



Richland County Council
STRATEGIC PLANNING AD HOC COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 5, 2022 – 3:00 PM
Council Chambers

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Jessica Mackey Chair; Paul Livingston and Chakisse Newton

OTHERS PRESENT: Bill Malinowski, Derrek Pugh, Gretchen Barron, Overture Walker, Michelle Onley, Anette Kirylo, Tamar Black, Leonardo Brown, Ashiya Myers, Patrick Wright, Abhi Deshpande, Brittney Hoyle-Terry, Angela Weathersby, Kyle Holsclaw, Justin Landy, Randy Pruitt, Stacey Hamm, Jennifer Wladischkin, Steven Gaither, Dwight Hanna, Zachary Cavanaugh, Dale Welch and Aric Jensen

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairwoman Jessica Mackey called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**
 - a. **December 14, 2021** – Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to approve the minutes as distributed.
In Favor: Livingston, Mackey and Newton
The vote in favor was unanimous.
3. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA** – Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to adopt the agenda as published.
In Favor: Livingston, Mackey and Newton
The vote in favor was unanimous.
4. **ELECTION OF CHAIR** – Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to nominate Ms. Mackey for the position of Chair.
In Favor: Livingston, Mackey and Newton
The vote in favor was unanimous.

5. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

- a. **Strategic Planning Work Shop (Draft) – Goals** – Ms. Mackey stated the strategic plan is a document we have worked on for several months. Overall she is pleased with the draft, and wants to go over the goals in the document.

Ms. Melanie Varghess, with Baker Tilly, stated in the plan you can find the goals and the initiatives determined to support those goals. They further defined a proposed owner in order to make sure accountability is accounted for within the strategic plan. There is a proposed timeline and sample metric to ensure the plan is implemented. They would like feedback on the priorities in terms of initiatives.

Ms. Lori Thomas, Assistant County Administrator, stated the first goal, “Fostering Good Governance”, is broad, and much of the first couple objectives will be guided by the other goals. Goals 2-6 are items the departments felt were important. Some you will find are recurring, but it will memorialize it more than anything.

Ms. Mackey stated she wanted to go through each goal to get a consensus and allow for input. She noted we heard several Councilmembers state they wanted to “foster good governance” and it’s a true initiative they wanted to take on as a priority. Each of the objectives talk about creating a framework for good governance, creating a strategic plan, holding ourselves accountable, and making sure we follow-up on all the initiatives before us.

Goal Objective	Initiative	Proposed Owner	Timeline/Metrics
Objective 1.1 – Develop realistic and achievable goals		County Staff/Dept. Directors, County Administrator	6-12 months Metrics: Year-end Strategic Goals Review
Objective 1.2 – Create a shared vision with agreement by County leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct annual/bi-annual meeting between County employees to share ideas and calibrate shared mission 	Dept. Directors, Administration, County Council	Upon above from Council 6-12 months Metrics – Strategic plan for review and implementation

Ms. Mackey stated at the end of this we want to be able to look back and say we have identified realistic goals for all the tasks we have set for ourselves. She inquired if there is a recommended framework for the meetings between County employees.

Ms. Thomas responded, once the plan is adopted by the body, we could explore multiple venues, such as Zoom, or host the meetings in the departments. The ultimate goal is to talk to each department, and each employee to ensure they are aware we have these overarching goals, and the vision and mission of Council.

Mr. Brown, County Administrator, stated this would be similar to what he did prior to the pandemic where he went to each departments and spoke with administration, supervisors and non-supervisory employees. The idea was to communicate we are all in this together, from the top to bottom, bottom to top. It is a unified approach, similar to what we did with the HR IMPACT survey, when we could not go department to department. We had meetings in Chambers, and virtually, and spoke regarding what we were trying to accomplish. The input received from these meetings was what was going to drive how we make our decision. He noted this would be a reflection of that type of process. If staff stated this process is not the best method, we would modify it quarterly because we are seeking unified communications.

Mr. Livingston noted the timeline/metrics is more of a timeframe vs. a timeline. He inquired if we are going to look at that in terms of progression, instead of looking back in 12 months.

Mr. Brown stated this would be a living process, and we will look to adapt to what makes sense for Richland County.

Ms. Newton stated, with Objective 1.2 – *Create a shared vision with agreement by County Leadership*, some of it understanding a vision, but part of it is culture change, and getting people to embrace what we are doing. (i.e. Moving from understanding, to embracing, to empowerment).

Ms. Mackey inquired about the intent or goals when we have these meeting. Would a report or synopsis be brought to the committee or Council so we are aware of the feedback?

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative. He noted there would be documented communications to go back and improve upon.

