

CITY OF SPARKS
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP
Monday, January 30, 2006 at 8:00 a.m.

1. Call to Order

A Special City Council Meeting/Workshop was called to order by Mayor Geno Martini at 8:03 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Legislative Building, 745 4th Street, Sparks, Nevada.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Mayor Pro tem Ron Schmitt, City Clerk Deborine Dolan, Council Members John Mayer (present at 8:27 a.m.), Phillip Salerno, Geno Martini, Mike Carrigan, City Manager Shaun Carey, Acting City Attorney Tom Riley. City Attorney Chet Adams, ABSENT.

STAFF PRESENT: John Dotson, Steve Driscoll, Adam Mayberry, Randy Mellinger, Robin Pagni, Linda Patterson, and Chris Syverson.

Comments from the Public

None.

City Manager Shaun Carey provided the Council with handout detailing the costs of the 2006 New Year's Flood event and displayed a power point showing photos of the flood waters, city crews working during the flood and the damage the flood waters caused after they receded. He pointed out that there was extensive damage to reinforcements along the banks of the river and there was also extensive damage to the bike path, which remains closed. He said on the individual assistance side the costs are around \$10.6 million, based upon the 177 businesses we have been able to work with. He said there are not a lot of residences down in the flood plain, but the Apollo Mobile Home Park had about 13 homes that were affected. Under public assistance, we are at about \$832,000 in costs. He stated additional costs that have not yet been approved amount to about \$267,000 and we are holding these costs until we get the federal disaster declaration. He said this should be on the agenda for the 13th as we bring forth the resolution ending the disaster. Council asked when we could expect the Federal declaration. Mr. Carey responded the Federal declaration is pending with the President right now and it could be any time. He stated staff was hoping it would be within the next week to 10 days; but it is in a good position for approval, according to the folks the State is talking to.

3. 2005-2006 Mid-Year Budget Recap & Review of 2006-2007 Budget Calendar

Mr. Carey noted the calendar pages in the agenda packet and outlined the time line for the budget process for this year. He noted that in the past we have done departmental budget presentations on Wednesdays in March; however, based upon discussions at the December retreat, staff is not planning to do those presentations this year. He stated that the budget this year is very conservative, due to the affects of new legislation and our decision to add some new positions have placed the City in a lean position budget wise.

Mr. Carey noted that the final revenue projections are due by March 15th, which allows the Finance Department to file the tentative budget by April 14th. He stated on the 24th of April, Council is scheduled to review and consider the five year CIP, with a Council Budget Workshop scheduled for April 26th. Mr. Carey asked if the Council wanted an all-day workshop or just a half-day budget workshop. He said on May 3rd he will be presenting his budget recommendations to the council at a

workshop and on May 15, the Council will act on the City Manager Recommendations and the 16th is the required public hearing on the budget. He stated the 22nd (the last Meeting of the month), the council is scheduled to adopt the final budget.

After discussing the calendar, Mr. Carey discussed the mid-year budget status. He reported that staff has adjusted the property taxes downward as directed. He stated we originally planned to spend \$15.6 million, which now is estimated to come in at \$15.3 million. This is due to the major impacts we expect to experience from the property tax cap legislation from last year. He stated this is the reason we plan to be fiscally conservative as we go forward with the budget.

Mr. Carey stated that the latest sales tax information shows that each month we are ahead of schedule, which gives us a good financial position on the sales tax. He said on the expenditure side, we seem to be tracking real well inside all of the departments; however we have not yet utilized the City's contingency fund for the flood and if our sales tax remains strong, we may be able to not use the contingency to cover the flood. He stated the Federal reimbursement of 75% is going to be one of the keys to allowing this.

Mr. Carey stated we are in a good financial position at the mid-year and we will see the affects of the new positions that Council added at the December workshop in the next six months as some of those positions are filled.

4. Review and possible direction on 2006-2007 budget Priorities and Strategic Plan

Mr. Carey noted that each Council Member was asked to bring forth new priorities and evaluate past priorities and this year the priorities are ranked as follows:

1. Public Safety
2. Financial Stability
3. Redevelopment/Economic Growth
4. Flood Control
5. Traffic Light Coordination
6. Infrastructure
7. Special Events Funding
8. Appearance of the City
9. Citizen participation

Mr. Carey then led a discussion with the Council on what some of their thoughts were in each of these areas. He asked them to identify areas of concern and issues within the City that they might have.

