

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the adjourned meeting of the Brainerd City Council was called to order at 6:32 P.M. by Council President Bonnie Cumberland for the purpose of holding a Town Hall to discuss the City of Brainerd's 2013 Strategic Plan.

Council and staff present included Mayor Wallin, Aldermen Pritschet, Scheeler, Parks, Borkenhagen, Koep, and Cumberland, City Administrator Goble, Finance Director Hillman, City Engineer Hulsether, City Planner Ostgarden, Park Director Sailer, BPU Secretary/Finance Director Wicklund, and Police Chief McQuiston. Also in attendance were BLAEDC Execs Dick Jordan and Ed Egan who worked with the City in formulating the Strategic Plan. There were also approximately 30 members of the public present.

Council President Cumberland welcomed the group and stated that the purpose of the meeting is to present the City of Brainerd 2013 Strategic Plan and receive comments and suggestions from the public. She introduced Mayor Wallin, who welcomed everyone.

Council President Cumberland stated that the City Council started its 2013 strategic planning process on February 11, 2013 with that meeting being the first step in creating the proposed City of Brainerd Mission and Vision Statements and Strategic Plan. She stated that subsequent meetings were held on March 11, March 25, and April 22, 2013, and presented a Power Point presentation outlining the proposed Mission Statement and Vision Statements

President Cumberland also stated that during the workshops and through voting processes, the City Council identified four major focus areas for the three-year plan which will be detailed later in the meeting. She stated that the Council also recognized several other issues affecting the City's future, stating that City staff will continue to address these following identified issues throughout the years as resources allow:

- To identify past and current growth management principles and plan future policies
- To strengthen our partnerships in the areas of health care and education
- To promote sound economic development strategies
- To encourage more citizen participation in the local government process
- To explore planning for future staff succession

President Cumberland introduced City Administrator Goble, who reviewed the four priority Strategic Focus Areas and invited the public to comment after each focus area.

#1 INVEST IN NEIGHBORHOODS – Reviewed were the three focus areas as follows:

1. Improve pride of ownership and livability of neighborhoods
2. Promote creation of active neighborhood associations
3. Develop walkable and bikeable neighborhoods

Citizen input on Strategic Focus #1:

- Forming partnerships with countries who could invest in the City
- Forming stronger partnerships with the school district
- Include enforcement of current property maintenance codes as an action step
- Youth Needs/Interests should be identified and included as action steps

#2 STABLE FINANCIAL PLANNING – Reviewed were the four focus areas as follows:

1. Develop five-year capital equipment/improvements/facilities plan
2. Achieve compliance with adopted fund balance policy
3. Re-establish BPU revenue bonds original bond rating of Aa3
4. Extension of Local Option Sales Tax legislation

Citizen Input on Strategic Focus #2:

- Are the timelines obtainable
- Concern expressed about utilizing grant dollars

#3 REDESIGN WEBSITE AND CREATE A CITY NEWSLETTER – Reviewed the objective of updating the City's current website and creating a city newsletter to provide more information about what is happening in the City, to clarify City Council's direction to the public, and to direct the public to artistic, cultural and recreational opportunities.

Citizen input on Strategic Focus #3:

- Selection of citizens to serve on Committees/Commissions should be done by a "merit system" to achieve more transparency to the process.

#4 DESIGN/BUILD A MISSISSIPPI RIVERWALK – Reviewed the objective to connect downtown the rest of the trails winding through town, which will assist in Brainerd's "brand" by ultimately connecting the City to the River. Different cities' riverwalks and architectural conceptions were also shown.

Citizen input on Strategic Focus #4:

- Focus ties together the early history of Brainerd and the River
- Great asset to develop – reference was made to Dubuque, IA
- Is project really needed? Funding questions included not a good use of tax dollars
- Past efforts to revitalize Brainerd failed
- Quality of water in Brainerd questioned
- The need for jobs in the City, better maintenance of streets, and reduced spending
- Skatepark for youth as a priority consideration
- Brainerd Proud Days event to be held on August 24th at Brainerd Armory

Alderman Borkenhagen addressed the audience, thanked them for attending and provided insight and enthusiasm for the City's forward thinking process.

Council President Cumberland also addressed the audience and thanked them for attending. She stated that all suggestions will be put forth to the City Council at the June 17th council meeting with final action/adoption of the plan at the July 1, 2013 Council meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Theresa A. Goble
City Administrator