

Executive Summary: Results of Clayton Agenda Building Workshop

On Saturday, March 14, 1998 Clayton elected officials, administrative staff, and citizen appointees to boards and commissions participated in a one-day workshop at Miami University. The workshop was organized and administered by the Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs at the request of Mayor Ted Gudorf. The workshop was designed to provide the framework to initiate and agree on a plan or "*issue agenda*" for Clayton.

The process incorporated elements of several consensus building techniques employed in the public and private sector, including Delphi sessions, nominal group techniques, and goal setting matrices. Clearly the one-day activity was an abbreviated effort, however the workshop produced three distinct agendas.

The primary goal of the workshop was to develop an action agenda. After the initial stage of the process, most of the day was focused on preparing this agenda.

1. **Action Agenda:** a prioritized list of issues and tasks that require active consideration, specific proposals, and decisions by Clayton Council, Administrative staff, and Boards and Commissions over the next 12 to 18 months.

The secondary goal of the workshop was to develop tentative discussion and charter agendas.

2. **Discussion Agenda:** identification of issues, concerns, and objectives that might frame the efforts of a long-term strategic planning process for Clayton.
3. **Charter Agenda:** specification of issues that will be discussed, analyzed, researched, and evaluated as part of effort required by the Charter Review Commission.

Overview and Process

Local government officials are frequently inundated with ***demands*** for services, expressions of ***wants and needs***, and questions about ***direction, objectives, and goals***. These demands, wants, needs, and questions come from a variety of sources including:

- individual citizens
- organized groups with common interests
- local government employees.
- elected officials

Moreover, from these varied sources come different ***perceptions, definitions, and intensity*** levels attached to these demands, wants, needs, and questions. In some ways the constellation of issues facing local officials may seem overwhelming. Yet, as we all know, in the final analysis, local officials ***analyze and consider*** the issues, sort out the conflict and develop ***consensus***, and agree on a plan or ***issue agenda***.

Obviously, the issue agenda does not constitute all the possible issues that necessarily face local officials, but instead it is made up of a portion of those issues that local official's feel compelled to focus upon. Indeed, it is the ***issue agenda*** that serves as the road map for the collective effort of governance tasks that local officials must address. How, under what circumstances, and through whose process the issue agenda is developed also varies widely. In most instances the agenda building process is an institutionalized dynamic. In these cases community values are well known, avenues for expression are routine, decision structures are well established, and consensus is a habit. In other cases local governments may feel complacent or stale, and periodically the agenda building process is refreshed or reinvigorated when local officials adopt a "strategic planning process" or "community visioning exercise". Finally, for some local governments a triggering event, crisis, or problem drives the agenda building process. For example, many local communities have undertaken planning efforts to develop "cutback" or "retrenchment" strategies due to a severe revenue shortfall, or other fiscal imperative.

Where does Clayton's Agenda Building Process Fit?

As you think about Clayton, the three agenda building processes described above don't seem to fit well. We believe that Clayton is in a unique but not unprecedented situation. As officials of a "new" local government emerging from a magnificent community triumph – a successful merger process – you feel compelled to get on with the business of local governance. While the commitment is clear, the process is unfamiliar. Clearly many of you have considerable experience as township trustee, clerk, or village council-member. However, the framework is not quite the same. As local leaders you understand that there are ***demands*** for services, expressions of ***wants and needs***, and questions about ***direction, objectives, and goals***. You realize there are different ***perceptions, definitions, and intensity*** levels attached to these demands, wants, needs, and questions. You understand the need to ***analyze and consider*** the issues, sort out the conflict and develop ***consensus***. The workshop was designed to provide the framework to initiate and agree on a plan or ***issue agenda for Clayton***.

Participants were separated into three groups and worked through Stages 1-3 in pre-defined groups. All participants were brought together for Stage 4 of the process.

<u>COUNCIL</u>	<u>ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF</u>	<u>CITIZEN BOARDS & COMMISSIONS</u>
Joyce Dietering	Ted Gudorf	Paul Andzik
Don Imbus	Dave Evans	E. Lynn App
Bob Peters	Wilbur Sussman	John Beattie
Janice Paulus	Buzz Portune	Mike Means
Debbie Liebermann	Brian Elkins	Sue Birchfield
	Bob Galvin	Alice Collier
	Dave Potts	M. Ernest Collier
	Dana Pennington	Tim Holman
	Monica Potts	
	Teri Birchfield	

Stage 1 – Issue Identification: brainstorm, identification of issues, concerns, problems, objectives, and goals. Issues were sorted between short and long term, and charter categories.