1. Public Safety. We want to promote the health, safety and well-being of our residents and with this as a high priority, the status of some of our police and fire operations were reviewed as follows:

Successfully opened Fire Station No. 5 in June 2005. This fiscal year includes the full salaries for staffing the station. At mid-year we were unable to meet the phased implementation of the four-person staffing and this has been deferred for Council consideration for next year. Fire Chief Tom Clewell reported that now that the new fire station is fully staffed and operational, the response times have reduced in the Spanish Springs area. However, we have started to receive

building permit requests for new homes in the northwest corner of the City and this will once again reduce response times. He noted they were able to cover the situation by requiring residential sprinklers and they are also working on better coordination with Reno for coordinating fire services. Chief Clewell said they are conducting a Fire Station Master Plan Study to see where new fire stations will need to be built in the future. He said they are currently considering the relocation of Fire Station No. 3 to cover the new development in Copper Canyon. Chief Clewell stated they have one new need, which is the four person staffing at Fire Station No. 1. He said they want to implement this staffing one engine company at a time. He then discussed some improvements that they were able to accomplish due to receiving grants: a new security system at Fire Station No. 1 and a new breathing air compressor.

Police Chief John Dotson gave an overview of some of the issues his department is facing, stating new needs included five new entry-level police officers. This would allow them to promote one officer to Sgt. for traffic and assign a senior officer to the academy full-time and create three additional detective positions. He stated they are also requesting three records supervisor positions and three additional dispatchers. They are requesting a crime analyst position to be part of the information systems/computer support team. Chief Dotson stated the real difficulty they face is growth; with a population of over 84,000, staffing is becoming critical. He said we can't keep policing the City with 108 sworn police officers and 48 civilian employees.

City Manager Carey pointed out that we are essentially at the cap for property tax (there is a small amount that Sparks could still expend), but one of the successful measures that came out of Southern Nevada was a sales tax increase that was directed toward public safety. He said while we have held our own in terms of officers per 1,000 citizens, we are not making the types of gains that would allow us to reach the service levels for a community of our size. He stated the time is coming up where the Council could consider whether they would want to support a Washoe County version of the Clark County public safety sales tax increase. He stated the decision would have to be made by June of this year in order to get the question on the ballot. He said Reno has also had this discussion and they are looking to increase the number of their officers and the County has also indicated a desire to look at this issue. Mr. Carey noted that with the 1 million square feet of retail arriving on the Pyramid Highway in the next 12 to 18 months and another 2 million square feet likely coming right behind that, we will have additional value on our tax roles and additional revenues, but to make the kind of leap we need to make in police services, it is time Sparks looked to its partners in Reno and Washoe County and to the business community to see if there is support for an increase in sales tax. He said the thing that Sparks needs is additional officers in service (on the street and in the detective division).

Council Member Schmitt said it was his understanding that it was a foregone conclusion that this question was going on the ballot because Reno and Washoe County have already been in discussions and they are going forward with it. He said it doesn't matter what Sparks wants to do on it. He said he was concerned with the series of "robbing Peter to pay Paul" legislative acts we have been experiencing in the last 20 years in the State of Nevada... we do a ½% sales tax and within two legislative sessions we'll do the reverse of that, so all we are doing is covering up the legislative errors and mistakes in our budget. He stated that until we have some way to stop the erosion of our existing income streams, it is not a good idea to go after additional income streams.

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Council Member Mayer asked how much in sales tax are we looking at. Mr. Carey responded that a ¼ cent sales tax would mean somewhere around \$1 million to \$1.2 million for Sparks. He asked if this was public safety or just police. Mr. Carey stated it is a police bill and can go to fund public safety needs, but it is focused on officers in our case.

City Manager Carey noted that Reno is working with the Chamber to try and build some momentum on this, but we won't have the next regional meeting until the last Friday in March (the 24th) and he felt that this was a way to try to move our police service levels forward.

Council Member Mayer asked how much we had left on our tax cap. Mr. Carey responded it was about 1.69 cents, and with a penny being worth \$175,000 (as of last year), we would receive revenue of approximately \$300,000; however there is a concern about raising property taxes, because you are raising the rate, but that rate runs into the value and the 3% cap on property tax increases.

