

**CITY OF TEMPLE TERRACE, FLORIDA  
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
REPORT OF WORK SESSION**

**Monday, March 29, 2010  
MOSI Board Room  
8:15 a.m.**

Having been duly advertised as required by law, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Temple Terrace, Florida, met in a work session, beginning at 8:15 a.m. on Monday, March 29, 2010, in the board room at the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI), 4801 E. Fowler Avenue, to establish goals for Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

**PRESENT WERE:** Mayor Joe Affronti, Council Members Alison M. Fernandez, Ron Govin, Ken Halloway, Mark Knapp, City Manager Kim Leinbach, and City Clerk Lisa Small. **ABSENT WAS:** Council Member Mary Jane Neale.

**ALSO PRESENT WAS:** Facilitator Herb Marlowe.

Mr. Marlowe explained the format for the session, stating that he will call for the City Manager to review the status of the goals from last year, Mr. Marlowe will ask the Mayor and Council for items they would like to discuss, and then they will conduct a poll to establish the goals for the coming fiscal year.

The City Manager briefly reviewed with Council the status report of the 2009-10 goals, dated March, 2010, which was included in information provided with the March 19<sup>th</sup> Council Update from the City Manager, and is included as part of this record.

Regarding the goal for **redevelopment**, the City Manager commented that there is a proposal for a new Joint Venture for the Vlass Group with Inland Group LLC, which occurred since he prepared the update, to finance and proceed with the first phase of development. He continued that plans include completion of Sweetbay and the Post Office this year, which is pretty aggressive. He reported the administration is still working on pension obligations, adding the hope that, if and when the City is able to use the red light camera revenues, of which only \$34,000 of the \$800,000 over two years for the administrative hearing process has been expended, a significant amount could be used to buy-down the pension obligations to bring it to a more positive ratio of coverage to obligation.

Relative to **wastewater treatment** options, the City Manager said the City has completed a conceptual plan that shows it would be feasible to build a plant using deep well trenches/retention areas for the reclaimed water.

The City Manager continued that they have also been talking to MOSI, which is looking at the biomass energy project, which would require a lot of water. He said an option would be to send the City's reclaimed water to MOSI for their cooling necessities, and they would buy it, giving the City a source of income and a point of discharge, which has been the main problem in the past. Council Member Fernandez interjected that MOSI would buy it in wet or dry weather, so it would be year-round. The City Manager commented the City would have some storage on site, perhaps in the form of a retention system, but it would be a much smaller area, which would help the City. In addition, he said MOSI would also buy all of the City's yard waste for energy generation.

The City Manager reviewed the River Watch Task Force continues to work on **Hillsborough River issues**; they have had numerous informational sessions and workshops. He advised that Code Compliance Director Joe Gross continues to work with the Task Force, and they are very active and continuing their diligence in maintaining the Hillsborough River as a River.

The City Manager noted that a **budget policy workshop** is planned for April to start the new budget cycle.

The City Manager commented the **School Support Committee** continues its work; last year the Realtors visited all the schools to clear up some of their misconceptions about Temple Terrace schools, and the Mayor's quarterly meetings with the school principals are continuing.

The City Manager reported the administration continues to look at **alternate properties** with the Department Directors. Regarding internships, the City Manager reported the City does a lot with USF, and commented that he met with the Department of Public Policy for Internship Programs. He said they have had criminology students work with the Police Department, and they also had a classroom program with the King High School social studies teacher last year; the City is very active with the Temple Terrace Schools and USF.

The City Manager reported that he and the Community Development Director met with Judy Genshaft to talk about the **importance of Vandenberg** and its tie into USF, as well as Telecom Park and some of the City's corporate clients who could make use of the airport. He continued that they also met with the Director of the Airport Authority, adding they will meet with the new Director after the change has occurred, to explore a more optimum use of Vandenberg and to promote a better access to the airport.

Relative to **targeted codes and fees/fines**, the City Manager said some adjustment was done to the EMS transport fees to be competitive with surrounding agencies, and the Fire Protection & Prevention Code in Chapter 9 was updated. He noted there is also the current controversy with the rental code. He said there are other proposed increases, such as the Local Business Tax, which he has not brought forward to the Council. Although rates have not been adjusted in three years, he expressed concern about piling on increases when people are down. He added he will bring it up at the budget policy workshop when the Council has an opportunity to see what the City is facing and some of the proposed solutions.

Regarding **alternative revenue sources/grants**, the City Manager reported that a number of grants have been obtained and new sources are being identified, primarily in Police and Fire, because that is where the emphasis has been since 2001. Community Development Block Grants were just renewed for the current fiscal year, he said, and the administration and staff will continue to pursue any and all available grants. Council Member Hallway cautioned to watch out for strings that may be attached to some of the grants.

The City Manager continued that the first **gateway** is planned on 56<sup>th</sup> Street in conjunction with the streetscape landscaping in the redevelopment project.

Council Member Knapp inquired about the unsightly box sticking up about five feet just past Corpus Christi Church, but before the Bank. He said the box appears to be for the main electrical wiring and panels adjacent to the brand new sidewalk; there is no way to buffer it in its location adjacent to the sidewalk.

