



4646 Dakota St. SE
Prior Lake, MN 55372

March 12, 2008

A Message from the Mayor

Proposed Reorganization Benefits

You have often heard me say that our Prior Lake organization is driven by the 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan. But like most things in life it is easy to say we live by something (like our strategic plan) when times are good. When times are more challenging, as they are today, it is very easy to second guess or abandon the plan. I am pleased to report that your city is doing neither.

At the March 3 City Council meeting, the city manager announced that he would be making significant changes to our governmental organization intended to have wide-ranging impacts. The reorganization is in response to today's financial realities and intended to help our community take proactive steps to weather the economic challenges ahead. But the most important long-term aspects of the reorganization are not economic at all.

As I listened to the manager's proposal last week, I was impressed that virtually every aspect of the reorganization strengthens our ability to achieve our 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan.

The Reorganization

The reorganization reduces city positions by four full-time equivalents. One full-time engineer and two full-time building inspection positions are discontinued in response to the market slowdown. A half-time facility manager position will not be filled as proposed in the 2008 budget. A full-time secretarial position will be reduced to half-time. These actions save an estimated \$165,430 in 2008 and \$287,082 in 2009.

We are saddened to have to lay off existing employees, but we have been able to provide them with significant advanced notice in hopes they can find a job before the layoffs become effective. We have also committed to contact other employers for them to offer references which might help them to become re-employed as soon as possible.

The existing Planning and Building Department is restructured into two departments. One department includes building inspection, code enforcement, transit, transportation planning, research and grant writing under the oversight of Jane Kansier.

Community Development and Natural Resources will be under the leadership of Danette Moore. In addition to leading the residential and economic development processes, this department will bring a fresh focus on natural resource objectives including our master park plan, park equipment replacement, conservation programs and Earth Day efforts.

Benefits

The reorganization affirms our commitment to the 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan in numerous ways. Before the reorganization, there was no management level position responsible for the implementation of natural resource objectives. That meant that one of our vision elements was not receiving the kind of attention it should. Similarly, before the reorganization, we had no one focused upon grant writing and solicitation, which is a basic piece of our strong financial management vision element.

The fact that community development (residential and economic development) and natural resources are together as responsibilities under one position is intentional. It acknowledges that we must attend to the well-being of our natural environment while focusing on quality community growth. This, too, is consistent with our 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan.

The reorganization also acknowledges that change is natural and continuing. Our previous organization was structured to meet the pre-2030 Vision and Strategic Plan objectives. It is not suitable for achieving our future challenges. No one would deny that today's market is altogether different than a year ago. This reorganization removes resources in some areas and adds them in other areas to provide the wherewithal to get needed work done. The reorganization report reminds us that the City of Prior Lake and its governmental organization have changed both subtly and dramatically in the recent past.

Last year we learned about the value of grants. We were able to leverage \$1.3 million with a \$500,000 city contribution making the purchase of the 30-acre Pike Lake property possible, so that the beauty of the area would be preserved for all to see in the future. In the process preserve our small-town values.

For the first time we will have a person on staff who will look for ways to help us get grant funds to get important community work done with as little impact upon the taxpayer as possible. Grants are potentially available for land acquisitions, downtown redevelopment, transit and transportation improvements and park improvements.

The reorganization also underscores the importance of our employees in achieving our vision as I mentioned in my State of the City Address. Employee talents and abilities under the reorganization are better matched to the work they are expected to do. Employee retention was also served by the changes. An employee who was ready to assume greater responsibility is able to do so here rather than moving to another city to our detriment.

Conclusion

Our Prior Lake staff, working within the new organization format, is more capable of achieving our 2030 Vision and Strategic Plan now than ever before so that Prior Lake can continue to pursue its vision – even in challenging times – and remain a wonderful place to call home.

Sincerely,

Mayor Jack Haugen