Council Member Mayer asked what strategies were planned to make the sales tax increase a successful vote. Mr. Carey stated the most effective way is to advance the issue in the private sector, probably through a blue ribbon panel of the chambers and some of the leaders in the community that could fund a well-financed question to the voters. He said the statistics speak for themselves in terms of the budget conditions and what we can do to address it. Council Member Mayer said he did not think people would vote for this until it "hurts" and he would like to see some type of preliminary survey to see which way the vote might go. Council Member Salerno said with so many people up for re-election this year, this really needs to be a push by the public. Council Member Carrigan commented that the fire question which failed was based on property taxes and he felt that sales tax was different and that people would go with it. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding whether or not the Council felt that the voters would go for the sales tax increase for public safety. Council Member Moss and Mayor Martini agreed to work on a team to explore the sales tax issue.

Council Member Schmitt said we are trying to decide between two important departments that consume over 55% of our budget but we really need to look at all departments and their percentage of budget consumption and see if we have departments that are consuming higher than the historical average and what services we are cutting due to those averages. Mr. Carey said he would look into this.

2. Financial Stability. The City Council adopted a Financial Policy last year and that policy is being followed in the preparation of this budget and as we manage the budget through the course of the year. As shown in the December retreat, we are stable through the next two-year period and we will address the third year as we prepare this budget cycle. Mr. Carey emphasized that these policies will allow the City to maintain our 10% investment into facilities and our fund balance and work toward an emergency reserve. He stated staff applies the policy first and then comes forward with anything that appears to be a new need. The discussion isn't our position today, because we are financially stable right now, but the question is our future. The last session of the Legislature hit us with the 3%/8% property tax cap and this hit Sparks particularly hard because of where we were in the assessment cycle and it is likely to be with us for quite some time. To get \$200+ thousand worth of new property tax, we need to add about \$200,000 million per year to the tax role and this tells us we have a significant problem.

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Mr. Carey stated our concern in financial stability remains with Redevelopment Area I which continues to see falling property values and the general fund is being increasingly asked to cover the costs of that program.

Council Member Carrigan said it is a mystery to him why, when you look at an 800 square foot house in Redevelopment Area I selling for \$260,000, they can say property values are falling in Area I. He said we should at least have the commercial properties assessed on a yearly basis rather than every five years; if we can't do the whole City every year. Mr. Carey stated the Assessor is working to change his assessment cycle from five years to an annual cycle like it is done in Clark County. Mr. Driscoll stated they were talking about it, but there was no commitment that it would be done. He said it really didn't matter now anyway, because even if the property is valued higher, the tax amount can only go up three percent due to AB489. Mr. Carey stated he would send off a letter to the Assessor asking where he was in the process. Council Member Mayer said we ought to look at using our one bill draft request to require a one year assessment cycle. The discussion continued regarding the discrepancy between assessed values and market values of homes in Sparks and the problem with property values and the tax cap and how it affected Sparks.

Mr. Carey summarized the four tracks that the Council wanted staff to pursue with regard to financial stability: a public information program to get information regarding property taxes out to the residents; look at legislative and legal remedies; stick to the financial policies; and remain conservative with the budget.

Council Member Carrigan stated he still did not understand why we were not seeing additional property taxes when we have been adding so much new valuation to the tax roles. A lengthy discussion ensued with various staff explaining how the Assessor valued property and what those valuations meant to the Sparks property tax figures.

3. Redevelopment/Economic Growth. Mr. Carey said staff looked at what tools we have to improve our ability to serve development. These included the Master Plan Update, the downtown zoning changes we are working on (TOD), and the commercial and industrial zoning changes. He said an issue that has recently come up is the "tool box" we need in order work with some of the owners in the old redevelopment area. He said we are finding that some of the "modern" rules we have been applying to raise the bar in the new growth parts of the City are making it difficult for some applicants to bring their projects forward. An example is that the City has one standard for development handbooks, which has a 20% open space requirement, and this causes problems if you are trying to do a handbook in the downtown because 20% may not be in our best interest because we are trying to create an urban environment with some density and the 20% requirement may not need to be an actual "green spot" but instead the investment should be in a nice streetscape or parks with art features in them. He said we need to discuss what we can do in our redevelopment area to make our "tool box" better serve some of the developers who are trying to bring projects forward because we are running into problems with the sign code, the setbacks and the open space requirements.

Assistant City Manager Randy Mellinger stated the 20% open space requirement in current handbooks is in reaction to the planned developments in the past that had no open space whatsoever and is clearly intended to create green belts and buffer zones. He stated that we adopted the zoning code in 1976 to break off from the Regional Planning Commission System,

but we adopted an old code and it doesn't meet today's needs and has not been comprehensively updated since it was adopted. He said the only mechanism we have to go to increased density for our Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is the planned development handbook and then we are faced with the open space requirement which is extremely difficult to apply to a down town high density project. Mr. Mellinger said in the interim, before we do any comprehensive changes to our zoning code, we need to look at a quick code amendment to address those issues with the planned development handbook.

