APPROVED MINUTES
CUPERTINO CITY COUNCIL
Saturday, February 6, 2021

SPECIAL MEETING

At 10:00 a.m. Mayor Darcy Paul called the Special City Council meeting to order. This was a teleconference meeting with no physical location.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Darcy Paul, Vice Mayor Liang Chao, and Councilmembers Kitty Moore, Hung Wei, and Jon Robert Willey. Absent: None. All Councilmembers teleconferenced for the meeting.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - None

CITY COUNCIL TRAINING WORKSHOP

City Manager Deborah Feng introduced the session.

Consultants Senior Partner Rod Gould and Senior Manager Christine Butterfield with Management Partners facilitated the workshop.

The Council discussed best practices of governance and clarifying roles.

The consultants created a workshop report containing a summary of the discussions which is available in Exhibit A (attached).

ADJOURNMENT

At 1:52 p.m., Mayor Paul adjourned the meeting.

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Kirsten Squarcia, City Clerk

CITY OF CUPERTINO
EST.1955

City of Cupertino
City Council Workshop
Held February 6, 2021

February 2021

Authors:
Rod Gould, Senior Partner
Christine Butterfield, Senior Manager
Management Partners

Management Partners

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Workshop Report

The City of Cupertino held a City Council workshop on Saturday, February 6, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. via Zoom. The workshop provided an opportunity for Council members and the City Manager to review governance structures and roles, discuss high performance governance and Council norms, and strengthen Council-staff teamwork. This report contains a summary of the results of the retreat.

Rod Gould, Senior Partner, and Christine Butterfield, Senior Manager with Management Partners facilitated the workshop.

Workshop Overview

Objectives
- Strengthen trust and effectiveness of the City Council.
- Develop a Council agreement on norms for working together, with staff and the community.
- Clarify roles of the City of Cupertino governance structure.
- Update and agree upon the phasing of the City's work program due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Agenda
- Welcome and call to order by the Mayor.
- Public comments
- Comments from the City Manager
- Agenda review
- Ice breaker exercise

- Discuss Cupertino governance structure and roles
- Discuss high performance governance and Council norms
- Review hanging issues and commitments
- Wrap up and next steps

Participants

City Council

Mayor Darcy Paul	Vice Mayor Liang Chao	Councilmember Kitty Moore

Councilmember Hung Wei	Councilmember Jon Willey

Executive Management Staff
- City Manager Deb Feng

Workshop Preparation

In preparation for the workshop, the facilitators met with the Assistant City Manager and City Manager to discuss the workshop objectives, facilitator's agenda and PowerPoint presentation.

Welcome and Opening Comments

Mayor Paul called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed Councilmembers, the City Manager, and the public to the meeting. The Mayor invited public comments before opening the workshop. City Manager Deb Feng then offered some opening comments about the importance of the day's discussions.

Following the City Manager's comments, Rod Gould provided an overview of the day to help develop a shared understanding of the purpose and objectives of the workshop. He reviewed the ground rules, agenda, and the method used to record items raised during the workshop that would be addressed at another time.

Rod suggested several ground rules to help the group have a successful workshop.

- Keep video on
- Mute yourself when you are not speaking
- Assume good intent
- Be curious
- Seek consensus
- Stay focused (set aside electronic devices)

Ice Breaker Exercise

The facilitators led an ice breaker exercise to provide an opportunity for the Councilmembers and City Manager to learn more about each other. Each participant shared the following two things about themselves; a summary of what was shared is provided in Table 1 below.

1. Communication style
2. Decision making process

Table 1.   Communication and Decision-Making Styles

Councilmember	Summary
Mayor Paul	• Listens to understand • Clarifies rationale and priorities • Open to all parties' interests
Vice Mayor	• Direct communicator and likes to delve into details • Analyzes information • Focus on what is best for residents
Councilmember Willey	• Listens more • Careful to send the right message • Not quick to jump into the dialogue • Represents the views of the community balance
Councilmember Wei	• Favorite way to communicate is face to face • Applies the law, a rational approach and compassion • Stand by Council decisions (not just personal positions)
Councilmember Moore	• Straight forward • Defensible arguments • She will bring up raise tough issues – "the elephant in the room"

Governance Roles and Responsibilities

To better understand the roles of the key players in local government, the group spent some time reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the Council, Mayor, city manager, commissions/committees, city attorney, and staff. The facilitators noted the importance of respecting others' roles, in order to be the most effective and productive City Council possible.

Rod explained the partnership between Council and staff; policy versus administrative domains; the role of commissions and committees, and the relationships between all major players within City government. The Councilmembers reviewed best practices for good and effective governance, and discussed civility, tone, and examined the distinction between policy versus administrative roles using the example for public expenditures and government contracting.

Rod asked the City Manager what she needs from Council, in order to be successful. Ms. Feng shared that in terms of communications, she needs the following:

- To *hear* more about:
  - Emerging issues, and
  - Gather the questions and comments that Councilmembers collect from the community.
- *Since November 2019* when the last Council workshop was held, the City Manager has observed improvements in the relationships across the City's governance roles.
- *Changes triggered by the pandemic include:*
  - Decrease in interpersonal interfaces with the public and Council,

      ○ Relationship building is more difficult, and

      ○ Increased focus on operations by the Council, with too much focus on administration which is the responsibility of the City Manager.

