

MILFORD CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
September 17, 2016

The Mayor and Members of Milford City Council met for a retreat beginning at 8:30 a.m. in the meeting room at Arena's Restaurant at 200 Northeast Front Street, Milford Delaware on Saturday morning, September 17, 2016.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor & City Council: Mayor Bryan Shupe

Councilmembers Arthur Campbell, Lisa Ingram Peel, James Burk,
Owen Brooks Jr. and Douglas Morrow

Staff: City Manager Eric Norenberg and City Clerk Terri Hudson

The City of Milford's City Council Retreat was an advertised, public meeting facilitated by Fran Fletcher, Policy Scientist, with the Institute for Public Administration at the University of Delaware.

The retreat opened with Mayor Shupe welcoming members of City Council and staff to the retreat.

Agenda items were as follows:

- Overview of Retreat/Fran Fletcher
- Aggregate Responses
- Work Styles 1
- Review and Discussion
- Work Styles 2
- Working Document and Planning Pages
- Identifying Priorities
- Next Steps: Strategic Planning
- Feedback Survey

The Retreat concluded at 2:05 p.m.

Prepared by Policy Scientist Fletcher, a complete summary of the retreat, including notes and outcomes, is attached.

Respectfully submitted,



Terri K. Hudson, MMC
City Clerk/Recorder

Attachment:

City Council September 17, 2017 Retreat Summary

Summary Notes and Outcomes

City of Milford City Council Retreat

**September 17, 2016
8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Prepared by Fran Fletcher, Facilitator
Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware

October 2016

Introduction

The City of Milford's City Council Retreat was held on September 17, 2016, in Milford, Delaware. The retreat was an advertised, public meeting facilitated by Fran Fletcher, Policy Scientist, with the Institute for Public Administration at the University of Delaware.

The retreat participants included City Manager Eric Norenberg, City Clerk Teresa K. Hudson, Mayor Bryan W. Shupe, Vice Mayor/Councilmember Douglas E. Morrow, Sr., and Councilmembers Owen S. Brooks Jr., James F. Burk, Arthur J. Campbell, and Lisa Ingram Peel. Other invited individuals who did not attend were Councilmembers Christopher L. Mergner, James O. Starling, Sr., and Katrina E. Wilson.

Purpose

Mayor Shupe welcomed everyone and explained the purpose of the retreat as two-fold:

1. *Planning for the Future*: "Facilitated discussion and goal setting by City Council, with the help of key City officials." Desired Outcomes: "Identification of priorities for the next 1–2 years and consensus on next steps for developing a strategic plan to guide City Council and City Management for the next 5–10 years."
2. *Team Building*: "Understanding roles and responsibilities of elected officials and appointed officials, City Boards, and Commissions and defining expectations." Desired outcomes: "Enhanced understanding of work styles and focus on methods/processes of effective decision-making related to the goals and plans set in the earlier component."

Priority Areas

Prior to the retreat, interviews were conducted with the Mayor and seven of the eight Councilmembers. The purpose of the interviews was to solicit input on six primary questions:

- 1) What are Milford's strengths?
- 2) What are Milford's weaknesses?
- 3) What are Milford's opportunities?
- 4) What are Milford's threats?
- 5) What short-term goals (within 6 months) would benefit the city?
- 6) What long-term goals (6–18 months) would benefit the city?

Interviewees were given the opportunity to offer additional perspectives on the following categories:

- Economic growth and development (land use planning, enhancing revenue, etc.)
- Encouraging and managing growth (future service delivery, historic tourism, partnerships, natural resources, gateways, etc.)
- Fiscal policies (budgeting, adequate fund balances and capital reserves, accounting, forecasting, debt management, fee collection, audit, grants, procurement, etc.)

- Capital improvements and infrastructure planning (flooding, historic preservation, grants, etc.)
- Public safety (staffing, etc.)
- Transportation (bus, multimodal, paths, etc.)
- Code enforcement (zoning updates training for board and commission members, etc.)
- Public works/Planning (project management, roads, equipment, impact fees, etc.)
- Connectivity for entire town (communication, united wards, etc.)
- Human resource management (workforce planning, recruitment, benefits, organizational structure, day-to-day management, policy and procedures, performance measures, systems, IT, communication structure, etc.)
- Strategic planning (vision and mission, goals, values, objectives, periodic review by committee and/or stakeholders, etc.)
- Town administration (leadership, ethics, collaboration, internal and external communication, response to constituents, annual town meetings/town survey, etc.)
- Goals/projects that might warrant a “tax increase”
- Clarity of roles, responsibilities, and expectations for:
 - Elected officials
 - Appointed officials
 - City Boards and Commissions
 - New incumbent orientation/training

The retreat began with a PowerPoint presentation accompanied by a handout (see Appendix A) that highlighted the aggregated responses to each question and follow up categories.