Mr. Mellinger said the biggest victim of our zoning code is the older neighborhoods because a lot of those buildings were built before 1954 and they can't do anything with their properties because of the setbacks, etc. in our codes. He said we need a zoning ordinance that is performance oriented so that we don't have to worry about the setback, etc. as much, if the project is designed well and improves the neighborhood, while still meeting building and safety codes. He said one action we have already taken is to change the Special Use Permit requirement from six units up to 110, which is a huge incentive. He said that we need to get a desired live/work balance to make the Victorian Square Project work, because we can't rely on the people who just drive downtown for special events.

Council Member Salerno asked how the proposed zoning amendments would affect the Trammel Crow project. Mr. Mellinger said it would help their project, although they have met the 20%, but there are other projects where there are more constraints and Trammel Crow is working with open, empty lots, and when you are working with existing buildings and more constrained lots in the downtown area, the 20% is not always possible. He said we need to be able to look at what kind of amenities are being provided (common areas within a building and streetscape enhancements, for example). He also suggested that the zoning amendments apply only to the downtown areas.

Council Member Carrigan stated he would like to see the amendments apply within the McCarran Loop, because our Master Plan calls for infill projects within the McCarran Loop. He said he would also like to see the City Council have some discretion to make exceptions if it is a quality project.

Council Member Schmitt said we need to put the heat on the consultant to get the TOD ordinance done because we promised developers two years ago that we would have one by now. Mr. Mellinger noted that we only have two advanced planning staff and most of their time has been taken up with the Regional Planning litigation; but now that a settlement agreement has been reached, they should be able to devote more time to the TOD. City Manager Carey summed up the issues as follows: get the TOD ordinance completed; bring forward a quick set of code modifications that begin to address some of the flexibility issues that we need inside the McCarran Loop and inside the development area; look at a strategy for expanding the "tool box" in the loop to open up the area for development.

Mr. Carey stated we are currently in a unique position with a number of big projects coming on-line that will change our economic position (Copper Canyon, Kiley Ranch North and other business parks which will be built in the next 36 months). He said we need to develop some strategies that will bring a good partnership between the City and those projects and capture the economic investment that will come to Northern Nevada. Mr. Carey stated some of the tools we could use is a focused effort through EDawn to get the word out about these project and

working with the developers on their marketing. He then asked the Council for ideas on other strategies we could use. Council Member Carrigan suggested making contact with the new Lieutenant Governor's office (after the election) and let him know about our projects.

Council Member Carrigan also said we should stand firm on the amount of industrial/business that has been allotted by developers in their handbooks and not change it when a developer wants to switch it to residential. Mayor Martini said he agreed that we should not deviate from the amount of business/commercial in the handbooks. Mayor Martini also said he felt that EDawn was aware of what is planned in Sparks (Copper Canyon and Kiley Ranch) and that they are already working on getting new business for Sparks. Council Member Schmitt said it was all well and good to work with EDawn, but we don't want to leave Sparks' destiny in their hands. After further discussion, the consensus was that we need to work with EDawn so we have a say in how they work for us.

Mr. Carey noted that staff is aggressively working and negotiating with RED Development for the large project at the Marina, which will ultimately result in the type of tax increment cash flow that we intended to be created with the project so we can use the funds to pursue improvement projects along Oddie Boulevard and in Conductor Heights. He said the focus in Area I remains getting through the three phases of Victorian Square. Council Member Carrigan commented that the PIO should work on getting the word out that the reason we had to shore up the funding by \$300,000 was because of the tax cap and the devaluation of the property and not because of anything that the City did.

4. Flood Control. Staff will continue to encourage the completion of the Flood Control project for the Truckee River. This is a key year as the Corps of Engineers will finish its identification of the alternatives that we will enter the environmental impact process with and when that process is completed they will select an alternative and head toward Washington, D.C. He stated we are still aiming toward getting construction started in 2009.

Mayor Martini asked where we were with regard to the realignment of the North Truckee Drain. Mr. Carey responded the City hired a consultant and it is under design. Mayor Martini asked if we would be reimbursed for our expenses on this project. Mr. Carey said that yes, we were eligible to seek reimbursement for those improvements through the Corps of Engineers.

