

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON  
2215 WEST OLD SHAKOPEE ROAD  
HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA 55431

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Approved Minutes  
Special Meeting  
Meeting #6a

5:00 p.m.  
March 5, 2001  
Council Chamber

Call to Order Mayor Gene Winstead called the meeting to order.

Roll Call Present: Mayor Winstead, Councilmembers D. Abrams, M. Fossum,  
H. Harden (arrived at 5:25 pm), A. Ornat, S. Peterson (arrived at 5:45 pm),  
and V. Wilcox.

Public Comment Period Public Comment Period is not open during special meetings.

Diann Kirby, Cable Administrator, introduced Dean Halverson from Leede Research, who proceeded to summarize the preliminary results of the Community Survey that was conducted by them in November, 2000. She stated that this was the first resident survey conducted in ten years.

Halverson provided some background on Leede Research stating it's a full-service research firm that is based in Wisconsin. He explained that they have experience working with other government as well as school groups. He explained that a telephone survey was conducted of a cross-section of Bloomington residents. He reported that they interviewed 400 residents made up primarily of married, single-family homeowners and employed full-time outside of the home, and that the respondents were equally split between male and female. He added that the surveyors made just under 4200 dialings to complete 400 surveys. He stated that there was a metrowide survey conducted by Metro State University prior to Leede's survey, therefore, they tried to structure some of their questions so that the data could be compared.

He reported the following as the top five responses by percentage to the following questions:

1. Positive Bloomington attributes: (close to things/jobs, other, nice/friendly/safe, the area in general, peaceful/clean/nice).
2. Negative Bloomington attributes: (other, traffic, crime, schools, taxes).
3. Length of residency: (less than 5 years, 36 or more, 6-10, {26-30, 21-25, 16-20 same}, {31-35, 11-15 same}).

He explained that survey responses of "Somewhat Dissatisfied" and "Dissatisfied" are grouped together and that any respondent who is not completely satisfied is considered dissatisfied. He explained that the term "Top Box" scores are referred to as the top rating or in most cases those that responded "Very Satisfied."

Halverson proceeded to highlight the following questions and responses and indicated the percentage of the responses:

1. Quality of Life: (52% very satisfied, 1% dissatisfied)
2. Community Safety: (55% satisfied, 2% dissatisfied)
3. Parks & Recreation: (56% very satisfied, 1% dissatisfied)
4. Neighborhood Appearance: (48% satisfied, 2% dissatisfied)
5. Home Property Values: (51% satisfied, 31% very satisfied)
6. Driver Compliance: (45% satisfied, 29% somewhat dissatisfied and 11% dissatisfied)
7. Public School System: (35% satisfied, 29% very satisfied, 22% didn't know)
8. Traffic Congestion & Safety - Choices for Traffic Reduction: (29% light rail network, 29% improve bus service, 22% build more roads, 7% increase car pool lanes)

9. Desired Changes in Bloomington: (11% traffic, 6% taxes, 5% school system, 52% other) (*If you were in charge of Bloomington and could change one thing, what would it be?*) **Key Finding:** "Traffic is the only issue in this unaided question that generated a double-digit response. There is a substantial list of 'Other' responses that can be reviewed in the verbatim results of the study. The lack of a few, consistent issues indicates a general level of satisfaction which is reflected consistently throughout the study."
10. Residential Contact with City Offices: (just under 60% had some contact with the City -- primarily through Police Department, Elected Officials and Recreation Department). **Key Finding:** "It appears that just under 60% of the respondents had some contact with the City. This question indicates a potential area for cross tab review. One can examine how contact relates to the opinions the respondent has about the City of Bloomington."
11. Satisfied with City Services: (Parks-54% satisfied, 40% very satisfied, 1% dissatisfied) (Recreation Opportunities and Programs-51% satisfied, 35% very satisfied, 2% dissatisfied), (Fire Protection-50% very satisfied, 42% satisfied, 0% dissatisfied)