Ms. Newton stated it would be great to have a feedback mechanism where the employee feels comfortable sharing suggestions and feedback, which would increase staff’s ability to communicate thoughts, desires, concerns and ideas.

Goal Objective	Initiative	Proposed Owner	Timeline/Metrics
Objective 1.3 – Establish metrics for accountability in implementing the strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish schedules to review goals and assign accountable staff members Routinely collect documentation among departments to measure strategic plan objective progress and use to generate “County wins” 	County Council, Dept. Directors, County Administration	0-6 months Metrics: strategic plan for review and implementation

Ms. Mackey stated her understanding is that Council needs to get feedback on how departments and staff should be tracking goals and accountability to share with the public, so they can see the results of the strategic plan and initiatives set forth. She would want, at the minimum, to do it on a quarterly basis, even if everything was not complete, but to provide an update on whether a task has begun and/or if there is a problem that came along and needs to be reevaluated.

Ms. Barron stated along with the tracking, the project we are working on should be specifically identified.

Ms. Newton inquired how we might incorporate some of these objectives and actions into our plans for performance reviews, as it tracks progress. It also is a mechanism to reward performance toward those goals long-term.

Goal Objective	Initiative	Proposed Owner	Timeline/Metrics
Objective 1.4 – Reevaluate strategic plan and adjust as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a reevaluation process for the strategic processes including status checks Informal review process of the strategic plan for when adjustments can be made 	County Administration, All Departments	12-18 months Metrics: Activities to review and document progress

Ms. Mackey stated this objective was somewhat included in Objective 1.3. When we started the process we talked about the strategic plan being a document that would be updated overall and develop a new plan, and be able to accomplish many of the things we set forth. We need to reevaluate where we are as a whole and develop a new plan. She noted she did not see that spelled out in the document.

Mr. Livingston inquired, once the plan is completed, if the next step would be to reevaluate the plan in 6 months to a year.

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative. He stated they were hoping to have this be a part of how we operate. It would be a part of our budgeting process, which is an annual process. Looking at the strategic plan, and making sure we are going in the direction, with some measurable process along the way, to ensure we did not deviate from the process at the end of 3 years.

Ms. Mackey inquired if moving forward the goal would be we reevaluate this plan with the budget process for FY23-24.

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative. It will be reflected in this budget and we will be able to give feedback. We will continue to track the process to develop a better and more defined process.

Ms. Mackey inquired, looking at a timeline, are we saying we will look at this annually in Q1.

Mr. Brown responded Q1 would be July – September for us. Going into the Council Retreat in January, Council would have already made some decisions. Staff will be receiving feedback, so when we get to the Retreat we will be more in the refining process. It would be Planning → Activity → Implementation.

Ms. Newton acknowledged in Objective 6.6 it refers to reporting dashboards.

Goal Objective	Initiative	Proposed Owner	Timeline/Metrics
Objective 1.5 – Collaborate with other governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish best practices using peer-to-peer neighbors, like entities and related professional associations to measure achievement of best practices via workshops, fairs and other constructive events. • Build relationships with non-profit governmental organizations across all departments to determine points of parity 	Mainly Richland County Economic Development Office (RCEDO), Utilities Director, Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC), Government Community Services (GSC) Division Manager, All Department Directors	12-18 months Metrics: Increase # of scheduled events, workshops with Govt. organizations/associations. Increase # of established relationships with Govt. organizations/associations.

Mr. Brown stated one thing they heard Council mention, and they have tried to do is work with partners who have similar work, community engagement that would impact each other. In addition, to work with jurisdictions we feel reflect Council’s vision for what the County should look like, and our internal desire to be recognized as a high performing government. Utilizing the relationships to help take advantage of things that were already accomplished and we want to do. Also, to work with them to accomplish things we could not do on our own, or do as well if we had not partnered with someone else.

Mr. Livingston stated County Council should be listed under “Accountability/Ownership” as they play a major role in fostering good governance.

Ms. Newton stated she thought when we talked about this we discussed collaboration with not just staff, but governmental collaboration among elected officials. To that point, a 3rd bullet point stating “Creating Opportunities for County Council” to build and deepen relationships with other governments, municipalities, etc.

Ms. Mackey inquired if staff had a starting point for “increased number of established relationships with Government organizations/associations” and how it would be measured.

Ms. Thomas stated after the strategic plan is adopted, we would be able to go back and determines, with the departments, the actual metrics should be.

Mr. Brown stated some of the metrics were just getting started. There is a baseline that needs to be established. We can make a determination, as a group, whether this year would be the baseline.

Ms. Mackey inquired if anyone felt there was anything missing from goal #1.

Ms. Newton stated she felt good, but they would have to review the timelines and timeframes.