Council Member Mayer asked if the flood control project had a component to realign Steamboat Creek, which goes straight into the river. Mr. Carey said the Community Coalition Project largely recreates a much more stable, balanced Steamboat Creek and it will act more like a riparian stream and act completely different in the future.

5. Traffic Light Coordination. Sparks will be a regional leader for integrating transportation choices. Mr. Carey stated the broader decision is the City's investment in transportation. He stated our investment in traffic engineering at intersections is one thing; but we need to work on the capacity question and investment in capacity needs to become the priority. He stated we are using state-of-the-art equipment at intersections to coordinate traffic lights; but our problem is capacity... we need to begin to take on some critical intersection projects that will allow us to move more vehicles through the space that we have. He asked that this category be re-titled to reflect transportation in a broader sense. Mr. Carey stated that we have a great partnership with RTC, we have the WC2 in place and we are collecting impact fees and as we look at our arterials

leaving the City (Vista, Sparks, Pyramid, McCarran, Rock) they are all fixed capacity and in his opinion we need to focus on raising the capacity of these arterials by pursuing projects that will make some real impacts.

Council Member Carrigan said that with the regional impact fees that are paid to the RTC he thought capacity improvements were up to RTC and he was not sure how we convinced RTC to move our projects up on their priority list. He said that widening Vista is a priority and he felt that Disc Drive should be a through street. He said he was also tired of having the freeway access from Pyramid shut down by NDOT and he did not understand the reasoning behind the closure. He said that traffic is a big issue for Sparks, but he did not know how we could fund the improvements.

Council Member Salerno said one of the major problems is all the street closures due to construction.

Council Member Mayer suggested the priority be titled Traffic Coordination, because there were a lot of areas where there were traffic problems in Sparks. He then explained some of the hurdles that RTC had to overcome in order to provide the needed improvements in Sparks as well as other areas in the region that they were responsible for. He noted that the proposed legislation with regard to eminent domain could cause a lot of delays and extra expense for RTC in acquiring right-of-way for roadway expansion. He also cautioned that Regional Road Impact Fee credits subtracts from the funds RTC has available for improvements in other areas.

6. Infrastructure. Mr. Carey said the facility investment plan that was adopted last year is being followed and we are generating revenues which can be used to begin to go down the path of building some of the capital investments that our City needs. He said we are rapidly advancing the West End Community Center: it is in design and we will be going after \$3.12 million in bonds to add to the money we have. He said staff anticipates that the \$4 million center will be under construction in June of this year.

Mr. Carey stated that in advancing the proposal for a City Hall down town, staff is looking at pursuing \$1.3 million in bonds to advance the design of the building so that we can meet the targets that have been set for completion of that building.

He said our revenues in Redevelopment have fallen, yet we are trying to move forward with the three phases of Victorian Square. One of the phases that is critical is completing the street improvements that are necessary to open up the circulation system. Getting around the fountain was a key component of the plan the Council approved, giving access to the south. In order to advance the project, the staff is looking at the City using some of its capacity and pursuing some bonds in the amount of \$3.8 million so that construction can get underway this later this summer.

Mr. Carey said the last infrastructure concern is the new Section 18 (the Regional Golden Eagle Park), which has an overall project cost of about \$23 million. He said a lion's share of the funds for the project would come from the successful RED Development project, where they would move forward with a project on the Don Mello property and use the proceeds from the sale of that property to build replacement facilities. We would also use impact fee funds and money from the Washoe County parks bond; however, there is still a \$6 million shortfall in order to build the entire park. Mr. Carey said that this park can be built in phases; however, he provided

the Council with alternatives for building the entire park up front versus being built in phases. He said that if the RED Development project did not go forward, for whatever reason, on the Don Mello site, the \$6 million would still be very effective to build badly needed additional youth sports fields and using the impact fees, the County money and the \$6 million (in bonds) we could still have a very effective opening phase for the new ball park.

Mr. Carey stated that all these projects would be a total investment of \$1.2 million in new debt service and it represents only 4.88% of our available "C" tax, so it would be well within any of the financial policies. He said that two new things [in this infrastructure list] are a commitment to moving forward with the streetscape necessary for Victorian Square and making a choice to build Golden Eagle Park in one fell swoop.

Council Member Salerno asked what the "financial consultant/bond counsel" based their fees on. Mr. Carey stated it is a percentage of the actual transaction and they don't get paid until the bonds are sold. He said the percentage is typically 3%.