Consensus Identified

Through the interview process, consensus was noted in the following items:

- 1) Need for a new police department building
- 2) Code enforcement changes
- 3) Need for transportation options
- 4) Positive impact of hospital construction
- 5) Fiscal strength of the city
- 6) Need for new Council training and orientation

Working Document

Participants were presented with a Working Document (see Appendix B) consisting of the aggregate responses rearranged under specific headings as follows:

- Thoughts in General (comments made not requiring action)
- Communication (Internal)
- Planning
- Public Works
- Human Resources
- School District
- Partnerships
- Hospital
- Downtown Development
- Recreation
- New Council Training and Orientation
- Leadership
- Code Enforcement
- Public Safety
- Finances
- Businesses
- Transportation
- Municipality
- Marketing (and External communication)
- Other

Discussion

The participants discussed the four highlighted headings noted below and offered the following comments:

- **Thoughts in General** – no added comments
- **Leadership**
 - Report new phone system comments to the City Manager
 - Mayor wants to address the perception of closed door politics; to council people “to do what they want to be involved with”
 - Perspective shared—some community members feel spending and resources are focused on the downtown area only
- **Communication (Internal)**
 - When receiving urgent phone calls from community, direct to appropriate councilmember rather than using email
 - Request for more frequent updates with more information from Mayor
Mayor response: “want to make sure his communication is based on truthful and evidence-based information, not rumors”
 - Ward updates take place twice monthly during meetings
 - All Councilmembers need to attend meetings in accordance with the Charter

- Create a more specific policy that requires Councilmembers to communicate why they can't/didn't attend and make it part of the public record of the meeting
- Documents for meetings need to be disseminated to Councilmembers sooner [prior to the meeting] to allow more time for review
- Inconvenient with no WIFI to access documents during meetings—this would save on paper and ink and allow more to be done electronically

- **New Council Training and Orientation**

- Include a tour of the city by the City Manager outlining the boundaries of each ward
- Must read Charter and code books

Questions were raised based on the recent changes to committee assignments:

- What is the general committee workflow?
- How to communicate and use agendas, set up meeting logistics, how to have discussions?
- When to bring information to public council meetings?

Identifying Priorities

Participants were divided into two groups. Using the Working Document (see Appendix B) and a worksheet of the Working Document (see Appendix C), each group reviewed and made additional comments/suggestions to the categories and topics. Both groups reviewed all categories.

The table reveals the categories noted as high and lower priority:

High Priority

- Code Enforcement
- Finances
- Hospital
- Municipality
- Human Resources
- School District

Lower Priority

- Recreation
- Business

The table further highlights the categories, topics, additional comments, and classification of high or lower priorities.

Category: Planning		
Topics	Comments	Priority
<i>Strategic Plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan should include City Council, public, and stakeholder groups 	High (1)
<i>Comprehensive Update</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Update: focus on SE (October) and focus on communities • Review Comprehensive plan survey 	High (1)
<i>Downtown Recommendations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Muldrow Recommendations: Muldrow was crossed out and replaced with “downtown”) • Downtown meeting was well attended by over 200 people 	

Category: Code Enforcement		
Topics	Comments	Priority
<i>Review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don Williams very efficient 	High (6)
<i>Assess</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-training with Parks and Rec staff was crossed out and fire and police department was added 	
<i>Rentals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on existing codes, instead of creating new- “instead of” was crossed out “and” added in its place, as new issues arise make/write new code • Create goals for 6 months and 1 year • Evaluation and accountability! • Active enforcement! 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional code enforcement employee about to be hired • What to do about landlords <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partnerships with landlords ○ Cannot be complacent 	

Category: Finances		High (4)
Topics	Comments	Priority
<i>Audit departments & review budget</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted as important 	High (2)
<i>Fees: business licenses, real estate transfer, impact new business</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make it inviting to outside companies 	
<i>Tax increases: police building, staff salaries</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect 425K, then think about 	
<i>Tax abatement & incentives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For new business and plants 	High (1)
<i>Seek grants & investors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On going 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can we do within budget? • Deadbeat tax list • How can we save vs. looking at wish lists? 	High (1)

