



Bellevue Planning Commission

September 13, 2017

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Planning Commission Guiding Principles

STAFF CONTACT(S)

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POLICY ISSUES

Guiding Principles can't be used to direct action that is inconsistent with state and local laws and regulations and Council policy and direction. Guiding principles cannot be used to expand or change the roles and responsibilities of the Planning Commission. Guiding principles that direct the work program efforts of staff or affect the City's budget require Council's approval.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION



DIRECTION



INFORMATION ONLY



The Planning Commission will discuss the current guiding principles during this study session.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Several Planning Commissioners developed informally a set of guiding principles following the annual 2014 retreat. The principles were never fully vetted by the Planning Commission nor operationalized for use in Commission business.

The Planning Commission requested following the 2016 annual retreat that those guiding principles be brought forward and considered by the entire Commission. The guiding principles are succinct and grouped into three (3) categories: trust, communicate and deliver results. A copy of those principles is attached to this agenda memo.

Guiding Principles Definitions:

There are many definitions for 'guiding principles' and most are quite similar. Here are three (3) examples:

Any principles or precepts that guide an organization throughout its life in all circumstances, irrespective of changes in its goals, strategies, type of work, or the top management.
(BusinessDictionary.com)

[A]n idea that influences you very much when making a decision or considering a matter.

Any ideas that give an organization guidance in circumstances even if goals change and work changes. (Cambridge Dictionary)

Any ideas that give an organization guidance in circumstances even if goals change and work changes. (Black's Law Dictionary)

Examples of Guiding Principles:

Most organizations have defined guiding principles. Though aspirational, they are intended to provide a message with clear intent. The following are excerpts from larger sets of guiding principles from different organizations:

- We are committed to being responsible members of the communities in which we work. (Marcellus Shale Coalition)
- Respect-We honor the uniqueness of each individual and treat him/her equally. (Overlake Hospital)
- Corporate Social Responsibility - Human Rights – We work to understand our human rights impacts and to apply the power of technology to advance human rights. (Microsoft)
- Embrace Change - We are committed to innovate and remain relevant to meet the evolving needs of our customers and our business. (Marriott)
- All we do is guided by four core values: impact, integrity, disciplined approach and collaboration. (Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation)

Possible Approaches to for Structured Dialog on Guiding Principles:

There is no one way in which to have a dialog about guiding principles. One approach is simply a discussion about the current guiding principles, their relevancy and any changes that may be needed.

Another possible framework for guiding principles is one based on the eight (8) elements of an organization's design. Understanding how the current principles fit into this framework and noting gaps may be useful. The eight (8) elements include:

- Decisions, and how they are made. (An example of a guiding principle – We make thoughtful decisions based on the information presented in a timely manner for City Council.)
- Norms, or how people act instinctively or take action. (An example of a guiding principle – Ensure fidelity of communications that sustain trust before, during and after meetings; say what we mean and do what we say we will. [This is one of the existing guiding principles developed by the Planning Commission.])
- Motivators, or how people are compelled to perform. (An example of a guiding principle – We are motivated by our shared responsibility to provide the City the best possible recommendations.)
- Commitments, or how people are inspired to contribute. (An example of a guiding principle – We strongly value equity and strive to provide equal opportunity for the public to engage with us.)

- Information, and how the organization processes data and knowledge. (An example of a guiding principle – Meaningful and relevant information presented in a manner that educates diverse audiences simply and effectively is crucial to our success.)
- Mind sets, or how people make sense of their work. (An example of a guiding principle – The diversity of backgrounds, experiences and professions of our Commissioners enables thorough dialog and achieves powerful results.)
- Structure, or how work and responsibilities get divided. (An example of a guiding principle – The Planning Commission is an enterprise guardian of the Comprehensive Plan.)
- Networks, or how people connect beyond the lines and boxes. (An example of a guiding principle – The Planning Commission, as an institution of local government, is a partnership of City Council, Planning Commission and Staff.)

Excerpted with notations. *10 Principles of Organization Design*, Gary L. Neilson, Jaime Estupiñán, and Bhushan Sethi, Strategy+Business (on-line), March 23, 2015.

OPTIONS

1. Retain existing guiding principles.
2. Revise existing guiding principles.
3. Elect not to have guiding principles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff has recommended no one option. However, staff suggests that the Planning Commission clarify and agree upon its objectives before proceeding into an in-depth discussion of guiding principles, follow-up afterwards, if needed, to discuss how to operationalize those guidelines and bring any results to the Planning Commission's retreat scheduled November 15, 2017.

NEXT STEPS

Work as far forward to achieve the recommendations above and, if needed, continue and conclude the discussion at the next Planning Commission meeting scheduled September 27, 2017.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- A. Planning Commission Guiding Principles

PLANNING COMMISSION GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Trust

- ✓ Ensure fidelity of communications that sustain trust before, during and after meetings; say what we mean and do what we say we will.
- ✓ Listen with an open mind; appreciate the professional knowledge, skills and contributions of others.
- ✓ Ensure that there is a transparent and respectful discussion, and that comments and feedback are delivered in the spirit of trust.
- ✓ The Planning Commission values and is dependent on the wealth of knowledge that Staff hold.
- ✓ Staff respect the time and effort that the Planning Commission puts into being of service.

Communicate

- ✓ Council will provide direction to the Planning Commission via liaison or written document.
- ✓ The Planning Commission will make professional and actionable requests of Staff.
- ✓ Staff will answer data requests in a timely and professional manner; packet materials are concise, and professionally delivered.
- ✓ Challenge underlying assumptions; ensure clear understanding and encourage healthy debate to bring our best thinking forward.
- ✓ Resolve conflict in real time as it occurs and productively, without escalation.

Deliver Results

- ✓ Be constructive, look forward, and ensure constructive and goal oriented discussion.
- ✓ Seek Excellence but do not 'let the perfect be the enemy of the good'.
- ✓ Stay in the room and work things out; where necessary ensure follow-on discussions to ensure that assumptions are clarified.
- ✓ Staff will update the Planning Commission on status of recommendations the Planning Commission has made to Council. If delays occur in review or implementation it is critical for the Planning Commission to understand the rationale.
- ✓ The Planning Commission Chair or designee to report to Council with staff designee where there is potential for differences of opinion.

Source: Developed by Planning Commissioners post 2014 Retreat.