



## City of Aberdeen, Maryland Strategic Planning Retreat March 14-15, 2014

### Norms for the retreat:

- Listen with respect
  - Let others finish before you start talking
  - Be attentive to the speaker
  - Disagree agreeably
- Be:
  - positive and realistic
  - candid and honest
  - patient and respectful
  - engaged and fully present
- Look for opportunities to agree
- Strive for consensus
- Practice “yes, and” rather than “yes/no, but”
- Have fun!

### Retreat Goals:

- Strengthen the working relationships between and among members of the governing body
- Develop a vision and critical success factors for the City of Aberdeen
- Identify goals for 2014-216 to move the City closer to its vision

### Preparation

- Each member of the Council will be given 5 to 7 minutes to share "what they believe" about the future of the City. This exercise is loosely based on the "This I Believe" Essay format initiated by Edward R. Morrow on National Public Radio in the 1950's. Today there is an international organization that engages people in writing and sharing essays describing their core values that guide their daily lives. You are invited to share what you personally believe to be true about the future of the City.
  - Tell a story: Be specific. Take your belief from the events of your life that have shaped how you look at and experience "community".
  - Name your belief: Focus on a core belief - and talk about why it is true.
  - Be positive: This is what you DO believe, not what you DON'T believe - avoid speaking in the editorial "we" and make sure this is about what you believe - speak in the first person.
  - Be personal: Write/speak in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak.

## **Day One**

### **4:00 – 9:00 pm**

#### **Introductions**

- Welcome and Introductions
- Agenda Review
- Norms and Expectations for the retreat

Agenda Item Outcome: Create a safe environment for honest exchange of ideas.

#### **"This I Believe..."**

- Each member of the Council will be given an opportunity to share their "belief" about the future of the City.

Agenda Item Outcome: Develop an understanding of the various perspectives of individual members of the governing body.

#### **Understanding the Current Environment**

- Review update on accomplishments from past Council goals
- Review Code of Conduct
- Share results of pre-retreat survey of City Department heads and City Manager

Agenda Item Outcome: Understand the current environment in which the City of Aberdeen is operating in, clarify code of conduct, and hear the perceptions of department heads regarding Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges and priority issues facing the City.

#### **Vision and Critical Success Factors**

- The building blocks of Strategic Planning include a vision for the future, a clear mission for the organization that is executed with common values, and an understanding of the "Critical Success Factors" - those things that "must go well" in order to achieve the vision. The Vision is best articulated by the governing body, the Mission statement (Who we are, what we do and how we do it) works best when owned by the organization and Values are often a shared statement between the governing body and the organization. We will be focusing on vision and critical success factors.
  - Review the common vision themes from the "I Believe" Statements.
  - Identify "Critical Success Factors"

Agenda Item Outcome: Develop a shared vision and identify and agree on those "things that must go right" to secure a positive future for the City of Aberdeen.

## **Day Two**

**8:30 am to 2:00 pm**

### **Check-in**

- Process day one and Confirm Agenda for the day
- Review Vision and Critical Success Factors

Agenda Item Outcome: Adjust the agenda as needed to better serve the City. Make adjustments to vision and critical success factors as needed.

### **The Mayor and Council's Priorities**

- Given the Critical Success Factors that have been identified – what priority policy issues ensure the City moves in the right direction
- Generate and Agree on what this Council would like to accomplish - including a clear understanding of "what success looks like" and what resources will be necessary to accomplish the priority objectives.

Agenda Item Outcome: Identify the Mayor and Council's priority work plan (goals) for 2014-2016.

### **Next Steps**

- Discuss how to communicate the results of the strategic planning exercise with staff
- Identify what support the Council needs from staff to maintain focus on their priority issues.

Agenda Item Outcome: Clarity regarding the path forward

### **Parting Thoughts/Adjourn**

- As the retreat comes to a close, each participant will be asked to share a parting thought on how they feel about the work done during the retreat.