Stage 2 – Evaluation & Prioritization: Focusing on the Action Agenda, each group discussed the issues placed on the action agenda, and ranked the importance of each issue on the list.

Stage 3 – Coordination & Interdependence: After finalizing and ranking the issues on their respective action agenda, individual groups received copies of the action agenda of the other two groups. Each group discussed differences; had the opportunity to integrate any of the issues from the other groups into their action agenda, and re-evaluate the ranking of action items.

Stage 4 – Collective Goal-Setting: Issue Consensus
Each of the three groups met together and proceeded to discuss individual revised agendas for the purpose of moving toward consensus on a set of collective issues or goals.

THE AGENDAS

Listed below are the action agendas developed by each participant group. These action agendas are the product of each group's work in Stage 1 through Stage 3 of the process.

ACTION AGENDA-COUNCIL

1. fire service staffing
2. capital improvement and road maintenance plans
3. proactive streets department
4. leaf collection
5. community survey
6. newsletter
7. park maintenance
8. business assistance program

ACTION AGENDA-ADMINISTRATION

1. fire and police levy
2. operating budget and investments
3. fire & ems staffing
4. comprehensive personnel system: policies, staff utilization, wages & salaries
5. improved city services & facilities: trash, leaf, snow & mow, cemeteries, parks, land acquisition
6. grants
7. water & sewer negotiations
8. zoning code consolidation
9. communications: internal & external; newsletter, community events
10. development strategies

ACTION AGENDA-BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

1. water and sewer availability and capacity
2. financial planning
3. cost control/budgetary constraints
4. improve citizen communication/dissemination of information
5. improve safety services (police & fire)
6. zoning rules and enforcement
7. increase citizen involvement from the community
8. sign ordinance
9. leaf collection/yard waste
10. animal ordinances and enforcement

Stage 4 of the process initiated a consensus building effort to produce a coordinated and consolidated action agenda. This Action Agenda reflects the identification and prioritization specific issues from the agendas of each group.

ACTION AGENDA

1. ***Fire and Police Levies:***
2. ***Establish capital improvement and road maintenance plan***
3. ***Fire and EMS staffing:*** including passage of levies, focusing on fire and emergency medical staffing concerns, and improvement of police and fire services.
4. ***Initiate comprehensive personnel system:*** including the development and codification of personnel policies and procedures, analysis of staff utilization, and review of compensation schedule.
5. ***Improve basic city services:*** trash, leaf pick up, snow removal, mowing, cemeteries, parks and road maintenance, development of a proactive streets department, and review of animal control ordinances and enforcement.
6. ***Grant research and preparation:*** including a review of operating budget and investments, financial planning, and consideration of cost control/budgetary constraints.
7. ***Water and Sewer negotiations***
8. ***Zoning Code consolidation:*** including review of code enforcement, and sign ordinance
9. ***Initiate improved communication with citizens and employees:*** including community newsletter, community survey, internal communications, and increased citizen involvement.
10. ***Identify economic development strategies:*** including consideration of a business assistance program, and overall development plans.
11. ***Expand neighborhood watch program***
12. ***Finalize city seal and expand Web page***

A secondary product of the workshop was the development of a preliminary discussion and charter agenda. Listed below are the issues and items placed on these respective agendas.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. Sports complex/recreation center
2. Additional city facilities (salt bin, road garage)
3. Central Business district
4. Senior Center
5. Light Industrial Park
6. Community Survey
7. Revenue Forecasting
8. Comprehensive Plan
9. Business Assistance Program
10. Increased citizen involvement
11. Develop public/private partnerships
12. Encourage private housing diversification
13. Implement diversity hiring practices
14. Institute animal control policies
15. Develop property maintenance code

CHARTER AGENDA

- 1 Form of local government including consideration of council-manager form
- 2 Charter positions
- 3 Income tax and future revenue sources
- 4 Representation: including issues of at-large and precinct representation
- 5 Administrative and organizational departmental structure
- 6 Term Limits