Goal 2 – Invest in Economic Development

Goal Objective	Initiative	Proposed Owner	Timeline/Metrics
Objective 2.1 – Create high paying jobs from planning growth and strategic economic development projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize a workforce symposium for workforce entities supported by the County, involving a select group of the 10 to 20 of the most effective workforce organizations • Evaluate the feasibility of a culinary school at Columbia Mall to implement a 2-year degree program benefitting workforce entry for unemployed and underemployed residents. • Implement and execute Economic Development Department Strategic Plan 	Mainly Richland County Economic Development Office (RCEDO), County Administration, All Departments	12 months – 3 years Metrics: Increase # of jobs and investment dollars

Ms. Newton stated she supports the goal and supports creating high paying jobs. She felt the plan left out the economic investment in the area in general. She noted those ideas went together, but are worth mentioning separately at times because you may have large investments that do not create new jobs, but they create new opportunities or jobs that are not tracked. The wording “*Evaluate the feasibility of a culinary school at Columbia Mall*” was limiting and inquired if the goal could be broader.

Ms. Mackey agreed they are all interested in evaluating the culinary school option, and seeing what it looks like, whether it be at Columbia Mall or a partnership in another form. She noted the Economic Development Department already developed a plan they are working towards. She wants Council to look at that plan to ensure their goals are not in conflict with the Economic Development Department. She inquired if there was any evaluation of the first initiative.

Mr. Brown responded he did not recall a workforce symposium with the Economic Strategic Plan, but it is something that could be evaluated.

Ms. Mackey inquired if Goal #2 was shared with the Economic Development Department, and did they offer feedback.

Mr. Brown responded the information was shared, but they has not been any feedback.

Goal Objective	Initiative	Proposed Owner	Timeline/Metrics
Objective 2.2 – Develop more shopping and amenity options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with the Community Development Division to find and support growth opportunities throughout the County • Explore implementing retail recruitment programs designed and run by the County through Community Development Division partnerships • Implement annual schedule for review of SLBE and MBE lists for accuracy • Bi-annually review and update business license fee schedule • Bi-annually review Comprehensive Plan • Annually update Land Development Code 	Mainly Richland County Economic Development Office (RCEDO), Office of Small Business Opportunity (OSBO), Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC)	12 months – 3 years Metrics: Increase New mixed-use development

Ms. Newton stated she remembers a conversation around quality of life and enjoyment that included shopping and amenities. She would have to think about other things that fall into the quality of life area that are not represented. For example, recreation. She noted, as they look at bi-annually reviewing the Comprehensive Plan, and annually updating the Land Development Code, this area needs to be fleshed out a little more. In addition, the Planning Department was not listed as an accountable party, and they should be included.

Ms. Mackey stated, during the Retreat, the idea was to work with community development to look at façade grant opportunities, developing an initiative where district identifies a retail shop or commercial business that could use a facelift, and looking at ways to help small businesses/owners and entrepreneurship. She did not recall tying in the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code.

Mr. Livingston stated the focus was primarily focused on looking at things from a business perspective. Whereas Ms. Newton is focused more on a service perspective. He noted the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development are in this goal because they help create opportunities for the businesses and generate revenue.

Ms. Newton noted, in the world of economic development, retail is a small portion, and recreation is an untapped resource in Richland County and a driver of economic development.

Ms. Mackey stated she agreed with recreation. She requested Ms. Newton to look at the remaining goals to determine where recreation can be added. In addition, she requested staff to determine if the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code should be included in Goal #2. She noted the metrics did not seem to apply to the initiative.

Goal Objective	Initiative	Proposed Owner	Timeline/Metrics
Objective 2.3 – Promote and support a regional and state Economic Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage private sector engagement with Economic Development (i.e. public/private partnership structure for Economic Development • Create an economic development marketing campaign for increased economic engagement • Explore opportunities for additional collaboration with Economic Development and other government organizations 	Mainly Richland County Economic Development Office (RCEDO)	6 – 12 months Metrics: Measurable Increased Collaboration

Mr. Livingston stated Council should be listed under Accountability/Ownership, as it cannot be done without Council.

Ms. Mackey inquired if Objective 2.3 is already a part of the Economic Development Strategic Plan. If so, she would like to see their reports and/or tracking as we look at metrics.

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Newton stated, at the Retreat, we acknowledged a Regional Economic Development Team already existed, as well as the structures, and the County already participating within those structures. She noted she does not know that this should be a goal. We could take the initiatives and put them in the general economic development.

Ms. Mackey requested at the next meeting any updates be included, as well as the Economic Development Office’s feedback on Goal #2.

6. **ADJOURNMENT** – Mr. Livingston moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to adjourn.

In Favor: Livingston, Mackey and Newton

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:55 PM.