The City Manager commented that there are some of the electrical items that cannot be buried, but concurred they should be landscaped. He said he would take a look at it, adding that further south there are three 10 x 10 switching components, to which Council Member Knapp interjected that perhaps when those are done they can be set further back so they can be landscaped.

The City Manager stated the HART and MPO appointments are utilized to provide **TBARTA input**, which is ongoing, with the Mayor serving as the Chair of the MPO and Council Member Govin serving as Chair of HART. He noted the circulator route is still in the works with HART, and is awaiting funding.

The City Manager reported the **Temple Terrace Golf & Country Club's** request for an interim loan was not feasible; however, the City did stop charging them an administrative cost, which provided some relief.

Under the potential goals for later discussion, the City Manager said, was the directive to **explore increased student participation in City events**. He reported the City uses a lot of volunteers, and he has emphasized a greater use of volunteers going forward, adding that the Human Resources Department will be presenting a program shortly to actively recruit and utilize volunteers. Council Member Knapp interjected the City uses some volunteers to satisfy Community Service requirements. The City Manager reported that one of the auditing firms has 250 people available for a workday; the City is trying to work with them to organize a project that could utilize that many people. Council Member Knapp commented that the IB program at King High School requires a certain number of service hours, and he believes the same is true for Jesuit, and the Academy of Holy Names. Mayor Affronti commented that the Boy Scouts also have requirements when one is pursuing the rank of Eagle Scout. Council Member Fernandez commented that the reality is that every single high school student who plans to go to college is required to show community service hours on their college application.

Council Member Govin asked for an idea of what the City Manager sees as the **budget** before they proceed further. The City Manager responded that the City is probably facing a million dollar shortfall on top of everything else. He said the Department Directors are now working on yet another 5% cut out of their budgets at this time. He said he will bring to Council again the "infamous list" of all of the things that make Temple Terrace a unique community that will be on the table again for discussion. He continued that the administration is getting to the point where library hours will have to be severely limited, as well as mowing, because of reduced hours and manpower in Leisure Services. He said all they have left is personnel, which they are already looking at, in terms of furlough days for holidays – keeping the 11 holidays, but instead of having 11 days off and three to five furlough days on those days, they would keep the same number of days off, but without pay. He estimated furlough days would only save \$300,000 to \$400,000, depending on the number of days they do. He confirmed zero pay increases again. The City Manager commented one of the challenges is the Police and Fire contracts that are in place; he doesn't know how willing they will be to accept another zero increase.

The City Manager added the **pension obligations** continue to climb for Police and Fire, and he believes it would take about \$250,000 to make up for the loss in their investments this year.

Council Member Fernandez interjected this may be a year the City has to use some of its surplus. The City Manager responded that a small amount was used this year, which the auditor did not favor because it is a negative trend. He commented it is a real challenge and although everyone is working very hard, the options are decreasing every year.

Council Member Govin commented that so far this year the Legislature has not passed any new mandates, to which the City Manager added that no news would be great news.

Mayor Affronti questioned whether the proposed pension legislation would help. The City Manager responded that he hoped it would be helpful if at least it reduces the obligation for cities for new employees. Mayor Affronti commented that a guarantee of an 8% return on the pension fund is unrealistic; Council Member Halloway concurred, adding that 8% appears to be “standard.”

The City Manager stated the pension funds are “defined contribution” plans. He explained that under Florida Statutes Chapters 175 and 185, the City receives property insurance monies, but in return, the City has to comply with all of their regulations and guaranteed rates. Council Member Fernandez said that had the City opted out of that and not accepted the funds, it would have impacted the City’s hiring ability.

Providing a brief overview of the situation around the state, Mr. Marlowe commented that unfortunately it is the same difficult financial situation everywhere; everyone has reached the point of service level reductions. He continued that this is a changing environment, with library reductions, recreation program reductions, and cities looking at the level of service provided in Police and Fire; furloughs are common, there are layoffs, and there will not be much in the way of raises. He noted that every county is different; however, studies indicate the next two years will be very difficult for local governments, and for some, perhaps the next three or four years. He concluded these are very challenging times. Mr. Marlowe asked everyone to provide the topics they would like to be discussed and considered for the coming year.

Council Member Fernandez raised the issue of **bank-owned properties** or those properties soon to be bank-owned.

Relative to the issue raised at a recent City Council meeting of the delay in the much-needed **updating of the City Code**, Council Member Govin suggested that perhaps they could find a way to start a Code update on a smaller basis, simply to identify the problems, without having to allocate any funding, rather than continue to wait until they can fund a large project.

Council Member Knapp wanted to make certain that the **wastewater/sewer treatment plant** continues to be pursued.

Mayor Affronti stressed the importance of **retaining current goals** not yet achieved.

Council Member Halloway stated his focus is on the **improvement of public education**. He briefly reviewed that the responsibility for public schools was given to the Federal government under the Johnson Administration's program coined "The Great Society," which established the Department of Education, whose budget now equals or surpasses that of the Pentagon.

