

## **SUMMARY OF COUNCIL RETREAT**

### **DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS**

**JULY 19, 2011**

Mayor Martin Tully welcomed Council members to the retreat at 7:59 p.m. at Emmett's Ale House, 5200 Main Street.

**Present:** Mayor Martin Tully; Commissioners Marilyn Schnell, William Waldack, Sean P. Durkin, Geoff Neustadt, Bob Barnett, Becky Rheintgen

**Staff:** Village Manager Dave Fieldman; Village Attorney Enza Petrarca; Village Clerk April Holden

Mayor Tully outlined the following topics for discussion: Expectations of Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, Commissioners, and interactions with the public. The Mayor said the Municipal Code includes rules of conduct for the Council. He said it is important to work as a team. He emphasized the need to maintain and instill confidence in the community and urged Council not to be distracted from the goal of a high level of service to the community.

The Mayor asked Council members to engage in conversation in terms of the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem and Commissioners as they relate to preparation for the Council meetings, expectations during Council meetings, communication among Council members, and communication with the public. Mayor Tully described the format he follows with respect to his meetings with the Village Manager in preparation for the Council meetings. The agendas are prepared by the Manager's Office. The Manager decides when items will be placed on the agenda and whether they will be on the Consent Agenda or First Reading. Two major factors in terms of when or where to place items on the agenda are the cost of the item and timeliness.

The Mayor noted that, according to the Municipal Code, the duties of the Mayor Pro Tem include communicating with Council members. In practice, the Village Manager calls each Council member prior to the Council meeting, generally on Mondays. With respect to Council meetings, the Mayor said he prefers discussion among Council members at the Council meeting as opposed to exchanges with individual members in advance of the meeting. In terms of reviewing future agenda items, it was agreed that the Manager could discuss future items at the time he calls the Council members, including those items under consideration for the next Consent Agenda. The Mayor encouraged Council members to call him with any questions or concerns.

The Mayor then focused on Council members' communication and contact during meetings and with the public. He specifically referenced Section 2.5 of the Municipal Code, Council Rules, Rule 7. He said he sent the rules to Council. He quoted the following section of Rule 7: "Remarks shall be confined to the question under debate, avoiding personalities and refraining from impugning the motives of any other member's argument or vote." Mayor Tully asked all Council members to commit to abiding by Rule 7 voluntarily outside of the Council Chambers, and to commit today to make positive changes going

forward. The Mayor said he is asking all Council members to try to build trust, to adopt a higher standard, to try to commit to Rule 7 and to try to go forward. Mayor Tully also discussed Rule 10 in terms of not talking when another Council member is speaking. He said this includes verbal communication as well as communication via electronic devices. He then discussed Council in terms of “we” vs. “I.” “We” is the Village, the face of the community. Council members are elected at large and everything Council members say or do affects Council as a group.

In terms of communication with the public, the Mayor said he understands there are competing needs and wants for communication. He also understands people seek and appreciate receiving information from Council members as well as official communication from the Village. He acknowledged the wide variety of constituents and said no one should be left out. He said he wants to be proactive. He referred to individual Council members communicating individually with residents or communicating through social media. He talked about unifying the message for official communications and said his concern is not the media, it is the message. He reminded his colleagues that Council members are policy makers, not first responders. Mr. Fieldman said how, when and why a message is crafted are policy issues he and Communications Director Doug Kozlowski are addressing.

The Mayor asked if there are other communication issues Council members would like to discuss. The Village Corner, the public comment portion of the Council meetings, and the standing committees were discussed in terms of balancing needs and resources.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 p.m.

April K. Holden  
Village Clerk