Council Member Moss asked what the time frame for the build out of Golden Eagle Park would be if we only used the impact fees, the Washoe County park money, and the proceeds from the sale of Don Mello. Mr. Carey stated we have been collecting park impact fees for ten years and we have \$3 million in the fund and it would probably be another five to ten years before we would amass enough money to complete the park if we don't do the \$6 million bond. Mr. Carey noted that we haven't built youth sports fields in a long time and they are desperately needed.

Council Member Moss asked if the \$6 million bond would have to go to the voters. Mr. Carey explained that it would not go to the voters and that under our financial plan the Council had the ability to do a certain amount of taxes under a certain percentage and we are using the "C" tax as the revenue stream for these bonds. He stated he was not sure if it would have to go to the Debt Management Commission. Acting Finance Director Joyce Farley stated that if we do the private placement of these bonds, it does not go to the Debt Management Commission; however, if we went the general obligation bond route, it would have to go to the Commission. She pointed out that if we go the general obligation route, it takes twice as long. Therefore in order for us to expedite these bonds and have the proceeds by around May 1st, we would have to do private placement. She said it was cheaper to do a private placement because there were not quite as many fees involved, it is a quicker process and the rates are about the same right now for both types of bonds.

Mr. Carey noted that the downtown infrastructure and the park projects were not in the original plan; however, this is an opportunity to move forward on these projects that currently present a challenge.

Council Member Schmitt asked if the name Golden Eagle Park could be brought to the Council for a vote. Council Member Mayer said he thought the park was supposed to be named after the guy over at Western Supply: Regvillio. Mr. Carey stated that he vaguely recalled a debate that took place in the 90's and he did not know if the intent was to name just a field or a substantial element of the park after Mr. Regvillio, but he did know that the "Golden Eagle" name went through the park naming process conducted by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

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Council Member Mayer asked for the total cost of full build-out of the Section 18 (Golden Eagle) Park. Mr. Carey responded it was \$23 million and right now our funding is about \$6 million short of that goal.

Council Member Schmitt said he had heartburn over bonding for additional money for Victorian Square, mainly because he was told it would “pay for itself” and now we are asking for another source of revenues for yet another cost. Mr. Carey stated we are aware of the costs, but we have a puzzle in that the Redevelopment Tax increment is no longer available and the amount that we can carry forward in any private transaction and get someone to develop will have a proforma on their side of the equation. However, when we adopted the three phase master plan [for Victorian Square] we were looking for the street improvements to be part of the mix. Mr. Carey then reviewed the history and plan for Victorian Square, stating the plan was developed according to the market and he also discussed, at length, the numbers behind the phasing for Victorian Square and why we needed an additional revenue stream.

7. Special Events Funding. Mr. Carey said we are in a stable perspective for maintaining what we are currently doing and it is being done from the General Fund (Farmers Market, Hometowne Christmas, Rib Cook-off and Hot August Nights). He said there has been discussion regarding bringing Cinco-de-Mayo back to Sparks and also having an “October Fest”. It was noted that Farmers Market not only paid for itself, but made money this year. Council Member Carrigan stated he wanted to continue with the policy that special events pay for themselves.

Council Member Schmitt said he was concerned about the recent rash of condo conversions in Reno and what it was going to do to our special events funding because that is strictly tied to the room-tax scenario and the more rooms that are taken out of the tax, the less is available for us. Council Member Carrigan pointed out that the room conversions were vacant hotels and that it should not affect the room tax. Council Member Schmitt said he felt we should have a policy of zero funding or a dedicated stream of funding to cover special events. Mr. Carey pointed out that there were also new hotel rooms being built.

8. Appearance of the City. Mr. Carey noted that a bus tour of the community and a workshop were held in December and asked if the Council had any additional concerns they wanted to discuss. Council Member Carrigan said the bus tour was an eye-opener for him, particularly Cygnet Circle. Mr. Mellinger noted that we currently have a very aggressive campaign going to get the code violations taken care of and the area cleaned up.
9. Citizen Participation. Mr. Carey said this was the Council’s last strategic goal. Council Member Carrigan commented that the Council Members have opened themselves up to the public, but he has only had two “coffee clatches” and he said he had no further ideas on how to grow citizen participation. Council Member Schmitt said he just came back from a conference in Ft. Lauderdale where the topic was citizen participation and he said one of the things that stuck with him was the example of a community who had a serious code enforcement problem which was solved, not by hiring more code enforcement, but by forming a citizen action plan to mobilize citizens out on their sidewalks in the evening to walk around the community to look at things and they were able to solve their community appearance and code enforcement issues by encouraging their citizens to get out into the community. He said he was sorry to see this as the number nine priority because it was his number one priority because it affects everything we do

in the City. Discussion ensued regarding various ways to get a citizen participation program going.

