

# City of Robins, Iowa Goal Setting Report

November 14, 2017

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Mayor:  
Chuck Hinz

City Council:  
Marilyn Cook  
Roger Overbeck  
Don Norton  
Brad Sevcik  
Dick Pilcher

Lori Pickart, City Clerk/Treasurer



Facilitated by:  
Jeff Schott  
Institute of Public Affairs  
University of Iowa

# **CITY OF ROBINS, IOWA GOAL SETTING SESSION 2017**

## **Introduction**

The City of Robins requested the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) to assist the city with goal setting. IPA agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

1. Prepare a questionnaire to identify recent accomplishments, issues/trends/concerns, potential new initiatives/programs/policies and suggestions to improve organizational effectiveness.
2. Conduct a goal-setting session with the elected officials and key staff.
3. Prepare this final report.

## **Goal Setting Work Session**

City Council Members and the Mayor held a work session conducted by the IPA on November 14, 2017. In attendance and participating at this meeting were Mayor Chuck Hinz and Council Members Marilyn Cook, Roger Overbeck, Don Norton, Brad Sevcik, and Dick Pilcher. Also in attendance and participating in this meeting were City Clerk/Treasurer Lori Pickart, Deputy City Clerk Liz Schura, Public Works Supervisor Vince Bading, and Zoning Administrator Dean Helander.

## **Major Accomplishments**

The following were identified as major city accomplishments during the past two years:

### **Economic Development**

- Otter Creek Country Store opening
- Lebowski's opening
- Emery Place – assisted with expansion

### **Infrastructure**

- Started Main Street Rebuild Project which will be completed by 12/17
  - Purchased all properties needed for Main Street reconstruction without condemnation
- Tower Terrace/I-380 intersection on DOT 5-year plan
- Water/sewer projects
  - Chester Road
  - Center Point Rd/County Home Rd
  - Mary Jo/Jennifer
  - Robinwood Dr water extension
  - Woodland Dr water loop underneath trail
- Drainage issue corrections, *i.e.*, Cypress Court
- Mentzer Rd to County Home Rd concrete overlay
- Center Point Rd concrete overlay (in process)
- Developed Northwest Quadrant drainage/park plan
- Sidewalk extension on Mentzer Rd to Emery Place (in process)

### **City Operations**

- Developed Human Resource planning document
- Developed improved city website
- Used website, eblast, texting to communicate with residents
- Completed library study
- Purchased church south of City Hall
- Completed special census
- Established Equipment Reserve Fund and used those funds to purchase fire truck, patrol car, snow plow, and street truck

### **Parks**

- Opened trail expansion at South Troy Park to connect to Cedar Valley Nature Trail
- Constructed Shimek Crossing/Bridge
- Constructed Woodland Trail connection to Cedar Valley Nature Trail

## **Issues, Concerns, Trends and Opportunities**

The following were identified as issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that may affect future city services, policies, finances or operations:

- Review city staffing needs
  - How to pay for staffing needs (see HR Planning Document for more information)
- Future construction of Tower Terrace Road in Robins
  - How to pay for it
  - Opportunity for future development
  - Infrastructure needs for this area; need updated engineering study and cost estimates
- How to maintain lowest taxes in metro area while undertaking major infrastructure projects
- Water and sewer across Tower Terrace Rd up Center Point Road to Main St
- Flynn Development:
  - Installation of infrastructure – how to fund
  - Opportunity for growth
- Robins Square development
  - Need to review zoning regulations and development plans
  - Community-endorsed economic development
- Zieser/Water Management development (Northwest Quadrant)
- Unnamed Tributary sanitary sewer trunk line from Mentzer Drive to Grand Court needs to be enlarged

## **On-Going Commitments/Obligations**

The following were identified as on-going commitments/obligations for the upcoming 24 month period:

- Continue participation in regional Dry Creek/Indian Creek trunk sewer project
- Continue sanitary sewer infiltration/remediation activities
- Complete blacktop or concrete surfacing of remainder of seal coated streets
- Continue to move forward with Tower Terrace Road/I-380 interchange
- Monitor drainage issues in neighborhoods
- Construct urban cross section of Main Street from Troy Road to Mentzer Road
- Continue to retrofit water in existing subdivisions
- Utility obligations of city related to Flynn property
- Continue economic development initiatives and continue support for REDI
- Develop plan for downtown/original town/City Hall area revitalization
  - Reach understanding as to commonly understood terms for parts of the city (Downtown, Uptown, Robins Square, City Hall)
- Develop plan for future growth of municipal buildings
- Make a decision regarding Northwest Regional Retention Plan
- Renew 28E annexation agreement with Hiawatha
- Develop maintenance agreement with Hiawatha regarding Robins Road and other joint jurisdiction roads
- Continue to update city website

## **New Priority Projects, Programs, Policies and Initiatives**

The Mayor and City Council reviewed potential projects, programs, policies and initiatives for consideration and selected the following as new priorities for the upcoming 24 month period (listed in priority order):

- 1 (Tie) Work with Hiawatha to overlay Robins Rd
- 1 (Tie) Develop plans for economic development at Robins Square
  
- 3 Restroom facilities at South Troy Park
  
- 4 Upsize Unnamed Tributary sanitary trunk sewer from Mentzer Rd to Grand Ct

## **Organizational Effectiveness**

The Mayor and City Council reviewed a variety of ideas relating to improving organizational effectiveness to accomplish the selected goals and priorities. After review and discussion, the Mayor and City Council selected the following steps to improve organizational effectiveness:

- Continue to explore methods to enhance communications with citizens
- Continue the goal for the Council and City Departments to control spending
- Conduct financial impact/cost-benefit analysis of proposed new major developments/annexation requests
- Hold work sessions every six months to review the status of implementing the priorities identified in this goal setting report; use the goal setting report as a guideline for city actions
- Update Policy Manual
- Have formed or are forming sub-committees and task forces as needed to look at various needs and concerns of the City
- In-service training for P&Z Commission, City Council and other committees
- Regular joint planning meeting with City Council, P&Z and REDI
- Continue to polish/improve systems (e.g., website, policies, etc.) already in place

## **Final Comments**

It was a pleasure to once again assist the City of Robins with this goal setting process.

It is important to note that the prioritization of projects and initiatives is not “cast in stone.” They can be modified as new circumstances may occur. It is recommended that an “action plan” be developed to accomplish the planning goals. The action plan would define the steps that would be needed to accomplish each goal, identify who is responsible for implementation, and establish a timeline for accomplishment. As identified in the Organizational Effectiveness initiatives, it is recommended that the Action Plan be reviewed at least semi-annually by the Mayor, City Council, and staff to monitor the status of implementing the goals.

Jeff Schott  
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November 15, 2017