<Harden arrived at 5:25 p.m.>

12. Satisfaction with City Services: (Creekside-50% don't know, 30% satisfied, 2% dissatisfied), (Traffic Enforcement-61% satisfied, 19% somewhat dissatisfied, 4% dissatisfied), (Police Protection-47% satisfied, 46% very satisfied, 1% dissatisfied)
13. Satisfaction with City Services: (Snow Plowing-56% satisfied, 28% very satisfied, 6% dissatisfied), (Street Repair-51% satisfied, 17% very satisfied, 22% somewhat dissatisfied, 9% dissatisfied)
14. Satisfaction with City Services: (911 Service-37% satisfied, 30% very satisfied, 32% don't know, 0% dissatisfied), (Animal Control Services-54% satisfied, 19% very satisfied, 17% don't know, 3% dissatisfied)
15. Satisfaction with City Services: (Believe that City Officials are responsive to community concerns and needs-47% agree, 26% somewhat agree, 13% don't know, 5% disagree). **Key Finding:** "It appears that the respondents feel that City Officials are responsive to community concerns and needs. There are 14% that disagree with the statement. The results are positive and show just short of 50% in the top-box rating. This is an important attribute; it indicates respondents feel they are being well-served by most City Officials."
16. Satisfaction Regarding General City Issues: (Response to Neighborhood Problems-46% satisfactory, 33% somewhat satisfactory, 5% unsatisfactory), (Residential Development-47% satisfactory, 30% somewhat satisfactory, 3% unsatisfactory), (Business Development-47% satisfactory, 26% somewhat satisfactory, 4% unsatisfactory), (Response to Crime-53% satisfactory, 30% somewhat satisfactory, 2% unsatisfactory), (Street Design-48% satisfactory, 30% somewhat satisfactory, 3% unsatisfactory), (Garbage/Recycling-67% satisfactory, 20% somewhat satisfactory, 3% unsatisfactory), (City's Management of Finances-33% satisfactory, 26% don't know, 25% somewhat satisfactory, 4% unsatisfactory), (Public Transit-27% satisfactory, 27% somewhat satisfactory, 20% somewhat unsatisfactory, 17% don't know, 9% unsatisfactory). **Key Finding:** "There was a strong 'Don't Know' response for both the City's Management of Finances and for Public Transit. This may be an indication of the need for further communications on these issues. The satisfaction levels on both issues are good. There are almost 30% of the respondents that showed dissatisfaction with Public Transit. This, combined with earlier interest in public transit as a tool to address traffic issues, may indicate a need to look further into this issue."
17. Perceived Value of Property Taxes: (37% very good, 33% good, 8% don't know, 2% very poor). **Key Finding:** "The results show the respondents feel there is a solid value in the property tax money they contribute annually. This is positive considering that price sensitivity is a common trait in consumer research. There is only 2% of respondents who gave a Poor rating for the value received."
18. Overall Satisfaction with the City of Bloomington: (65% satisfactory, 29% very satisfactory, 5% somewhat unsatisfactory, 1% unsatisfactory). **Key Finding:** "The Overall Satisfaction levels shown in the study are good, but show room for improvement. Top-box scores of as high as 67% were seen in the study. This shows how high the respondent group is willing to rate attributes in the study. There is little dissatisfaction; the results would indicate the goal is to move people into the Very Satisfied category."

