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Eight year council member, including terms as the council's mayor

Tips for Council Effectiveness

- "I want, I need, you should" represents communication from citizens.
- Be aware of your inner voices: self-doubt, anger
- Promote deliberation above all—be willing to engage the consequences of your views
- Role as trustee or conservator; constituent services is customer service representative. How will you divide your responsibility between trustee and constituent services?
- Most important constituents are other council members. Nothing gets done without a majority
- In council-manager government, the mayor's role is facilitative not authoritative
- Be aware of the origin of your images about what elected officials do. Do they come from state and federal legislatures? TV regarding national politics? Partisan?
- Citizens Law of location: If I live near a project I should have more influence over the cc decision, including veto.
- Citizens Law of seniority: I lived here longer than anyone else, I should have more influence over the decision.
- Beware of the unschooled mind in you that searches for confirming info and discounts counter info.
- It's ok to look to other cities for ideas.
- If you see your role as primarily a watchdog, you risk minimizing the contributions that staff can add to your work.
- How you conduct your business conveys as much—and maybe more—to citizens as what you accomplish.

- Get things done in order to legitimize the value of government. The most condemning critique of government is "they can't get anything important done."
- People care about money when the cc is talking about projects that don't affect them.
- Principle is only invoked when it serves the interests of the party invoking it.
- Working with other council members to accomplish something is incredibly rewarding. But it may mean giving up some of what you want. Keep your mind on what you are trying to accomplish. The emotions of politics and dealing with demanding citizens can take you off track.
- Citizens can be very rational when their interests are not affected by a project you are considering.
- Do not expect citizens who are affected by a project to think in the public's interest. The most you can expect is that they will see that their interests will have to be assessed against an array of interests and perspectives.
- It is incredibly difficult to educate advocates to opposing views, perspectives, and interests you are hearing. Do not try. Speak to the hypothetical citizen who has no interest in the issue but is attentive to it. You want that hypothetical person to say about you: "That council member adds value to our community."
- Your toughest job initially will be learning how to get other council members to consider "your" issues. There are formal ways to get items on the cc agenda, and there are informal ways to interest other council members.
- Your next toughest job will be learning how to influence other council members. Learn how to engage your colleagues without enraging them.
- Nothing is accomplished by getting another council member angry or by questioning the other's motives. Shaking hands after raising voices during a council meeting is a mark of generosity.
- Note how the council has to work under conditions that no organization would tolerate--lack of hierarchy, lack of specialization, lack of feedback,

vague task, lack of role definition, open meetings. To work effectively under these conditions requires a strong base of respect and loyalty among council members as well as a collaborative mindset.

- Saying things on television that are transparently political makes you look silly to everyone who doesn't already agree with you. You are not a congress person or a state legislator who can only communicate symbolically.
- It is not enough just to say what you think. You must try to persuade others if you want to get things done and build credibility among citizens. You can do this when your reasons are compelling enough to change minds or compatible enough to fit with what can be acceptable. You can do neither if you do not understand what you are talking about.
- There is no compelling reason why you have to speak up on every agenda item. Believe it or not, you may actually be repeating what has already been said. You gain no credibility among anyone by doing this.
- Lectures belong in the classroom not in council discussions.
- Be clear about which agenda items are most important and deserve the most time. If you are spending lots of time on relatively minor issues, ask yourself why you are doing this?
- Remember and remember, your most important constituency is the other council members. It takes a majority to get anything done and without their respect, you are walking uphill again and again.
- If the council is struggling with disagreements and failure to get things done because of council dynamics, and if you have explored these differences to no avail, and if meeting protocols are difficult to enforce, work to perfect the art of voting! Don't waste time with arguments that others have already heard.
- Once a vote has been taken, let the issue go. There is nothing more frustrating than a council member who continually wants to revisit an issue that has been decided by a majority.