Category: Public Safety		
Topics	Comments	Priority
<i>Building/ Construction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted as important 	High (2)
<i>Crisis preparedness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do in partnership with Public Works & City Fire Dept. 	High (1)
<i>Union complaint</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be coupled with code enforcement and landlord education • Focus on future needs 	Lower (1)

Category: Hospital		High (1)
Topics	Comments	Priority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What opportunities are there for us to encourage businesses to partner with them? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Bayhealth looking for childcare partner 2) Looking for collaboration with fitness and rehab • Schools! Need to build reputation to attract employees to live in Milford (vs. Milton) 	

- Workforce development to meet training needs (Delaware Technical Community College’s new RN-BA programs) **High (2)**

Category: Partnerships

Topics	Comments	Priority
<i>Hospital</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting discounts, waiver of fees. How much is too much? Want to be fair in what we give in support, <u>but not</u> create precedent that is unreasonable 	Lower (1)
<i>School District</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We all benefit from strong schools. Be good ambassadors and direct questions and concerns to factual source • Direct people to go to school meeting to understand the difference between city and school differences (taxes) • New school leadership may provide new direction 	
<i>Chamber of Commerce/public-private</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support all efforts 	
<i>Local/Downtown Organizations Downtown Milford, Inc. (DMI)</i>		High (1)
<i>Other-library, entrepreneur network, DMI</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can they be open Saturday afternoons and Sundays to support foot traffic downtown? 	

Category: Transportation

Topics	Comments	Priority
<i>Public</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus-downtown 1 route; infrequent, stress need to serve ALL of county via state and counties particularly with hospital site 	
<i>Uber</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they here? Is it our role to entice them here? 	
<i>Explore rail</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this feasible? Is there any existing state/regional infrastructure? 	Lower (1)

- Connect downtown with sidewalks*
- Work with state partners
 - “Complete Streets” vision (Front Street) slowing traffic and opening pedestrian/bike paths beyond downtown
 - Transportation Alternative Programs (TAP)
 - Instead of \$700,000 for repairs, use money to leverage TAP match to expand walkability and biking on Front Street states 80% match

Category: Current Businesses

Topics	Comments	Priority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have DMI ask what are your future plans? 	Lower (1)
<i>Increase store operating hours</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Thursday the best night for creating downtown consumerism? Is <u>Friday</u> better or is there too much competition? What does the data from 3rd Thursday suggest? Could the efforts with library be better coordinated? 	
<i>Keep timeline for business in bank [Taste of Italy]</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not city setting timeline—can we share updates via social mediation (reveals to build anticipation)? 	
<i>Reach out to existing businesses for expansion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BAC, Seawatch • Who is meeting with them? Eric • Supply chain discussions to make business easy for them (removing & reducing obstacles) • Workforce development opportunities and partnerships 	

Category: Future Business

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates forthcoming re: Muldrow plan and Downtown Development District (DDD) merger, community meeting scheduled 	
<i>More retail choices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the City’s role in attracting retail for downtown? • How much outreach should we be doing (hiring marketing firm) rather than having businesses coming to us? This is a priority—is it in the budget? 	
<i>Increase services to serve hospital</i>		High (1)

- Manufacturing jobs*
- BAC, Dentsply, Perdue, Seawatch
 - Annex BAC to expand

Category: Downtown Development

Topics	Comments	Priority
<i>Revitalization of commercial & residential areas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For this and above, see category “Municipality” [below] • Looking for non-profit partners (not direct municipal use) 	
<i>Large property development/redevelopment</i>		
<i>Use store fronts for businesses & above for residents</i>		
<i>Fill vacant buildings</i>		
<i>Develop use of Armory-needs system upgrades</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for non-profit partners (not municipal use) 	
<i>Explore incentives for historic home renovation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and DDD 	
<i>Proactive selling with investors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked to schools. • Should we be more assertive? • Should we outsource marketing? 	

