

MINUTES OF THE DAVIS CITY COUNCIL
Special Meeting of February 9, 2024

The City Council of the City of Davis met in special meeting session beginning at 1:06 p.m. in the Veterans Memorial Center Club Room, 203 East 14th Street, Davis, California. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Josh Chapman.

Roll Call: Councilmembers Present: Will Arnold, Donna Neville, Gloria Partida, Babu Vaitla, Josh Chapman

Councilmembers Absent: None

Other Officers Present: City Manager Michael Webb, City Attorney Inder Khalsa, City Clerk Zoe Mirabile

Approval of Agenda W. Arnold moved, seconded by G. Partida, to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments Alan Hirsch: Commission reform—believe council subcommittee has good motives. Need to come together to build consensus. Challenge is how to change processes to get better solutions.

Workshop: City Council Goal Setting Retreat Bill Mueller and Jerry Azevedo of ICS Consulting facilitated City Council discussion regarding priority focus areas. Meeting framework:

1. City Manager report on city strengths and accomplishments, challenges, and opportunities.
2. City Council discussion of individual interests, priorities, and perspectives.
3. City Council consideration of focus areas, required resources and conditions, and strategies for success.
4. City Council discussion of individual interests and ideas related to the General Plan Update process.

City Strengths & Accomplishments, Challenges & Opportunities City Manager's Perspective on State of the City:

- High level of accomplishment toward goals despite challenges and emergencies. Goals largely implemented by a small subset of staff, approximately 10%. Daily operations run smoothly, approximately 90% of staff.
- Accomplishments include: Healthy Davis Together, Reimagining Public Safety, Social Services & Housing Department, Respite Center, Valley Clean Energy establishment and self-sustaining, transition to 2 year budget, transition to district elections, investments in roads/path/infrastructure, using technology and data-driven analysis to inform policy and enhance sustainability and customer services, strategic plans including Downtown Plan, Urban Forest Management Plan, Climate Action Adaptation Plan

(CAAP), Housing Element, EV Charging and Fleet plan, initiated Parks Needs Assessment and Master Plan Update and Homeless Services Master Plan.

- Strengths: Engaged community with high expectations, world class university, ingenuity/progressive, committed and collaborative council, dedicated, persevering and professional staff, economic niches, property value stability, and responsible fiscal management.
- Challenges and threats: Resource constraints, outside influences, labor market, lack of diversified revenue base, land supply constraints, housing pricing/affordability, legal environment constrains, gaps in mental health services, growing unhoused crisis, and needed infrastructure investment.
- Opportunities: Property owner investment, economic development, partnerships to serve unhoused and provide mental health services, further affordable housing investments, state policies supportive of housing, grants, DEIB programs, investment in staff training and retention, and investment in facilities.
- Future focus areas: Revenue generation, economic development, General Plan update, implement strategic plans, gaps in mental health services, affordable housing policies/programs, grants, and partnerships.

B. Vaitla: Does the city have adequate staff resources? Would increasing staff resources allow to keep up with increased expectations?

M. Webb: Depends upon level of service and implementation. Approximately 10-15% more staffing needed to maintain status quo. Meeting increased expectations would depend on level of intensity of the projects or level of service.

B. Mueller: Other communities do not have the same scrutiny from their residents. Be careful with benchmarking services.

B. Vaitla: Do staff constraints have effect on morale?

M. Webb: Constant stressor. High levels of burnout, stress, and anxiety.

Director of Public Works Engineering & Transportation Dianna Jensen: Constantly in reactionary mode. No time to be thoughtful. Concern for quality.

Director of Social Services & Housing Dana Bailey: New department. Working with high profile topics and engaged citizenry.

Tasks are difficult to solve, legal constraints. See potential. Need to put parameters around community interests/projects, etc.

Finance Director Elena Adair: Work is behind, have to decline vacation requests.

Director of Public Works Utilities & Operations Stan Gryzcko: Even with assistance from consulting services—staff still has to manage contract. Have the most buy-in from a dedicated internal team. Helpful to use consultants to evaluate and render advice.