Council Member Halloway opined that public education has deteriorated for four decades and will continue to do so unless something is done, adding that the City has zero influence on improving public education. He noted that when they attempted to determine, by a survey, why parents are electing to send their children to private schools in spite of the high cost, the school district representative preparing the survey refused to include the question. He suggested the solution is to establish charter schools for grades K-5, adding he doesn't have any idea how to do that, but he hopes the City will research it and make it a goal. He commented the City of Pembroke Pines established a Charter School for K-12, which gave the City a say in the types of curriculum and objectives; as a result, the public schools in the area have actually improved in their performance as well.

Council Member Fernandez commented that she also wants to address education; however, she looks at it differently and for a number of reasons, disagrees with Council Member Halloway regarding Charter Schools. She said she would like to see **continued efforts to expand upon the Principals' meetings** and the Realtors, by reaching farther into the community to the residents.

Council Member Govin commented that his biggest concern for the coming year is **the budget**. He said he does not know whether there is a way to cut without cutting the City's identity. He said he believes they can go into the retained earnings that are available; however, the more responsible means would be to perhaps cut the budget in the same fashion, by taking the same dollar amount from retained earnings that is taken from budget cuts.

Mr. Marlowe asked whether there were any further additions to the preliminary list of topics.

Council Member Knapp concurred with budget concerns and had nothing else to add to the list. Council Member Halloway commented the schools were his primary concern.

Council Member Fernandez said she would also like to see **increased City communication to the residents**. She commented that currently there is a citizen who communicates regularly to a large group of citizens through email. While she believes that is a great outreach method, she said she believes the City should establish its own communication tool.

Another topic Council Member Fernandez asked to be included on the list is that when the City takes on a City project or for any activities established by the City, she said they need to be thinking about the **long-range financial impacts**. As an example, she cited the landscaping being done along 56<sup>th</sup> Street in increments.

Mr. Marlowe opened the discussion with the topic of the **budget**, commenting that the City Manager mentioned a shortfall of about \$1 million. He asked whether sales tax revenue was improving.

The City Manager responded sales tax revenue is still down and so are intergovernmental revenues. Mr. Marlowe questioned whether the Hillsborough County Property Appraiser provides multi-year projections, to which the City Manager responded he does not; preliminarily, he said next year the City is projected to be about 8% down in property tax revenues, which is better than a lot of places.

Council Member Knapp commented that last year the City implemented an ad valorem increase. The City Manager interjected that was to bring the revenue back to the level of the previous year, adding that the City did not receive even one complaint about the increase from the residents. Mayor Affronti commented that persons he spoke with said they understood the need for the increase. Mr. Marlowe commented that a lot of folks are predicting that there will be a drop next year in commercial property values. The City Manager concurred, stating they generally lag behind residential property.

Council Member Knapp expressed concern that the banks are at fault, initiating the spiral, citing the example of having a bank re-appraise his property, resulting in a lower value and a subsequent request for a capital call on his loan. He surmised banks are lessening their exposure, and when that occurs, in turn, as an owner, he takes the new appraisal to the Property Appraiser and appeals the valuation.

Mr. Marlowe stated that the City tries to provide a high level of services to make Temple Terrace a distinctive community; previously the citizens valued that enough to be willing to take a tax "roll up." He questioned whether there is a sense the community would be willing to do that again.

Council Member Fernandez said she believes the Council should communicate to the residents in a Town Hall meeting how early the Council is trying to look at the budget, in order to give the residents a very good opportunity for input. She suggested that the administration have the preliminary list of proposed cuts available. She acknowledged she does not know what the citizens are willing to accept. She said she believes none of the citizens have received raises, some have accepted rollbacks in their salaries, costs are going up, and water rates are going up because of their conservation efforts. She reiterated she cannot say what the citizens are willing to accept; while there is an expectation of high service, she questioned at what point the citizens will decide they can live with less service because they don't have the money.

The City Manager noted that a Town Hall Meeting is currently being scheduled, to which Mr. Marlowe interjected that is one action step, to get citizen input. Council Member Knapp pointed out the irony that those who can afford the increase are the ones who typically come to the meeting. Council Member Fernandez concurred, but added her belief that the earlier they talk about it, the conversation starts to trickle down to the ball fields and their concerns are expressed to the Council at various functions or in passing.

Mr. Marlowe summarized that the challenge is to try to get some valid input. Mayor Affronti stressed the importance of having options available, i.e., whether they should raise taxes, or if not, whether they should take out of reserves, and if so, how much. Council Member Knapp said his preference would be to raise taxes before they take from reserves because of the debt situation; they have never had this kind of debt service before and having less reserves is a serious concern.

Mr. Marlowe commented that 20% in reserves is a little on the high side, to which the City Manager responded that compared to other cities, it is okay, but it is lower than the City's standards.

Mr. Marlowe emphasized the importance of public engagement and to provide them with choices, in terms of what they would give up in exchange for something else. The City Manager explained it is his practice to bring the Mayor and Council a balanced budget and won't propose raising taxes.

The City Manager continued that the administration will show where the cuts were made, and then it is up to Council to decide where and how they would like to modify it. He explained that in this current year, they rolled up the millage rate half a mill, so they did not have to cut all the things that make our community special.