19. Status of Bloomington Compared to Other Communities: (51% same, 41% better, 6% not as good, 3% don't know). **Key Finding:** "There is a strong, positive perception of the City of Bloomington compared to surrounding communities. Only 6% of respondents feel it is Not as Good as surrounding communities. This compares to almost seven times that amount who think Bloomington is Better. This continues to indicate the community's perceptions are strongly positive."
20. Driving Force for Living in Bloomington: (42% close to things/jobs, 11% grew up here/family from here, 9% schools, 11% other). **Key Finding:** "The driving force in selecting Bloomington as a place of residency seems to be tied closely to what they indicate are the greatest strengths of the community. Personal history also appears to be a factor. These are all positive attributes and can be used in marketing and branding work."
21. Status of Neighborhoods: (Traffic Law Violations-34% somewhat an issue, 29% not an issue, 21% issue, 14% major issue), (Traffic Congestion-32% somewhat an issue, 31% no an issue, 23% issue, 13% major issue), (Neighborhood Noise-61% not an issue, 23% somewhat an issue, 8% major issue), (Juvenile Drinking-52% not an issue, 23% somewhat an issue, 11% issue, 4% major issue), (Juvenile Vandalism-41% not an issue, 26% somewhat an issue, 19% issue, 10% major issue), (Property Theft/Damage-47% not an issue, 29% somewhat an issue, 16% issue, 6% major issue), (Vehicle Theft/Damage-49% not an issue, 25% somewhat an issue, 14% issue, 9% major issue). **Key Finding:** "It does not appear that Vandalism, Vehicle Theft/Damage or Property Theft/Damage are seen as major issues by the public. Around 25% of the respondents feel these are issues or major issues. This may indicate an opportunity for improvement. A cross tab may help determine if this is focused to a specific demographic group or geographic area."
22. Perceived Safety: *"Is there any area within one mile of where you presently live where you would not walk alone at night because of fear of crime?"* (59% no, 39% yes, 2% don't know).
23. Community Development and Redevelopment: (Townhomes-35% desirable, 28% somewhat desirable, 15% very desirable, 21% not desirable), (Apartments-33% somewhat desirable, 30% desirable, 7% very desirable, 29% not desirable), (Senior Housing-39% desirable, 26% somewhat desirable, 22% very desirable, 10% not desirable), (Redevelop Vacant Businesses-43% very desirable, 30% desirable, 13% somewhat desirable, 9% not desirable), (Improvement Existing Houses-42% desirable, 34% very desirable, 15% somewhat desirable, 6% very desirable), (Additional Phase of Mall of America-31% not desirable, 27% desirable, 20% somewhat desirable, 17% very desirable). **Key Finding:** "91% of respondents found the Improvement of Existing Houses at least Somewhat Desirable while 61% found the Additional Phase of Mall of America at least Somewhat Desirable, another 31% found it Not Desirable. It appears there is some polarization regarding the addition to the Mall." It was stated that those that lived near the Mall were more in favor of the additional phase.
24. Community Development and Redevelopment: (Attractions for Tourism-39% desirable, 22% somewhat desirable, 21% not desirable, 15% very desirable), (Creekside Community Center-30% desirable, 25% don't know, 22% somewhat desirable, 13% very desirable, 11% not desirable), (Entertainment Activities-44% desirable, 21% somewhat desirable, 17% very desirable, 13% no desirable). **Key Finding:** "Attractions for Tourism shows the strongest response in the entertainment based items. There is a high Don't Know response for the Creekside Community Center, which may indicate a need for further communication. 82% found additional Entertainment options at least Somewhat Desirable. The City may want to explore further what types of entertainment venues are desired in Bloomington."
25. Information Sources: (71% Sun-Current, 39% Cable TV, 18% Star Tribune, 16% Broadcast TV, 15% Bloomington Briefing).
26. Information Sources: *"Do you feel the quality of information available from the City of Bloomington is ..."* (59% average quality and complete, 29% high quality and complete, 10% low quality and incomplete, 3% don't know).
27. Regarding Internet Access and Usage: *"In the past year, how frequently have you used the Internet to access information provided by the City of Bloomington?"* (35% not at all, 24% infrequently, 24% sometimes, 7% frequently, 7% very frequently).

<Peterson arrived at 5:45 p.m.>

Halverson stated that more in-depth details can be made available if Council is interested including verbatim responses and responses broken down by geographic region. He also added that respondents were willing to have automatic traffic control monitoring at City stoplights. He summarized by stating that Bloomington has a very positive story to tell from the responses provided in the survey.

Bernhardson stated that as a result of the survey, it was determined that there was no need to establish focus groups or conduct a business survey.

Terri Heaton, Chief Financial Officer, referenced the preliminary overview of the Year-End 2000 Report that is on the regular agenda at 7:00 p.m. by stating that the City is experiencing a positive fund balance and is in a good financial position. She stated that two areas of challenge are Motor Vehicle and the Ice Garden.

