



City of Homer

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Homer City Council

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Memorandum 19-127

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Councilmembers Aderhold and Venuti
DATE: September 18, 2019
SUBJECT: Council Retreat Planning

The purpose of this memo is to reinitiate the conversation from the April, 22 2019 City Council meeting on planning for a council retreat. Minutes from that meeting indicate that City Council agreed on the following:

Councilmembers were generally supportive of the idea of planning a retreat but felt that it would be better to schedule something in the fall after elections or just after the first of the year. Councilmember Venuti offered to work with Councilmember Aderhold on this.

Fall is here, which means it is time to discuss the details of retreat planning. We have provided the following prompts below to initiate conversation and welcome input from the body.

Timing and duration: Four hours seems to be a good threshold for productive work, and it should probably not go longer than that. There is space in the Council calendar during the second week of November (week of the 11th). Potential times include:

- Wednesday November 13th from 3pm – 7pm
- Saturday November 16th from 9am – 1pm

Location: A location offsite that can accommodate Councilmembers and the public. Suggestions (depending on timing) include the Port and Harbor conference room and the College.

Goals and objectives of retreat: Establishing and prioritizing goals for Council and the Administration for 2020 would be a great start. This would give staff and Council the direction they need regarding items they should be spending their time on. Examples of potential projects/goals include repurposing derelict facilities and major code rewrites.

As part of the goal setting conversation, Council needs a mechanism for the manager to keep Council updated on progress and a way for new items to make it onto the list. This includes developing a threshold for when a project becomes either big enough or time consuming enough to need to be put on a list and prioritized by the body.

It would be our suggestion that both the Administration and Councilmembers come up with a list of projects they hope to work on in 2020. There would be some homework in advance of the retreat to bring these ideas to the table.

Attendance and participation: It is our suggestion that attendance be limited to the Council and Manager. While at a later retreat it may be valuable to include staff, this initial session should be about Council setting their priorities. The four hours will go quickly and limiting participation will improve efficiency.

Facilitation: Council has discussed the desire to have a professional facilitator guide the conversation. We agree that this would be necessary to make the most use of Councilmembers time. Initial conversation with *Wise at Work*, a local company that facilitates strategic planning on behalf of organizations across the state, anticipates approximately 12 hours of work to plan for, execute, and provide follow up on a four hour facilitated retreat.

Recommendation: Discuss retreat and provide direction on next steps. Authorize Councilmembers Aderhold and Venuti to work with the City Manager and a facilitator on furthering retreat planning with the goal of updating City Council at the October 14th Council meeting.

FN: \$1,500 out of 0100-5210 Mayor-Council Professional Services + \$150 out of 0100-5206 Mayor – Council Food and Staples