Council Member Halloway said they are between a rock and a hard place; when it comes to cutting spending, sooner or later it will get into services, and the alternative to cutting services is to raise taxes. The City Manager commented that the administration has cut about 15 positions through attrition; no one has been laid off, but it is considered a possibility in this coming year.

Council Member Fernandez remarked that last year they did a mix – they made cuts, raised taxes a little, and took a minimal amount from the surplus. The City Manager noted that in addition to the employees having no pay increase, the City will be passing on the increase in health insurance costs to the employees, the amount of which is still undetermined, since it is through a new company; that will amount to a pay cut for the employees.

Council Member Fernandez asked whether the State has mandated any specific percentage or amount for reserves; when the City was at 25%, there was talk that the State was not going to allow a percentage that high for reserves. The City Manager said he hasn't seen anything about that. Council Member Govin interjected that the talk was about 15%. Council Member Knapp questioned how they would prepare for a disaster if they don't have sufficient reserves; Council Member Fernandez concurred.

Mr. Marlowe confirmed that last year they utilized a combination approach, and they may be faced with that same scenario. Therefore, he said the action step would be to prepare some materials to get some public feedback, to which the City Manager concurred.

The City Manager remarked that another thing the administration is trying to accomplish is to secure the Interlocal Annexation Agreement with Hillsborough County. He explained that probably half of the industrial park properties have signed annexation agreements with the City, but they are not contiguous; with the Interlocal Agreement that is no longer a requirement. Although there would be a year lag in property tax revenue, he said there would be an immediate realization of sales tax and utility tax. Mr. Marlowe clarified that another strategy is to grow the property tax base. In response to Mayor Affronti's question concerning Mr. McClellan's dairy farm property, the City Manager reported Mr. McClellan is meeting with the City of Tampa today regarding the quarter million dollar surcharge per year for wastewater treatment, since the Environmental Protection Commission will no longer allow the City of Tampa to handle the wastewater by field application.

Council Member Knapp confirmed Mr. McClellan will have that issue whether they annex or not. Regarding any other growth opportunities, the City Manager commented he met with the County's Economic Development Director, trying to develop every other area they can think of.

Council Member Knapp questioned how they are planning to financially "attack" the Arts Education Center, moving the Library, and relocating the Police Station there with the current financial constraints. He specifically questioned the funding for the Arts Education Center, which will be occurring first.

Council Member Halloway interjected that perhaps the Finance Director should be included in future sessions, since many of the goals center around funding.

The City Manager confirmed Vlass is going to build the Arts Education Center, but said the City has to operate and maintain it; the cost to the City for the additional studio footage is \$640,000, with an anticipated annual operating cost of \$80,000.

Council Member Govin said he understands the developer will build the building at no cost to the City [other than the \$640,000 the City Manager noted for the three studios]; however, he questioned the cost of finishing the inside of the building. The City Manager responded it is supposed to be completely finished. He remarked that they are asking Vlass for the display boards to see the proposed fixtures and other details, adding that Vlass is meeting with the Focus Group on Monday at the Focus Group's first meeting. In response to Council Member Govin's question as to who would pay for the chairs and things of that nature, the City Manager said they believe that is part of the \$640,000 - \$100,000 was earmarked for those items. Council Member Govin expressed concern that an audio system alone could be quite expensive. The City Manager reviewed the Council approved \$640,000 and if they start bidding things out and have more specific information, and it appears it will exceed that amount, they will have to come back to Council to address that.

Council Member Halloway remarked he recently visited the new Tampa Art Museum; every definable area had a plaque with some family's name for having contributed the funding for that area. The City Manager reviewed that part of the fundraising effort is to create an endowment to help finance the operating and maintenance costs, adding that he believes the Focus Group will evolve into a fundraising group.

Mr. Marlowe directed Council's attention to the next topic – **communication with City residents.**

Council Member Fernandez commented she has noticed increased citizen communication by email. Council Member Knapp suggested citizens could sign up for an email "blast" from the City. Council Member Fernandez said she prefers to communicate by email rather than "hard" copy, because it is easier to locate later. She commented that although they do not rely on the City resident for communications, it is nice that this particular resident has taken on the task of spreading information; however, the information being communicated is outside of City control, the list is selective and probably not everyone knows about it, whereas a City list would be different. She suggested if the City does take this on, that they don't send out six emails at one time or they will likely not be read.

Instead of using email, Council Member Holloway suggested using a social media site, such as Facebook. Council Member Fernandez interjected that although the City has a website, it requires people coming to the site, whereas with Facebook the information just appears in one's inbox. The City Manager said he would have to research social media further. Mayor Affronti commented that those who are interested in what is going on will find a way to do it, whether through the newspaper, website, the City newsletter, or Grant's email; then there is another group that he found when knocking on doors, who don't care.

Following further discussion of communication issues and the need to keep the public informed, Council Member Fernandez remarked the City doesn't control the newspapers; this would be an avenue that the City could control.