Category: Municipality

High (1)

Topics	Comments	Priority
<i>Vacant buildings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant property registry as a revenue source and for monitoring 	Lower(1)
<i>Many Victorian homes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DMI historic preservation rental—code issues 	
<i>Several areas need traffic lights</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DELDOT—not City role to evaluate this on state roads 	
<i>Need more housing options</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot problem to scale. What about promoting owner-occupied properties? • Potential property owner partnerships 	

Category: Recreation		Low (2)
Topics	Comments	Priority
<i>More parkland</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of new development requests 	
<i>Target: youth, families, seniors, and businesses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Center, Boys & Girls Club of America 	
<i>Increase river options (boats & floating dock)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SUP (stand-up paddle boarding) rentals 	
<i>Concerts to connect old & new residents</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library and other groups 	
Category: Marketing		
Topics	Comments	Priority
<i>Better communication with community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we need a PIO (public information officer)? Can existing staff be cross trained? 	High (1)
<i>Community calendar</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many conflicts—who manages events? Yes; who administers this, how do we avoid overlap with private sectors? 	
<i>Focus on heritage & activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More events on river, shipbuilders race 	
<i>Connect with churches, DTCC, Perdue</i>		High (1)
<i>Meet with community leaders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage internationalization 	
<i>Informal meetings to engage community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting multi-lingual employees from local high school • How do we encourage more mixture of communities? 	High (1)
<i>Better signage for entrances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underway 	

Section 8 housing is located on water • Where? Milly

Category: Human Resources			High (2)
Topics	Comments		Priority
<i>P & P manual</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underway 		
<i>Succession planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underway 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seems like policy needs update—underway • Job descriptions—updated prior to refilling and/or when major responsibilities change • Know chain of command 		
Category: Other			
Topics	Comments		Priority
<i>Expand AmeriCorps volunteer involvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not important • Boy Scouts 		
Category: Public Works			
Topics	Comments		Priority
<i>Maintenance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marked with star=important 		
<i>City Scape</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marked with star=important 		
<i>Crisis Preparedness</i>			High (1)
<i>Air pollution</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seawatch 		High (1)
<i>Infrastructure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old vacant buildings 		
<i>Electricity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints, \$ too high 		High (1)
<i>Monitoring</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marked with star=important 		
Category: School District			High (2)
Topics	Comments		Priority

- Taxes for officers should be district wide, not just Milford tax base

Creating Goals

Working as a group, participant's crafted Short-Term Goals and Long-Term Goals from the categories and topics that received the highest number of votes.

Short-Term Goals

Code Enforcement

- Hire new code-enforcement officer
- Evaluate performance metrics across the department
- Active enforcement policy

Added comments:

- Code enforcement in downtown for hospital area is already underway, if left unattended, it becomes a threat to the success of the hospital and city
- Solid waste employees could help code enforcement flag issues

Finance

- Department heads to audit their own department to find ways to save money
- Better understanding of funding sources and options
- Set up structure to collect outstanding taxes

Long-Term Goals

Human Resources

- Succession planning
- Policy updates

Recreation

- Capitalize on matched funds
- Explore recreation on the river
- Partner with DelDOT's TAP for bike/walk paths

Next Steps

The decision was made that the Community Affairs Committee would be assigned the task of creating a plan to move forward. The Committee meets on October 10, 2016, and will begin the discussion and review the Muldrow & Comprehensive Plan data for resident input. These documents will be used to draft an action plan. The action plan will be open for additional public comment.

Final Thoughts

A final concern was expressed about back taxes:

- Should the public be made aware of the names of delinquent tax payers?
- Should there be a vacant building registry?

It was decided that further discussion will take place on these topics.

Team Building

Two teambuilding exercises were conducted. Utilizing a neuro-linguistic programming tool (see Appendix D), the first exercise focused on identifying the participant's preferred working style and communication preferences. A second Work Style Inventory (see Appendix E) assessed participants' favored methodology when working with colleagues. They rated themselves in six areas:

- 1) Amount of talking during a meeting
- 2) How I deal with conflict
- 3) During a meeting I think about...
- 4) How much information do you need before making a decision?
- 5) Decision-Making style
- 6) Attitude toward implementation of plans

Each teambuilding activity was followed by discussion offering the opportunity to increase awareness of themselves as individuals and as effective team members.

Retreat Feedback Survey

The participants completed a feedback survey (see Appendix F) regarding the effectiveness of the retreat, if outcomes were achieved, and thoughts concerning future retreats. Six out of eight feedback forms were completed. Most participants stated the retreat was a good first step toward collaborating and preparing for our strategic planning process where five responses indicated ***Strongly Agreed*** and two responses indicated ***Agreed***.

Participants agreed the desired outcomes were achieved regarding Planning and Team Building and stated the utilization of a neutral facilitator enhanced the effectiveness of the retreat process.

Finally, responses were split as to the need for future retreats. Three responded a “retreat should be conducted after each election” and three indicated “only in accordance with the length of time outlined by the strategic plan to assess if goals have been reached or need to be modified.” No one voted that retreats were not needed in the future.