Rod then asked Council about what their reactions to the City Manager's comments. Council offered the following feedback:

- Things are going well, and it is much better than under the previous City Manager. More work is needed to ensure that staff understands they are here to serve the residents and "we need to be sure decisions are made in collaboration with residents."
- Treat the City Manager as a mentor.
- Happy with Deb's candor.
- Continue to develop trust between Council and staff and explore how we build communication and bridge relations with staff.
- Would like to receive updates about what is not working well.
- Communicate more information to Council.
- Council communication must go through the City Manager and interested in the view of Council from staff's perspective.
- City Council/staff partnership missing.
- Deb inherited an organization characterized as a "train wreck."
- Ramifications of lawsuit persist. Previous City Manager left the state, two assistant city managers departed and planning, and parks and recreation staff also left. Staff was abused by a project manager and developer. There are still lingering trust issues.
- Deb is doing beautifully.
- Interested in heightening efficiency.
- It's not about efficiency; it's really about serving people well; it's a push-pull between those two principles.
- Interested in greater accountability.
- City staff need to understand basic legal regulations in the City.
- Ensure that when new codes are considered by Council that the versions and changes are well documented through various readings.

At the close of the conversation, Deb reminded the Council that staff has developed a work plan dashboard to improve project status information.

High Performance Governance and Council Norms

Rod led the group in developing a shared understanding of high-performance governance and Council norms. The Council and City Manager reviewed two articles from the *Institute for Local Government* (ILG) and discussed examples of Council norms and another regarding Council goal setting authored by Rod Gould.

Rod explained that how the Council works together as a body and plays a critical role in the effectiveness of the City's strategic direction, staff performance and motivation, and regional influence. In addition, the group reviewed the four essential elements for effective Councils, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1.   Elements of Effective Councils
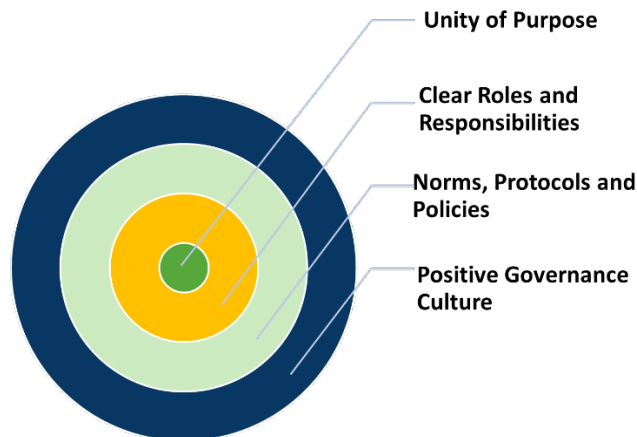
After reviewing communication tips, ways to disagree with a colleague, and how best to build professional relationships, Council reviewed the self-assessment survey results. A summary of the survey is presented on the slide below.

Rod posed the following three questions to the group.

- What was surprising?
- What do we do well?
- What do we need to work on?

A summary of the discussion among Councilmembers is provided below.

Councilmembers offered that the Mayor runs a great meeting and that the results of the assessment appear consistent with their experience so far. In addition, the group discussed the idea of building flexibility into the meeting agendas including conducting meetings in neighborhoods and being thoughtful about the room layout when planning for meetings as well as creating opportunities for the Council to reflect on their performance following decisions.

Council Norms
Following the discussion about high-performance governance, the facilitators reviewed examples of typical Council norms. The group talked about which ones make sense for Cupertino, and how the norms should be operationalized. Rod explained that the next steps for the norms are to formally adopt them by resolution, then review and confirm or modify the norms on a regular basis.

Some of the Councilmembers like the flexibility of not having formally adopted norms and found the sample norms too restrictive. The Council decided to table the discussion and decision about Council norms for Cupertino for a future time.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

After a brief stretch break, Ms. Feng began to discuss the City's Work Plan, but Councilmember Moore at that point raised concerns with regard to considering the City Council's Work Plan at a workshop where the Work Plan had not been noticed as an item for discussion. At this point in the meeting, no members of the public were present. The meeting was not broadcast on the City website or City Channel. Mayor Paul agreed with the concern regarding notice and asked that the City Manager bring back the item at a duly noticed meeting.

The City Manager committed to updating and distributing the City work program as well as follow up on the items identified by Council in the workshop to be addressed at another meeting. The topics are listed below.

The following items were added.
1. How and when is the right time for Council to dive into details of a policy, issue, questions, and explore options? Consider holding more study sessions and ensure that staff outlines the policy development and decision-making process in more detail.
2. Discuss changing staff reports to include an array of options for Council to consider as well as staff providing a specific recommendation.
3. How do other cities conduct Council policy analysis/review?
4. Cupertino should "raise the bar" by involving the community more in the review of policy issues.

To conclude the workshop, each Councilmember and the City Manager offered a closing comment or key takeaway from the day's discussions. Rod indicated that Management Partners would prepare and submit this report. A summary of the closing comments that were offered is below.

- Need for involving more volunteers and connecting them to opportunities
- Council is aligned and so are staff
- Glad the prioritization process worked out
- Lots of listening
- Another half day workshop would be helpful