Council Member Govin expressed concern regarding the Freedom of Information Act, suggesting that an Attorney's Opinion might be in order in regard to a social networking site. If the City starts a new source of providing information to the citizens, he questioned how selective they can be about what information can go there. He also expressed concern that there would be a cost associated with trying to maintain such a site. He commented he believes it would be good, but he questioned who would be the best person to be responsible for the site. Council Member Govin commented that he personally likes Facebook, adding that HART is on Facebook and does well with it. He continued that Facebook would be an inexpensive way to get information out, but it couldn't be done with terse comments or uninteresting descriptions; it also has to be continually maintained on a daily basis or it would not be worthwhile.

Council Member Holloway commented there is also a concern about the Sunshine Law if the Council was together on a Facebook account and whether that would constitute a violation of the law. Council Member Fernandez said she is envisioning things the City already has in print, such as meeting notices, and through a Facebook account, being able to encourage citizens to come and discuss the issues. Council Member Govin concurred that they should consider it; however, they should research it further. Mr. Marlowe clarified that the goal could be to examine the options and the costs involved. He noted that one aspect of Twitter is that if your name is mentioned, it contacts you. Council Member Govin commented that information sent from private citizens often reflects that individual's position, which is their right as a private citizen, but may sometimes be hurtful to other citizens.

Mr. Marlowe directed the Council's attention to the item of **"soon-to-be Bank-owned properties."**

Council Member Fernandez explained the reason this came up is that it is a Code Enforcement nightmare, which is escalating. She said one of the things affecting the City's budget, is the negative effect of bank-owned properties on property values in the City, because the banks don't do necessary maintenance and apparently do not negotiate sales. She questioned what the City can do and whether there is any way to force the banks to do something. She confirmed it is primarily a maintenance issue and expressed concern it may be also be a liability issue for the City.

Mr. Marlowe questioned what powers the City may have in this situation.

The City Manager responded the City does not have any powers; informally, the Code Compliance Department already goes to the banks and has had some success in getting them to maintain the properties, although not the same as if someone was living there. In addition, he said the City is organizing volunteers to assist in cleanups.

Council Member Govin mentioned that he and the City Manager attended a meeting at the Florida League of Cities conference regarding this problem. He said there are some cities on the East Coast that are experimenting with different ways to deal with this problem, one of which he believes has to do with an assessment. He concurred with the need to do something, stating that he serves as the liaison to the Code Enforcement Board and it is a nightmare situation.

Council Member Govin continued that when the banks secure a buyer, they come to the Code Enforcement Board, seeking a lien or fine reduction and asking for the actual cost; the City has to be careful about that and either reduce the fines to something more reasonable and stay on that amount; otherwise, they are often settling on 10 cents on the dollar.

Council Member Govin said he believes the assessment would go around Code Enforcement; the City pays for the services and assesses the property, which becomes something the City can go to Court to collect; whereas, they cannot go to Court for a Code Enforcement lien until it is sold. The City Manager interjected that the City Attorney has investigated that avenue and found it has not been tested in the Courts yet; it has only been in place one year. Since that was last year, Council Member Govin suggested the City Manager should check with the Florida League of Cities to see if anything has happened since that time. Council Member Fernandez expressed concern that it appears the banks are not in a hurry to sell, and she would like find a mechanism to pressure them to maintain the properties while in their control, and secondly, to get the property out of their control as quickly as possible and to a new owner. She concluded the banks are not operating in their own best interest, or in the City's best interest.

The City Manager suggested the assessment, if it could be done without too much legal exposure, could serve a dual purpose – clean up the property and the cost would come out of their property immediately, which would give them the incentive to sell it as rapidly as possible.

Council Member Halloway said it would be a poor business practice on the part of a bank to let a property deteriorate; banks are interested in money. The best practice would be to sell that property as rapidly as possible for as much as they could get, he said, which means maintaining the property and getting it on the market quickly.

Council Member Fernandez suggested the administration expand the research beyond the Florida League of Cities, because there are likely many other cities experiencing this same problem with bank-owned properties. She added that perhaps a lobbyist would know how this situation is being handled by others.

Council Member Knapp questioned whether there is a way to introduce a code change for bank-owned or unoccupied properties where the City would maintain the properties and charge the owners accordingly.

Council Member Knapp suggested that when a bank takes over a property, they would be sent a letter informing them that they would start incurring the maintenance charges. The City Manager concurred, but said the tough part is collecting payment. Council Member Govin interjected that is where the assessment comes in, to which the City Manager agreed, which would render immediate payment, whereas a lien could go unpaid for years. He added the City could contract the work out, since there are fewer employees now.

Council Member Fernandez opined that currently when a bank-owned property has an outstanding lien, she is generally not in favor of drastically reducing that lien, particularly when the process has gone on for many months. The City Manager responded that the problem is that the person buying the property will often come to the City to request a reduction, instead of the bank coming forward.

Mr. Marlowe moved to the topic of **Incremental Code Changes/Updating the City Code**.

