



Memorandum

Date: January 19, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
David Waltz, City Manager
Kelly Harrington, Assistant City Manager

From: Julia D. Novak, Retreat Facilitator
The Novak Consulting Group

Re: Council Retreat Information and Agenda

I am looking forward to our continued work together as you establish a foundation for effective governance and agree on mutual priorities to further the City of Blue Ash. This year, the retreat has two parts – Thursday afternoon will focus on effective governance and Friday will focus on the City’s strategic planning framework and the priority initiatives.

Dr. John Nalbandian, Professor Emeritus from The University of Kansas, will lead Thursday afternoon’s session. Dr. Nalbandian has a unique perspective on the Council-Staff partnership that comes from not only teaching hundreds of city managers in his forty-year career at The University of Kansas but also from serving as a City Commissioner and two-term Mayor for the City of Lawrence, Kansas. John has shared his insights through workshops with The National League of Cities and International City-County Management Association as well as numerous state associations, executive leadership programs, and individual sessions with elected bodies. I have included a brief bio of Dr. Nalbandian for your information. Dr. Nalbandian and I have co-authored articles and shared facilitation at City Council retreats in Palo Alto, California; Westminster, Colorado; and Clayton, Missouri.

Dr. John Nalbandian

John Nalbandian, Professor Emeritus, joined the faculty in the public administration program at the University of Kansas in the 1970s. U.S. News and World Report ranks the School of Public Affairs and Administration’s local government emphasis as the best in the country. John was chair on two occasions. In addition to his administrative experience, John served on the Lawrence, Kansas city council for eight years including two terms as the council’s mayor. John has also served as president of the Lawrence library board and the Willow Domestic Violence Center board. He has received numerous awards for his teaching, research, and service including recognition in Kansas as both academic administrator of the year and elected official of the year.

In addition to his continuing affiliation with KU, John has served as a visiting professor of practice at both Arizona State University and presently at Virginia Tech where he supports their local government certificate program. John regularly presents his “Political Astuteness” workshop in local government professional development programs at the Universities of Texas, North Carolina, and Virginia. He also provides workshops to local government and elected official professional associations throughout the country as well as facilitating council retreats.

Agenda

Day One: 3:30 to 6:30

Introductions

- Welcome and Introductions
- Agenda Review
- Norms and Expectations for the retreat

Agenda Item Outcome: Create a safe environment for honest exchange of ideas.

High Performance Governance: Governing Body and Staff in Partnership

- Dr. John Nalbandian will lead this workshop style portion of the agenda. John asserts that the essential prerequisite to effective governance is connecting what is “politically acceptable” with what is “administratively sustainable.” Bridging this gap requires an understanding of unavoidable obstacles – conflicting political values and differences in perspective that governing body and staff bring to their work. High performing governance is enhanced with this awareness.

Agenda Item Outcome: Develop an understanding of both the challenges and importance of the Governing Body – Staff Partnership.

Adjourn to City Hall for a Special Meeting

Day Two: 9:00 to 2:00

Check-in

Agenda Item Outcome: Prepare for the day’s work.

Strategic Planning in Blue Ash

- Opening Remarks from the City Manager
- The history of the Results Maps/Focus Areas

Agenda Item Outcome: Understand the origin of the City’s Strategic Planning Framework.

Revisiting and Refining the Framework

- Review the existing results maps/focus areas

Agenda Item Outcome: Refresh and recommit to the strategic planning framework.

Ongoing and New Initiatives

- Staff will share the current workplan and its alignment with the Strategic Planning Framework
- Staff review new items identified for Council consideration
- Council comment

Agenda Item Outcome: Agree on and understand the organizational workplan.

Adjourn/Next Steps