City Manager Carey said that for the first time last year staff introduced the concept of inviting initiatives and doing things that would grow our community. Last year, one of the things we did was the graffiti program and the funded, full-time the Arts program. He asked Mr. Mellinger to discuss ways other communities are using these initiatives to create changes in their communities. Mr. Mellinger said the first thing was to change the title from “quality of life” initiatives to “community initiatives” because “quality of life” is a very broad terminology. He said staff felt “Community Initiatives” implies more enhancements that are above and beyond what you would normally do in a community. He said some good examples are our GRIP enhancement and traffic engineering group and there are also ongoing programs that would be considered community enhancement, such as the expanded code enforcement program, the community policing program, the special events, the historic survey.

Mr. Mellinger then showed what other cities are doing, but cautioned that staff is not suggesting the Council do any of these projects and with limited funding the best we could do would be to set up some programs and then pursue funding or implementing programs that do not require funding.

Adopt-a-lot – similar to the adopt-a-street program, where a group of citizens or a family will take over a vacant lot. We don’t have this problem, but it is a good example of the types of community initiatives that build pride in the community.

City-wide beautification – we’ve had the Sparks Clean-up program but there are things that go beyond just cleaning up and it involves residents and citizens. It is a good measuring stick as to whether we really do have pride in our community. Mr. Mellinger said we do a great job as a City in maintaining what we have and the way we have our new developments designed is really outstanding, but there are still some gaps. One of the options would be establishing a lighting and landscaping district city-wide to install and maintain landscaping on major arterial streets to transform the appearance of the City.

Mr. Mellinger discussed other options, including enhanced neighborhood watch programs, community art projects and community gardens. He asked the Council for input on what they might be interested in pursuing so staff could design some programs for consideration. He noted that funding may not be possible this year, but at least it would be a start.

Council Member Moss said she supported the community art program. Council Member Carrigan said he agreed that an art program was “the way to go” but he would like to have some say in the quality of the art, because he did not want to spend \$200,000 to get “swiss cheese”. Mr. Mellinger said to be honest, if it is not obscene or unsafe, then you pretty much have to go with the art that is submitted. He said there are ways to design a program so we won’t get things that are odd, but the last thing we want to do is get the Council involved in judging the art. Mr. Mellinger then led a discussion regarding failed and successful art projects in our area.

Council Member Schmitt said he felt it was important to find out what the community wants, before we start a program, because it could fail when no one wants to be involved in it. It was

noted that what people consider important for the city will vary from age group to age group and from location to location.

Mr. Carey said that from the discussion he felt the Council was leaning toward something to do with arts and youth and on getting additional input from the community on areas where the community would be interested in starting initiatives. Mr. Carrigan suggested adding these questions to the annual community survey. Council Member Schmitt said he was still not convinced how to get community participation, but he has seen the results of community based projects in other cities. He said he would like to see a public workshop. Council Member Carrigan said he would like to see a summit with participation from each ward. Council Member Mayer said like to see new faces at the summit, not the same faces. Council Member Schmitt agreed and discussion ensued regarding how to get new faces at the suggested summit.

5. Performance review by City Council of City Manager Shaun Carey to consider the character, alleged misconduct, professional competence, or physical or mental health

Human Resources Manager Chris Syverson noted she had provided the Council with information regarding the accomplishments to date on his job performance and invited the Council to discuss his performance from July forward.

Mr. Carey said he would like to take this opportunity to let the Council know where he was at with some of the strategic goals that they set for him and to provide input, direction, and concerns that they may have, so he is better able to direct the operations of the City in a manner consistent with what they wanted to see.

Mr. Carey stated that in looking at Council relations, we need to continue to do the retreats and we need to set a date in April. He said he wanted to increase the frequency of their individual meeting so that he can do the PMI's on a more frequent basis and continue to update them. He said he is continuing to produce the City Manager's News Briefings and the Council Matters publication, and the long-range calendar is continuing to shape up. He noted that the Council received training on the Share-point, Calendar-point and Project-point tools at their December retreat.