Council Member Govin opened the discussion, stating there is no likelihood of any money to spend on this for awhile; therefore, he would like to see the City start with forming a study group comprised of some of the local architects and engineers to identify smaller “fixes” that could be done. He acknowledged that a study group has been tried before, but that was some time ago; the determination at that time was that the Code needed a lot of work. He said the reality is the City cannot afford the massive overhaul, so he is suggesting that the City work with small sections that would provide meaningful changes. He acknowledged that proceeding in that manner sometimes creates a domino effect of other changes that may be required at the same time. He expressed the belief that utilizing community volunteers, who have indicated a desire to work on this project, would show the City’s willingness to use these community resources to work on small sections of the Code, as well as demonstrate to the community that the City does not have the funding resources needed to accomplish the entire project on its own. He stated that this would also help prepare the citizenry for what the Council may have to do to meet the budgetary needs for the coming year, in terms of borrowing from reserves or further cuts. He concluded that this is another way of letting the citizens know the Council hears their pleas to fix the problems with the Code, that the Council is going to begin to take small steps in that direction, and will continue to go in that direction until such time as funds are available to do the entire project.

Council Member Fernandez questioned whether there are classes at school for people studying to become architects, where a professor could take on a certain element or section of the Code as a project, the students could do the research, and come back with suggestions for the City as part of their class activities. She continued that the research and information they bring back may be useful, even though the City would have to review it; the City would not have to implement their suggestions, but the research would be done.

Council Member Knapp said the City Codes do not really have anything to do with construction, because that is covered by the Florida Building Code. He said the City Code is more of what one can develop, and the means and methods that will be allowed.

Council Member Knapp cited an example of the maintenance-free wall required between commercial properties and residential properties to illustrate how the Code is a living document that has to be able to change with technology and new products, and be subject to interpretation. He explained that when that section of the Code was written the interpretation was that the maintenance-free wall was constructed of masonry wall with bricks; around 1992 PVC fences were introduced and were interpreted to meet that criterion. He said the cost difference between those two methods is very significant. He said the Codes could be rewritten completely tomorrow, but with technology and the introduction of new products, it has to be a living document, as well as be open to interpretation; there is a lot of discretion in the codes.

Council Member Knapp explained the other significant issue with the existing Code is related to the new downtown redevelopment, which has created massive issues for persons who own existing properties but are not part of the actual redevelopment project. He cited the example of the old funeral home, which was purchased for a dental office, but found to be cost prohibitive to renovate in order to meet the Codes, and now sits empty. Another example, he said, is the Dunkin' Donuts on Bullard Parkway; the owner wants to tear it down and build a new one, but they cannot physically make it work with the Downtown Redevelopment Code.

Council Member Fernandez questioned whether they need to readdress specific criteria around the CRA more than anything else. Council Member Knapp responded that most of the problems are the result of the fact that the criteria for the CRA district is so strict that existing property owners can never come close to complying, even if some of them tore their buildings to the ground. Beyond being cost prohibitive to the few properties, such as the funeral home, which have sufficient land, Council Member Knapp said it is physically impossible for most. In response to Mayor Affronti's question as to flexibility, Council Member Knapp stated there is zero flexibility in the Downtown Redevelopment Code.

Mayor Affronti commented that some members of the previous group who worked with staff became frustrated and quit because staff didn't listen to them. He suggested if they are serious about getting input from some of their knowledgeable citizens, it could make a huge difference in the development. Council Member Knapp concurred, stating they lost a Dunkin' Donuts over it, after the business owners had tried to work with it unsuccessfully for two years; with the existing criteria for the Downtown Redevelopment Area, they could not make a site plan work with a drive-through. He added that the Community Development Director did try to work with them, but the site was too small.

Council Member Fernandez suggested that to handle previous concerns perhaps the group would report to the Council as well as to staff; staff could explain why they disagree, but it would relieve the group frustrations of not being heard. Council Member Govin commented that the Community Development Director knows the problem areas. The City Manager added that the Community Development Director would lead this group.

Following a brief break, Mr. Marlowe directed Council's attention to the topic of **education**, stating that everyone is concerned about the quality of public education. He said a goal in this area would be to look at strategies for civic influence; some municipalities have chosen to establish Charter schools, some of which have succeeded and some have failed, and others have chosen to work within the public schools.

Mayor Affronti said he believes there are two parts –what they should do now and what they would like to do down the road. He commented that he would love to have the success of Terrace Community School duplicated in the high school, adding that Terrace Community School is one of the best charter schools in the Country. He said Brooks-DeBartolo Collegiate High School is having problems because of its location at 15<sup>th</sup> and Fowler Avenue, and the lack of funding, which is primarily from Derek Brooks, former Tampa Bay Buccaneer linebacker and DeBartolo, the real estate developer. He continued that they are interested in moving into Temple Terrace, but in the meantime, the City is working with the school district the best they can. He said he believes the meetings with the school principals have been very productive, and through those meetings, a lot of important new programs have been established, such as the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) program at Greco Middle School, the Bank Street (the developmental-interaction approach) program at Temple Terrace Elementary, and many others, because they have been communicating with the district and making it known that the City wants its children to have the best possible education.

Mayor Affronti continued that before that time, about 19% of Temple Terrace children were going to private schools, which is a fairly high percentage, while our population makeup is highly educated compared to the County or State. Mayor Affronti explained how cooperative the School District has been and the success they have had at the various schools as a result of the new programs, adding that change doesn't happen overnight. He noted that funding is an issue with charter schools.