Parks and Community Services Director Deanne Machado: Full time staff come to city every day, become familiar with community, and understand needs and culture.

Human Resources Director Chris Bensch: High turnover rate. New MOU contracts have been a big help in morale and recruitment. Changing demographics in the workforce. Money is not everything in employee satisfaction.

Fire Chief Joe Tenney: Challenges with keeping minimum staffing levels. Increased call volume, less mutual aid available. Missing mid-level management and administrative support.

Police Chief Darren Pytel: Constant vacancies, lack of applicants. Fewer police officers and additional state and procedural requirements. Officers are wary of public scrutiny, will choose to get hurt on the job instead of use tools available. Overtime is a daily occurrence. Lack of personnel to meet status quo. Lack basic technology, tools and equipment used by modern day law enforcement.

W. Arnold: Public perception not recognize value of staff.

B. Vaitla: Real tensions between council, staff, and community. Figure out how to bring tensions to the surface, experiment with solutions.

City Council Discussion of Individual Interests, Priorities, and Perspectives

B. Mueller: Summarized feedback from individual councilmember interviews:

- Biggest challenges: Housing, unsheltered population, and lack of revenue.
- Biggest opportunities: Adding housing, unsheltered, climate action, downtown revitalization, economic development, and UC Davis.
- High marks for impact: CAAP, safe & equitable community, city services, and vibrant neighborhoods.

- Lower marks for impact: Climate action, housing, business formation & growth, downtown revitalization, and revenue development.
- Efforts to assist unhoused rated in the middle, more to do.
- Issues that keep the council up at night: Unhoused and mental health community-wide, housing and affordability, infrastructure funding, and school enrollment figures.

B. Vaitla: Mental health includes diagnosed and undiagnosed, depression, anxiety, stress, and social isolation of seniors.

G. Partida: Quality of life is the purview of the city. Parks & Recreation touches all lives in the community, recreation services alleviate stress, and serve seniors.

W. Arnold: Some issues are state or nation-wide, homelessness, and housing unaffordability. Other challenges/opportunities unique to Davis—housing availability, and school enrollment.

D. Neville: Cities can do creative things to promote mental wellness. City doesn't always do self-promotion well enough. Many community members don't know what is going on in city organization. Need to find ways to communicate to community.

B. Mueller: Communication is a tool, not a goal. Mechanics. More that can be done to get the word out. Council is closely aligned within a very narrow band. Also a lot of alignment with council and management staff.

City Council recessed at 3:07 p.m. and reconvened at 3:24 p.m.

City Council Consideration of Focus Areas, Required Resources and Conditions, and Strategies for Success

Proposed goal setting framework. Different nature of goals: Timebound vs perpetual.

Leadership initiatives (achievable/time-bound)

- Ensuring Fiscal Resilience
- Climate Resilient City
- Helping the Unhoused
- Supporting Local Business Growth
- Launching an Inclusive General Plan Update

High quality services (never ending)

- Maintaining a Safe and Equitable Community
- Funding, Maintaining, and Improving Infrastructure
- Increasing Housing Availability and Affordability
- Supporting Neighborhood Quality of Life

- Investing in a Vibrant and Activated Downtown
- Keeping Close Connections with Institutions and Jurisdictions Inside and Outside the County

B. Vaitla: Should add diagnostic of mental health issues to list.

Following discussion, proposed objectives categorized as follows:

1. Striving for Fiscal Resilience
2. Strengthening Climate Resilience
3. Shoring Up the Housing Continuum
4. Improving Social Services for Vulnerable Populations
5. Maintaining High Quality Infrastructure and Services
6. Stepping Up Economic Development Activities

City Council recessed at 5:43 p.m. and reconvened at 5:59 p.m.

City Council discussion of individual interests and ideas related to the General Plan (GP) Update process

M. Webb: Seeking feedback on topic areas: depth of GP update, time for adoption, budget, community engagement, council engagement, staff involvement, and consultant.