Mr. Carey said there was a joint retreat in October, but they have not set another retreat. He asked if there was anything the Council wanted to discuss in the area of relations or communications that he can address in the future. Council Member Mayer said he was still having problems with the Calendar-point tool. He also said he felt that the joint meeting dates should be set and not moved around. Mr. Carey said he would work on continuing to develop a more effective master calendar process and he would see what he could do about setting meeting dates and then sticking to them. Council Member Carrigan agreed that the joint meeting dates should be set and then left alone and not changed just because someone can't make that date. It was Council consensus that once meeting dates are set, then it was up to the individual attendees to change their calendars to make the meetings and that the meeting date should not be changed because someone can't make it.

Mr. Carey said that in the area of relations between the City Manager's Office and the Council, the PIO, Adam Mayberry, attended a retreat last week with our senior staff and we are going to be working on refining some of our communications tools, such as the City Manager's news brief. He said he was going to turn this over to Adam and as a goal, streamline some of the

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communication tools to give the Council more information on what is going on in each of the departments. Council Member Carrigan said he would like to have a once-a-month televised question session where citizens and employee can ask questions of the Council. Other Council Members also expressed interest in this type of a program.

Inter-governmental relations – Mr. Carey said the Council has had two significant workshops on this topic and in December gave clear direction on an expanded legislative program. We are moving forward with taking steps to bring this to fruition and it appears to be on track. He said staff is continuing efforts to meet with State Legislators and we were able to do a very successful legislative breakfast as part of Hometowne Christmas. He suggested we might want to do this at other special events which would give the Council an opportunity to interact with our legislators. He said Steve is going to need some input from the Council on working with individual legislators and the Council will need to meet with Steve one-on-one on this issue.

Mr. Carey said we are continuing to pursue Federal projects and on this score he met last week with Rob Joiner and all of the local offices. He said we will be going back in the first week of February to meet with the Legislature and we will be attending the National League of Cities Congressional Conference.

Council Member Mayor asked if Rob Joiner had been appointed to the Government Affairs Office position. Mr. Carey responded that he has not; however, we are just creating the position and while he was very comfortable with Rob Joiner assuming that role and we could forgo an employment search and make it an appointed position if the Council wished to do so. He asked if the Council wanted to consider outside candidates or let Mr. Joiner assume the position. Council consensus was that Mr. Joiner would do an excellent job and should be appointed as the Government Affairs Officer for the City.

Mr. Carey then discussed the goal point summary on where we are in the strategic plan for the year and asked the Council to review the report and let him know if they had any suggestions. He then opened the floor to any questions, concerns or comments the Council may have regarding his job performance.

Council Member Mayer suggested that we hold a Cinco de Mayo event at the Marina, to see how well an event would go over in that area. Mayor Martini said staff is already working with the organizers of that event.

Council Member Carrigan said he liked the point system Mr. Carey had, because there are so many things getting done so quickly and he really appreciated it. He said he likes to see how quickly staff responds to citizen complaints. Mr. Carey agreed that Share-point is working well, and while we are able to respond quickly to some of the issues, we need to make a translation from Share-point and bring some of the issues forward for Council direction because they really go beyond just an issue... they need to be taken on as a City-wide goal.

Council Member Carrigan commented that we don't utilize our television station enough, especially since we have 24 hour programming. He said he would not mind sitting down with our State Legislators and having a "Meet The Press" or Point, Counter Point" type programs which would be fun and also informs the public regarding some of the problems we have. Council Member Salerno agreed. Mr. Mayberry then described some of the recent programming

that had been accomplished. Mayor Martini cautioned that the more we use the station, the more it cost. Mr. Mayberry said, as he understands the contract, SNCAT can give us up to 20 hours a week in labor for production costs, but he is still learning how that operates. He said he is looking to bring aboard an intern to help with that aspect, but that producing shows can be very time consuming.

Council Member Salerno said that Mr. Carey has communicated very well with him, as has the rest of the staff. He said there have been major changes, but he felt that the City Manager was doing a very good job.

Council Member Moss echoed Mr. Salerno's comments and stated that Mr. Carey has always given her the answers when she asks and is always available to her.

6. Comments from the Council and City Manger

Council Member Mayer noted that he would be in Washington D.C. from the fourth to the 8th of March and then his daughter was getting married so he would be on a cruise from the 10th through the 20th, so he would not be at the first Meeting in March. He said there were other Council Members going to Washington from the 8th to the 15th, so there probably would not be a quorum for the first meeting in March. Mr. Carey said that he would work with each council person to make sure that we held the required two meetings in March.

7. Adjournment

The workshop was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

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