, major new economic development success, employer or resolving a policy question). You do not need to identify potential solutions to your concerns.

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**Significant Initiatives or Programs**

Please list any initiatives, programs or policies that you think the City should consider in the next two years (for example, downtown revitalization, updating employee job descriptions, adopting a policy on open burning, conducting an annexation study, reviewing water and sewer rates, etc.)

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**Organizational Effectiveness**

Please list several things that the Mayor/City Council and/or staff could do in the future to improve organizational effectiveness, decision-making process, teamwork and the ability to accomplish the City's stated goals and objectives.

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**RETURN OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please return this questionnaire to Stephanie Reynolds by **Monday, December 28, 2009.**