B. Vaitla: Community engagement track, commission lead, overseen by consultant. Allow commissions to take leadership role. Staff are experts in these areas. Interested in staff track, gather information on vision. Interested in council subcommittee related to community engagement and another focused on staff feedback. Iterative process via council check-ins. Course correct throughout.

G. Partida: Interested in council check-ins throughout process. Interested in feedback from community members that have not been engaged before. Similar process to consultant meetings prior to the formation of the Police Accountability Commission.

W. Arnold: Engage broad swath of community and make concerted effort to reach members not usually involved.

M. Webb: Existing GP has 21 elements, 8 are required by state. Process took 6+ years. Minimum time to adopt a GP is 2 years, including Environmental Impact Report, however, 3 years is more realistic. Last GP update process included 215 people on 14 committees and years of meetings. Considerable resources were dedicated by consultant and staff. Typical cost is \$1-1.5 million. Currently have \$800,000 set aside for GP update. Measure J/R/D can play a factor. If need election, additional time and cost.

D. Neville: Want to understand requirements of GP and be hands on. Have full community engagement. Want frequent updates, strong communication. Suggest starting by going through existing plan. Have staff advise council on what has changed, where we can integrate CAAP and other plans, and what is still useful. Planning Commission has also asked for training on GP. Environmental Justice Element—stand alone, integrated, or hybrid options. Prefer hybrid.

G. Partida: Support hands on approach, reviewing current plan for what is/is not relevant. 21 sections is too many, doesn't focus vision. Focus on 8 that are required and council discretion to add other elements. Community engagement should include commissions. Consultants help with community engagement.

B. Vaitla: Support staff identifying what is salvageable, check for consistency, see what else needs to be done. Target 2 years. Design process with 2 years as goal. Community engagement—restructure commissions, strengthen them to lead on community engagement process with a specific focus to make sure underheard communities are heard. Structure around required elements, maybe a few more. Structure commissions as public facing engagement. Solicit most knowledgeable to commissions. Can think about forming steering committee made up of 1 member from each commission.

W. Arnold: First step is review current. Support using commissions as community engagement. Restructure commission focus. Support periodic check-ins. Narrow scope of GP to what is required, maybe a little more if rise to importance. Support aggressive timeline. Could have goal of 2 years, and achieve 3.

M. Webb: Council consensus regarding education for GP 101.

J. Chapman: Present to council, Planning Commission, and all commissions involved in the process. Support empowering commissions to engage the community, aggressive timeline, frequent check-ins, support 2 subcommittees.

B. Vaitla: Leverage staff knowledge and efforts for long term visioning.

M. Webb: Can create opportunities for staff to provide professional input.

Community Development Director Sherri Metzker: Suggest use consultant as extension of staff. Iterative process. Key is to make sure there are constant check-in points during the update. All departments need to be involved.

M. Webb: Council consensus—Desire/need to assess current GP, what is good, what needs updating, what can be eliminated. Focus on required elements, some room for flexibility based on local needs/priorities. Regular check-ins with council, 2 prong council subcommittee. Alignment with new commission structures as the mechanism for engagement and feedback.

B. Vaitla: Consultant to guide commissions in outreach. Hold focus community sessions. Schools sites, churches, etc.

M. Webb: To be supplemented by additional community outreach and engagement.

D. Neville: Commissions going out into the community.

M. Webb: Council consensus interest in creating opportunities for staff involvement in development of plan. Follow an aggressive timeline.

B. Vaitla: Interested in Climate & Environmental Justice Elements.

W. Arnold: Support consultant role to work as extension of staff with direction by staff.

M. Webb: Bulk of work will be done by consultant with staff input.

B. Mueller: Will take input from session. Goal document will return to Council for discussion and feedback, then final approval. Council can follow that with discussion regarding prioritizing and tradeoffs.

Adjournment Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Zoe Mirabile
City Clerk