Mr. Marlowe clarified that one option is to continue the work they've done with the School District and another is to find a site for the Brooks-DeBartolo Collegiate High School. The City Manager mentioned he took representatives on a tour, where they looked at several properties in the area, including the Inca property, which has some issues, property on 301, and property adjacent to Greco Middle School, east of the track. Mayor Affronti interjected the school representatives want to meet with the School District to see if it is possible to have the school adjacent to Greco. The City Manager said the 301 property is owned by Southwest Florida Water Management District, and he doesn't believe there is enough property there. He said they liked the Greco property, which would be a good mutual use, but he cautioned them that the neighbors may be opposed to having a high school next to them. Council Member Govin suggested property on the north side may be workable, where it is not adjacent to the neighborhood.

Mayor Affronti said he believes it would be helpful if the Council Members have any ideas as to programs they would like to see implemented in the schools to let him know. Council Member Halloway said he would focus on the element of reading; clearly the bulk of students coming out of high school today are weak readers. He briefly discussed the reading methods used today, expressing concern that the end result is turning out students who are not literate in terms of reading. He opined that the methods used in public schools today, which are not phonics-based, are why parents are putting their children in private schools. He concluded he would abolish the "whole language" or balanced approach [a blend of "whole language" and phonetics] and go back to phonics, if he could.

Mayor Affronti suggested the problem lies with lack of support and training at home; students in charter schools are there because their parents want them to go there for a good education and they push their kids.

Mayor Affronti said he doesn't know how to overcome the problem of children in public schools who couldn't care less about school, and neither do their parents.

Council Member Fernandez related her personal experiences of her three children in school; two children love to read, and one does not. She said they do teach using a phonics-based approach at Lewis – both opportunities were there – one child needed the whole language method and the other needed phonics all the way. She said it has been her experience that the teachers are using both approaches, but it all comes back to the home in her opinion; children pick up their parents' values, and if school is not important to their parents, it is not important to the children. She doesn't know how to change that culture.

While she appreciates charter schools, Council Member Fernandez remarked that Terrace Community School annihilated Greco; it is a challenge to get parents to set foot on the Greco campus to see that they do not have the violence that some of the City's own Police Officers stand up and discuss at the Temple Terrace Golf & Country Club. Where the theory of the charter school is very good, she said in practice, they split the talent and have missed an opportunity to improve their property values, because the physical location of Greco being in the City affects their property values. As a parent working within the Greco system, she said they are campaigning to get parents to come onto campus and see that they have made a lot of inroads. However, if a lot of active parents are taken out, she said there are a smaller number of voices left to pressure the School District; they have shown good results with the School District, citing the District allowing them to assist in interviewing new principals going into Temple Terrace Schools. She suggested the City can help by keeping close contact and keeping parental pressure to not accept detrimental programs. She concluded that she is not opposed to a charter school, but the first goal has to be to put pressure on the School District to make needed improvements and changes to the local schools within our borders.

Mayor Affronti remarked they have emphasized in the principal meetings that, where there are two groups of children in a class – some who are interested and the others who don't care – they don't "teach down," but continue to teach at the upper level to allow those children to progress.

Council Member Halloway briefly mentioned the advanced placement program referred to as "CAPS." He expressed concern that along with grant money, a Civil Rights group has complained about the number of minorities in the program, which may result in the program becoming more of a quota system and not based on "smarts" as it was originally intended. He reviewed a statement from one of the schools participating in the last School Improvement Grants Program, which stated about 25% of the students experience "delayed proficiency," which means they could not read.

Council Member Fernandez disagreed, explaining that the statement means 25% were reading below grade level, not that they could not read.

Mr. Marlowe clarified the Council is talking about continued promotion of the City's schools and the second is to try to attract charter schools.

Speaking from the experience of having a child completing four years at King High School, Council Member Knapp expressed concern that children in the mainstream program at King High School may experience safety problems, particularly the younger children just entering high school, if they are not big and strong. Mayor Affronti said his grandson, who is a sophomore, has not had any problems at King.

Council Member Fernandez said they need continued pressure on the School District for school safety, which could be an issue at any location. Council Member Knapp commented that they are finally getting a turn-around of the thought process in the community, adding that they have been trying to overcome a 10-year stigma of not being safe. Council Member Fernandez emphasized that the School District stops listening if there are no active parents involved.

Mayor Affronti said area supervisors and principals are at those meetings; they are able to give them a perspective of what the citizens see; they are reacting to that.

Mr. Marlowe directed Council's attention to the topic of the **sewer/wastewater treatment plant**.

Council Member Knapp reviewed that in the past, the City had property set aside to use for the wastewater treatment plant; however, there were groundwater issues. He continued that the adjacent property has come available due to a bankruptcy proceeding. He said he mentioned it to the City Manager as a possible opportunity, adjacent to the planned future site, that may provide sufficient land to get rid of the groundwater.

Mr. Marlowe said there are a couple of possible solutions – the adjacent land, and if MOSI is able to take some of the water. The City Manager interjected that the conceptual study has indicated that irrespective of MOSI, the City could use retention trenches to dispose of the water. He noted that he has asked the City's lobbyist to talk with the Department of Environmental Protection to see if that is something they would entertain conceptually, before the City spends a lot of money; he has not yet heard back on that request. He said that would incorporate the property to the south that Council Member Knapp mentioned, with the retention ditches operating like a percolation pond.