Sandy Stein, Stein Design, began his presentation by stating that it was a year ago that the City Council provided him with its perceptions and attitudes regarding the City of Bloomington. He stated that the information Council provided him gave him a good base line into getting at the "DNA" of Bloomington. He explained that he would be reviewing the Council's responses of a year ago compared to what the survey respondents provided to see where there was agreement, disagreement, and what new things were generated as a result of the survey. He stated that all of this is to help the City identify a new brand. He restated that branding becomes a promise, an offering, and describes who the City is and what makes Bloomington different from other cities. He added that he has met with the architects to share with them the values of the City, short and long-term objectives so that when the brand is developed, it is cohesive throughout all of the touchpoints. This combined will result in the City's identity and it will be applied in two-dimensional and three-dimensional ways from stationery to signage, etc. He proceeded to compare some of the questions that the Council provided its perspective on compared to the responses by the constituents.

1. *Positive Attributes of Bloomington:* (Council-schools, parks, Mall of America, cultural diversity, low serious crime rates.) (Constituents-proximity to everything including jobs, parks and recreation, friendly people, generally feel safe, good school system, overall quality of life, comfortable and at home here.)
2. *Negative Attributes of Bloomington:* (Council-494, arterial capacity problems, no real downtown or central gathering place, need to renew neighborhood shopping centers, deterioration of housing stock, perceived east/west split between low/high income groups, perceived division is not relevant to most of community.) (Constituents-traffic congestion, non-compliance of traffic laws and too infrequent enforcement, somewhat concerned about crime, lack of public transit.) East/West rivalry was not even a minor issue in the research. Ornat mentioned that a church with "West Bloomington" in its name is going to drop the "West" part of it because they believe the name implies they are not open to all of Bloomington. Stein stated that according to the respondent data, the only rivalry that seemed to appear was between northeast and northwest.
3. *Satisfaction with City Services:* (Council-highly-skilled police and fire departments, over 25% of community is in parks and open spaces; although most of the really nice parks and open spaces that have been acquired/developed are in West Bloomington. (Constituents-applaud City for its parks and recreation services, outstanding fire and police protection, snow plowing is very good, city officials are responsive to needs and concerns overall, good value here, getting good return on tax dollars.)
4. *Attitude Toward Public Transportation:* (Council-need to improve east/west bus service to assist workers, inadequate routes currently covered by public transportation.) (Constituents-more public transportation needed to deal with traffic congestion, current public transportation is inadequate.) Stein stated that due to the constituents high level of concern regarding traffic, it is important that their ability to gain access to the new city hall and the access points be intuitive and that the City needs to be proactive in the interpretation of the site and how to use it. He stated that in the identity and the environmental graphic design package, that is part of the identity development, it is absolutely crucial that the signage that tells people how to use the facility is important to the identity process.

5. *How Bloomington Compares to Surrounding Communities:* (Council-close to downtown Minneapolis, but cleaner, greener, and more upscale with fewer social problems, can't compete with Calhoun/Uptown/Lake of the Isles neighborhoods, good as most and better than some, provides a more complete set of housing options, we have failed to revitalize the center west side, reputation for leadership with Mall of America and upper-income neighborhoods, metro leader in the amount of park space set aside.) (Constituents-every bit as good and even better than any of the surrounding communities, convenience of being in close proximity to many places.) Stein observed that Bloomington does fall behind in new mid-range housing.
6. *Community Development and Redevelopment:* (Council-great returns on all public and private investment, City continues to attract development and redevelopment, development provides renewal, additional jobs, and stronger tax base, challenge ahead to keep existing businesses and attract new ones as land becomes less available, aging residential and some commercial properties need repair or replacement.) (Constituents-desire for development of more senior housing, townhouses preferred over condos and apartments, redevelopment of vacant business is highly desirable, older neighborhoods showing wear and need improvement.) Stein observed that perhaps there is a need for tax incentives for both businesses and residences to upgrade.
7. *Internet Access and Usage:* (Council-opportunities for City to improve interactions with community through use of the Internet, could lessen the need for trips to City Hall for simple transactions.) (Constituents-higher than national average use of Internet at home and work, rarely accesses Internet to access community information.)

