

WINSTON-SALEM CITY COUNCIL
Special Virtual Meeting
March 24, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Joines called the Special Meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and stated pursuant to the policy and procedures adopted by the City Council relative to virtual meetings, I have determined it is not feasible for the City Council and I to meet together physically and due to the Safer-At-Home order, all Council Members are participating virtually. He asked the City Clerk to call the roll.

ROLL CALL

Present: Council Member John C. Larson, Council Member Robert C. Clark, Council Member Kevin Mundy, Council Member Annette Scippio, Mayor Allen Joines, Mayor Pro Tempore Denise D. Adams, Council Member James Taylor Jr., Council Member Jeff MacIntosh, and Council Member Barbara Hanes Burke (arrived at 1:13 p.m.)

GENERAL AGENDA

Mayor Joines thanked everyone for their hard work in coordinating the meeting and gave an overview of what is expected of the day, noting this meeting is important to the Staff, as the Council provides guidance to help them prepare work programs that are in line with Council's objectives and priorities going forward. It is most important to the Citizens of the City as we work to address their concerns.

G-1. 2021 Strategic Planning Workshop.

Mr. Lee Garrity, City Manager, stated this is an exciting time noting the importance of the Strategic Plan as it gives staff guidance on where and how to move the City forward. He stated he and Scott Tesh, Performance and Accountability Director, would be conducting one on one meetings with the Mayor and City Council to ensure all priorities and concerns are understood. He introduced Scott Tesh.

Mr. Tesh introduced Michelle Ferguson from Novak Consulting Group. He noted the Novak Consulting Group was selected by the RFP process in the fall and this team was selected based on their experience in government strategic planning. He noted they were highly recommended by management staff in multiple cities and counties, such as Raleigh, Wake County, and Durham.

Michelle Ferguson stated this an exciting time and said it is important to reflect on this past year, but focus on the future years and what the priorities are going forward. She introduced Kelsey Engelking, Consultant, and Julie Gieseke Graphic Facilitator.

Council Member Barbara Hanes Burke arrived at 1:13 p.m.

Ms. Ferguson went over the Agenda and invited the Mayor and Members of Council to introduce themselves and share their expectations regarding the Strategic Plan.

Mayor Joines stated he has a very high level of expectation of developing a comprehensive, exciting, and forward-looking Strategic Plan.

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Mayor Pro Tempore Adams stated her expectations are to have a couple of successful items that will render positive results utilizing the input from the Citizens.

Council Member Larson noted that Southern Living just classified Winston-Salem as one of the top ten progressive Cities in the country and wants Winston-Salem to be that in the next ten years.

Council Member Clark stated there are a lot of goals but there should be a way to quantify or define goals to help guide how to implement them.

Council Member Mundy stated this is an opportunity to look to the future to see what can be accomplished.

Council Member Scippio stated her expectations are to be thoughtful and creative in ideas and find a way to make Winston-Salem a unique City that engages every aspect of the community, by utilizing and maximizing different resources.

Council Member Taylor stated he is proud that he is a native to Winston-Salem and was reared in the district he now serves. His goal is to receive input from the citizens, galvanize input from the Council and use that information to provide productivity, and continue to move the City of Winston-Salem forward.

Council Member MacIntosh stated his expectation is to have a better understanding of priorities of his fellow Council Members, especially the new ones. He stated he is confident in the Council producing a Strategic Plan that would move the City forward.

Council Member Burke stated her expectation for the strategic planning session is to share some ideas regarding what the priorities and needs are of the City and to develop a comprehensive strategic focus that will have the greatest impact of the needs of the citizens.

Ms. Ferguson asked the Mayor and City Council to discuss how the pandemic has affected their view of their role and discuss interactions with each other, City staff, and the community. She also asked them to share reflections of the past year.

Mayor Pro Tempore Adams shared that at first, her role was to work with staff and business partners to help the City. This has drastically changed to dealing with COVID, equity, social justice, no jobs, housing, homelessness, and loosing small businesses, as well as learning how to best manage those issues.

Council Member MacIntosh stated he has been more aware of how the public views federal, state, and local governments, and what the roles are of each. Communications have been an issue, noting that sound bites and Facebook post are not the traditional way, but it seems to be the best way in keeping the public informed.

Council Member Larson stated there a lot of people staying home with a lot on their minds, such as job loss and education. He is receiving a lot of calls regarding issues that are not within his role. Directing citizens to the right resources has been a challenge.

Mayor Joines stated his role has not changed but has tried to balance between health and safety for our Citizens while being conscientious of the impact of COVID on small businesses and restaurants.

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Council Member Scippio said she is receiving more phone calls from citizens regarding different issues and it has been a challenge to direct them to the right resources. She shared it has been difficult for residents that do not have smart phones or digital resources, and having to be more creative in communications to those residents.

Council Member Clark stated his role has not changed, but the to do list has changed. He noted that his to do list has many items on it that he does not have influence over. He said with people being vaccinated, there seems to be hope at the end.

Council Member Mundy shared that as a new Council Member learning what his role is, it has been difficult during the pandemic. He said people have true emergencies, such as losing jobs and losing their home, and navigating them to proper resources has been challenging.

Council Member Taylor stated he likes to meet with the citizens in person and the pandemic has made that extremely difficult.

Council Member Burke said she agrees with everything that has been stated. She stated as an Elected Official, it is important to her to meet her constituents where they are so she could help meet those needs. She noted that the issues of her constituents have not changed but have amplified and created new issues since the pandemic.

Mr. Tesh provided the Strategic Plan Process Overview presentation.

Ms. Ferguson stated there would be a 15-minute break and that the meeting would reconvene at 2:25 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 2:26 p.m.

Mr. Tesh provided the 2020 Resident Satisfaction Survey Overview, noting the survey was performed by a third party and there were over 1,000 responses.

A thorough discussion ensued regarding Resident Survey.

Council Member MacIntosh requested information of actual violent crime stats.

Scott Tesh noted that maintenance of City streets throughout the City is a big priority for the residents.

In response to Council Member Scippio, Mr. Tesh stated he would provide information about specific stormwater concerns.

In response to Council Member Mundy, Mr. Tesh stated he would provide Council with the information by Ward.

Mr. Tesh then stated Ms. Ferguson would present the Community Input and Focus Group Summary.

Ms. Ferguson provided some logistics of the focus groups and explained the different components of the group.

She highlighted some key themes regarding the Local Business/Economy, Local Non-Profit, Local Institutions, Neighborhood and Community Leaders, and the Open Community Focus Groups.

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The Mayor and City Council discussed key themes that were mentioned throughout the groups such as affordable housing, public safety, improving the digital divide, improving the economy and community engagement.

In response to Ms. Ferguson's questions regarding what is true today and what will be true in ten years for Winston-Salem, several Council members mentioned that today Winston-Salem is an excellent place to work and raise a family, as well as a start a business. Ten years from now the Mayor and Council Members stated they hoped for reduction in poverty, better racial equality, to have economic equity, and more affordable housing.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.