

CITY OF DARIEN
GOAL SETTING SESSION
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
November 14, 2023, 6:30pm

Present: Mayor Joseph Marchese, Alderpersons Tom Belczak, Ralph Stompanato, Eric Gustafson, Joe Kenny, Ted Schauer, Mary Sullivan, Gerry Leganski, City Administrator Bryon Vana, and Director of Municipal Services Dan Gombac, Police Chief Greg Thomas, Senior Planner Jordan Yanke and Darien Chairman of the Board - Chamber of Commerce, Andy Blumenfeld.

1. Beautification Projects

Staff advised the City has completed a number of beautification projects including roadway landscape plantings, theme lighting, banners and welcome to Darien signs. Staff confirmed the Council is interested in continuing to plan and budget for beautification projects. Staff encouraged the elected officials to submit ideas for their wards.

2. Chamber Grant

Staff advised that in the current fiscal year the council approved a grant of \$35,000 for the Chamber. The grant covered the chamber's current membership dues of \$30,000, potential growth of 15 new Darien business memberships totaling \$3,375, and assists in miscellaneous expenses of \$1,625. The city council approved the MOU with the chamber on February 6, 2023 by a 5-2 vote. The council discussed continuing the grant for another year. The council generally favored continuing the grant but did ask for more specific examples of how the Chamber benefited from the grant. Staff advised that this issue would be discussed at an Administrative/Finance Committee meeting and council meeting before any decision is made.

3. Resident Notification System

Staff advised the primary source of resident information from the PD is done on twitter. Prior to Twitter, the PD used a texting system but did not have many subscribers. Some of the elected officials asked staff to look at a texting option as a way to send out messages to the public. Chief Thomas advised that the PD would be switching to a text alert system through our web site consultants. The PD will continue to provide general information on twitter by combining with city hall Twitter account.

4. Citizen Survey

There was a general discussion about the survey results. Administrator Vana advised there were some responses showing people use the Next-door app for information. Vana discussed some recent Next-door posts and stated many of the posts/responses are inaccurate, malicious and slanderous. The city always welcomes any feedback whether it is positive or negative. However, there were several posts, regarding the Gerber issue, that cross the line of reasonableness these posts are all public comments, not private messages between two parties. The council concurred that a civility statement regarding social media posts would be beneficial. The

Administrative/Finance Committee will discuss this issue and provide the council with a recommendation.

5. Elected official survey

Mayor Marchese stated that due to the late hour he and Administrator Vana would meet individually with each Alderperson to discuss their survey responses.

6. Postcard Mailer

Mayor Marchese discussed the city mailing direct flyers to residents informing them of community events and provided cost estimate for the flyer. The Alderpersons supported this concept.

The meeting adjourned at 9:18pm.

JOSEPH A. MARCHESE, MAYOR

JOANNE E. RAGONA, CITY CLERK