



METRO COUNCIL RETREAT

Meeting Summary

Jan. 24, 2012

Metro Regional Center, Room 501

Councilors Present: Council President Tom Hughes and Councilors Rex Burkholder, Carl Hosticka, Carlotta Collette, Kathryn Harrington, Barbara Roberts and Shirley Craddick

Councilors Excused: None

Staff/Guests Present: Martha Bennett, Dan Cooper, Alison Kean Campbell, Andy Shaw, Scott Robinson, Margo Norton, Kelsey Newell, Jim Desmond, Kathleen Brennan-Hunter, Janet Bebb, Justin Patterson, Nikolai Ursin and Mary Anne Cassin

Ms. Martha Bennett of Metro convened the retreat at 3:31 p.m.

Mr. Jim Desmond of Metro presented Councilor Carlotta Collette with Metro's *2010 LiveCom Award*. The glass award, presented to Councilor Collette and staff in 2010, was unfortunately damaged during travel. Metro, in an attempt to be more sustainable, commissioned a local artist to recreate the award using the broken pieces.

1. REVIEW PREVIOUS RETREAT HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Bennett stated that the Metro Council is scheduled for an additional retreat on Feb. 21, 2012 to wrap-up their Dec. 13 discussion on the Planning and Development Department programs, and to begin the initial FY 2012-13 budget discussion.

2. NATURAL AREA PORTFOLIO PROJECT: NEXT STEPS

Ms. Bennett, Mr. Desmond, and Ms. Mary Anne Cassin of Metro, led the Council in a discussion around potential funding options for Metro's natural areas. In November 2011, Metro released the report *Metro's Portfolio of Natural Areas, Parks and Trails: Opportunities and Challenges* which detailed the current state of Metro's nearly 15,000 acres of publically-owned natural areas and parkland. As Metro's portfolio continues to grow – thanks in large part to the voter-approved 1995 and 2006 bond measures – so does the need to provide resources to maintain what the region has acquired. The need for on-going funding for stewardship of the public's investments in natural areas has been a long standing, identified need.

Mr. Desmond and Ms. Cassin stated that after researching different potential funding mechanisms, staff recommend the Metro Council approve a work program for consideration of a small (less than \$0.10/1,000) 5-year levy property tax dedicated to maintaining Metro's natural areas and parks. The levy could be placed on the May 2013 ballot and, if successful, could provide funding as early as FY 2013-14. Staff briefly overviewed the proposed legislative process and public process timelines for March 2012 to May 2013; the proposed measure would follow a similar format to that of the 2006 bond measure. Highlights included public opinion polling, establishing an advisory committee, and implementing a public involvement strategy. Additionally, staff noted that the

project would have several key check points with the Council to allow course correction or termination of the project if desired. Other researched funding mechanisms included a restaurant tax, utility tax, or excise tax. None of these funding mechanisms were recommended by staff at this time.

Council discussion included:

- The need for a sustainable funding source for maintenance and operation of Metro's natural areas and parks;
- Potential impacts caused by property tax compression;
- Other potential ballot measures and elections in 2012 and 2013;
- Recommendation that economic development be added to the seven possible topics areas;
- The importance of polling the public prior to establishing an advisory committee;
- Some councilors requested additional information on the potential opportunities and challenges of the other researched funding mechanisms;
- Possible ballot measure partners, supporters, and opponents; and
- The importance of messaging. Councilors emphasized the need to communicate the regional outcomes produced from the levy versus the administrative impacts Metro will face without funding. Members expressed that the measure's messaging should focus on protecting the public's prior investments in natural areas.

3. SUMMARY, Q&A, NEXT STEPS

This agenda item was not discussed.

4. ADJOURN

Seeing no further discussion, the meeting concluded at 4:40 p.m.

Prepared by,



Kelsey Newell, Regional Engagement Coordinator

ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF JAN. 24, 2012

There were no meeting materials distributed at this meeting.