Council Member Fernandez asked whether there would be an unpleasant odor, which would be a public concern. The City Manager responded that they are acutely aware of the perception, although a great deal of research was done about eight years ago, and he doesn't believe that would be a problem. Council Member Fernandez recognized that it takes treated wastewater from four households to provide sufficient irrigation for one household, so there is no way the City could utilize the wastewater for irrigation for the City. Council Member Knapp added that piping would also be cost prohibitive. At one time Southwest Florida Water Management District had indicated there may be funding for piping, Council Member Fernandez added. Council Member Knapp said there was a previous concern about what would happen when it rains and no one needs the irrigation. The City Manager concluded that the City is actively continuing to work on the proposed wastewater treatment plant.

Council Member Fernandez suggested that another item for the list would be to develop a strategy to have in place to work with future developers for the rest of the CRA.

Council Member Govin suggested they include the Hillsborough River issues; the City is still not anywhere close to being in control of the River and is getting very little cooperation from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). He said they refuse to give Temple Terrace representation on the Governing Board, which he suggested should be a goal of the Council. He opined that SWFWMD deals with the City only when they have to; the only way around that is to have someone on the Board who will stand up to the Board and speak their mind on behalf of Temple Terrace. The City Manager interjected it is a gubernatorial appointment. Council Member Govin suggested they should lobby the candidate expected to win in November that there are 12,000 people down here who would like some representative on that Board. He stressed the City should actively pursue an appointment to the SWFWMD Governing Board. Mr. Marlowe clarified they are speaking of a pro-active effort to gain a seat on the Board.

Council Member Govin also mentioned the pension issue is a killer for the City and needs to be addressed. He said there is pending legislation and they need to understand how it will affect the City; he emphasized the City needs to take action, because it won't go away. Council Member Halloway commented that it is a problem throughout the Country. Council Member Govin concurred, but said the City has to find a way to deal with its own problem. A brief discussion ensued over the pension issues and the City's funding requirements. The City Manager commented that if they reduce the expected rate of return, there would be more liability for the City to assume; the actuary includes 8% in their study and if that is lowered, the City has to make up the gap, which they cannot afford to do.

Council Member Fernandez stated they need a long term plan for funding the pensions, suggesting a more even funding to increase the funding during good years. The City Manager interjected they do that now. Council Member Fernandez expressed concern that they still owe such a large amount in bad years that perhaps the amount paid in good years should be increased even more; at the same time, they need to be careful not to overfund the pensions. Mayor Affronti added that the unfunded liability continues to climb.

The City Manager suggested they should influence the Pension Boards concerning new hires, such as increasing the "20 and Out" program to "25 and Out" for future hires. He suggested a joint meeting with the Pension Boards. Mr. Marlowe suggested they would like to establish a much more active strategy.

Following a short break to set up the polling devices, Mr. Marlowe reviewed the topics under consideration as goals for the coming year, and instructed Mayor Affronti and the Council Members to select five goals as their top priority (number 1 ranking); they could endorse as many others as they wished.

The following is a *draft* of the 2010 goals. Mr. Marlowe explained he will prepare the final document, reflecting the final priority listing of the goals, and submit it to the City Manager for his review, prior to presentation to the Council for adoption.

Goals 2010 (Draft)  
City of Temple Terrace

- Continue efforts to develop the wastewater treatment facility.
- Continue redevelopment project.
- Develop a long-term pension.
- Continue pursuit of alternative revenue sources.
- Examine social media communication options and develop a plan.
- Develop a comprehensive approach to bank-owned properties.
- Develop a long-term CRA strategy.
- Seek a position on the Southwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board to represent Temple Terrace views.
- Continue to develop gateways.
- Strengthen community support of local schools via expansion of current forums and develop a communication strategy re: the quality of local schools.
- Support Brooks-DeBartolo relocation to Temple Terrace.
- Continue to pursue the circulator.
- Continue discussions of Vandenberg options with USF.
- Continue development of student intern programs and student volunteer programs.

Mr. Marlowe expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work with the Council once again and called for closing comments, beginning with the City Clerk, who commented the economic situation is a real challenge, trying to do so much more, with less, and fewer places left to cut.

Noting this is his last goal-setting session, Council Member Halloway said he would miss these sessions; they have been very enjoyable.

The City Manager emphasized the value of the goal-setting session to the administration and staff. He noted that when the City recently received the Distinguished Budget Award, he read all of the reviews, and the City was complimented on the visions established in the year 2000 and the goal-setting each year thereafter; this process is recognized nationally. He said it is extremely important to him and to staff and reflects well on the City, adding Council's efforts are appreciated.

Mr. Marlowe commented that the importance of this goal-setting process is becoming recognized by the Florida Government Finance Officers Association. He said it is also really important from a manager/governing body's communication standpoint to understand the Council's priorities.

Mayor Affronti complimented City staff, noting that the Council sets the goals, and it is up to staff to follow through and make it happen. The work session concluded at 11:32 a.m.

Submitted by,

Lisa Small, MMC  
City Clerk