

**CITY OF MONROE  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2008**

Work Session of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Michigan held on Saturday, November 8, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. in the first floor Council conference room.

Present: Mayor Mark Worrell, Council Members, Clark, McGhee, Paisley, Conner & Molenda

Excused: Council Member Beneteau

Also Present: City Manger George Brown

Mayor Worrell convened the Council work session at approximately 8:45 a.m.

The Mayor reminded the Council that the work session was intended to allow the Council members time to review the goals and objectives they had set during sessions in January of 2008. Each Council person present expressed their opinions regarding the general and specific progress toward meeting the goals and objectives.

Council members expressed satisfaction that good and/or adequate progress was being made on the first goal listed. This is "Maximize cost containment while maintaining quality of services". The IT operations partnership with the County was cited as an example of progress with objective of intergovernmental cooperation. There was a discussion regarding identifying and pursuing more intergovernmental cooperation initiatives where they are mutually beneficial. Council members stated their satisfaction that implementation of the recommendations from the organizational assessment were being carried out. Some Council members pointed out that due to continued budget constraints, the Council has had to implement changes that went beyond the assessment's recommendations.

Council members expressed satisfaction that progress was being made on the second goal listed. This is "Address compensation and benefit programs to alleviate financially burdensome costs to the taxpayers". Members discussed the continued bargaining unit negotiations and non-union employee implementation for establishing of retiree health care benefits that included mirroring and a defined contribution plan for new hires. Council members also commented on their resolve to continue to find ways to reasonably lower tax payer costs for employee health care benefits.

Council members expressed some satisfaction that they had addressed the third goal listed, for this fiscal year. This goal is "Re-prioritize budget allocations to emphasize infrastructure improvements". The Council's decision to balance the 2008-2009 general fund operating budget and include additional funding for local street upgrades was cited as progress toward placing higher priority on infrastructure investment.

Council members expressed a need to focus more on the fourth goal listed. This goal is "Enhance economic and community development initiatives". Council members cited continued and substantial progress on the battlefield demolition as progress toward one of the objectives. They also spoke about some progress on being more aggressive with blight ordinance enforcement. Council members expressed a desire to become more involved and knowledgeable with other economic and community development activities to assist in the revitalization of the Orchard East neighborhood and commercial district. Their was a consensus that the Council should soon conduct a joint meeting with the Port Board to discuss the Port's economic development and redevelopment activities and to provide some direction regarding their expectations.

Council members expressed their view that some progress has been made on the fifth goal listed, but the additional efforts should be made. This goal is "Encourage and embrace community volunteerism". Some Council members expressed the need to provide additional training to some board and commission members and to work on recruiting interested and qualified members from the community when vacancies occur. The Hollywood blvd. landscape improvement project was mentioned as a recent example of neighborhood initiative to beautify. There was a suggestion that the City should develop certificates of recognition and other means to recognize individuals and neighborhood based groups who make an extra effort to improve the City and/or their neighborhoods. One Council member suggested that a program be developed that would result in a beautification award. The Mayor discussed his interest for including funding in future budgets to provide financing for each precinct that could be applied toward neighborhood improvement and beautification initiatives. Council members expressed support for encouragement of the formation of more neighborhood associations and volunteer efforts for civic projects.

Other items discussed included the formation of internship programs that would bring college students into City operations to learn about public services and to contribute their assistance toward providing the leg-work to support additional initiatives and service needs. There was a short discussion about the progress of the Monroe Housing Commission request to purchase some acreage of the City owned property adjacent to the Greenwood housing development. The City Manager reported that the Interim Director of Planning was in consultation with the Housing Commission Director on that request. There was a short discussion about the need to review the sign ordinance to correct conflicting language regarding sandwich board signs. There was a discussion about the problem of adequately sweeping street gutters and snow plowing with cars parked on street, overnight. Interest was expressed for developing a map that would indicate where mortgage foreclosures had occurred within the City over the past couple of years. Members expressed a desire to publicly recognize exceptional employee performance and extra efforts. There was a discussion about whether there might be a need for consideration of an expansion of Navarre Library, since it appeared that it was well used, crowded many evenings and that there at times there was a waiting period to use available computers.

The meeting concluded at approximately 12:40 p.m.

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Charles D. Evans  
City Clerk, Clerk's Office

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Mark G. Worrell  
Mayor