Stein proceeded to describe the positioning statements that have been created as a result of the quantitative and qualitative analysis that was just discussed. He explained that the positioning statements are about Bloomington's brand that distinguishes the City from other places and other communities. He stated that Bloomington is a "city of complementary parts which form a rich whole." Stein proceeded to read the positioning statements that he believes will begin to become Bloomington's strategic advantage:

1. Richness in Place
  - a. *Nature in balance with development.*
  - b. *Convenience and quick access with grand views and open spaces.*
  - c. *The refined, the new, the leading edge with character, comfort, familiarity and trust.*
  - d. *A major center of employment and the state's largest volunteer fire department.*
2. Richness in Function
  - a. *The merging of parks and wide-open space with high technology.*
  - b. *New upscale developments with mature, generations-old neighborhoods.*
  - c. *The country's biggest mall with small independent retailers.*
  - d. *Leading institutions of higher education with terrific neighborhood schools.*
  - e. *A place to come to and a place to stay.*
3. Richness in Philosophy
  - a. *A blending of traditional approaches with open-mindedness.*
  - b. *A well-established community, able to see itself with new vision.*
  - c. *A city of strong leaders, listening to the voices of the people.*
  - d. *The best of Minnesota in the middle of the Twin Cities.*

Harden provided the following feedback regarding the positioning statements: She offered an alternative to "*nature in balance with development*" by suggesting that Bloomington's preservation of nature is way out of balance or very positive as there is so much nature in Bloomington. She stated that she didn't understand the, "*merging of parks and wide-open space with high technology*" statement. She stated that in regard to the statement "*leading institutions of higher learning*" was slightly overstated when referring to Normandale Community College as she thinks of Yale and Harvard as "leading institutions of higher learning." But overall, Harden commented that the positioning statements did a wonderful job of describing Bloomington.

Stein Design  
Presentation  
continued

Stein stated that a school such as Normandale Community College is as fundamental to Bloomington's culture and time as a major Eastern college might be to a larger spectrum of higher education because it creates so many opportunities for people that really matter today.

Abrams stated that he does believe the public schools in Bloomington may be a draw but that the reference to a "*leading institution of higher education*" seems to highlight college in Bloomington and it's not the same as Carlton College is to Northfield, Minnesota for example. He suggested that the statements regarding Bloomington's location could perhaps be enhanced to get across the concept that Bloomington is well located in proximity to other places.

Stein stated that the next step is the development of the identity and these positioning statements can be a stepping off point to a visual identity that could potentially celebrate some of the compliments expressed.

Ornstein stated that the history of Bloomington appeared to be missing, the Native American history, the sporting history, the river and its history, etc. even though it's part of the past. It was suggested that it's the history that ties to the great number of residents and families who have lived in the area for 30 or more years. Ornstein added that the city is also known for the tremendous achievements of its high schools and the great athletes they have produced.

Ornat suggested that the strong history and the volunteerism that is so much a part of Bloomington could be emphasized more in the statements.

Harden suggested the words, "the availability of a convenient community college."

Bernhardson inquired if the Council agreed that the statements summarizing the Council's perspective and the Constituent's perspective seem to capture what's going on and did the positioning statements capture the uniqueness of what the Council thinks Bloomington is and what it wants to become. He explained that branding is a combination of what Bloomington is and what it wants to become. The Council concurred that what has been presented to date will serve as a springboard to the development of the City's identity. Bernhardson added that the visual that was shown as "building blocks" was used for the cover of the Budget and Financial Statement to illustrate "building on our strengths."

Wilcox stated that he liked the positioning statement, "*a place to come to and a place to stay*" and suggested that perhaps "a place to come back to" could be incorporated into the statement also as so many people who do leave Bloomington end up coming back.

Winstead mentioned that he, the City Manager, and Larry Lee have involved in discussions about a way to involve the community in an annual festival or a major community-wide type of event and requested that the Council start thinking about those ideas regarding themes, etc.

Adjourn Meeting

Mayor Winstead adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Barbara Clawson  
Council Secretary