6-1-1974

Memos about planning staff

Gary Stout

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MEMORANDUM

To: Ernie Bonner       Date: June 13, 1974
From: Gary Stout

Re: Planning Staff Organizational Questions

I would like to have your best thinking with regard to the following questions:

1. What is Sheldon Lynn's role with respect to the Planning Bureau staff and work program?

2. Who will be in charge of the Planning Bureau when you are on vacation during August?

3. When will a detailed work program be available for the Planning Bureau (including monthly planned performances statements that will allow a realistic monthly review of progress)?

4. How can we set up an early warning system for informing the Commissioners' staffs of the items coming up for Council consideration well in advance of that consideration?

5. Which specific individuals on the staff are going to be responsible for Community Development programming and who will be responsible for pulling this together?

6. When will I have a list of employees who do not evidence totally good and acceptable performance, and your plans for approaching each individual problem?

7. When will a complete program for filling all current staff vacancies be prepared for my review and evaluation?

8. How will the Corbett-Terwilliger Plan be pulled together as a professionally complete document capable of implementation?

9. How do we ensure that items (such as Going Street or the CRAG Interim Development Policy) do not receive a perfunctory Bureau or Commission review, followed by a need to go back and take care of the problem later -- when it is more difficult to handle?
10. How can internal communications in the Planning Bureau be improved so that personnel there feel that they are informed of the total staff activities, and feel that their participation in this process is worthwhile and personally rewarding?

I believe that a clear and concise written response would best communicate your thinking with regard to these issues. However, I do not want this series of administrative questions to be misinterpreted. We have been dealing with a great deal of "crises" over the past several weeks and you and other Bureau staff members have handled these very well. My concern is for creating the kind of administrative environment in which the entire staff can contribute to problems and challenges efficiently, and the constant "crises" atmosphere can be somewhat moderated.

GES:dyml
MEMO TO GARY—

From: Ernie

1. Sheldon Lynn's role at the present time is twofold:
   a. First, he is the Bureau's chief contact with other bureaus and agencies
      in the formulation and articulation of programs which will be
carried out by those agencies or in which those agencies have
clear mutual responsibility. This includes his work now as
Chairman of the CDES Program Task Force, as well as his
work with the Industrial Development Study and the
Development Constraint Study.

   b. Second, he is responsible for work program development and
supervision in that half of the Bureau staff composed of
comprehensive planning, district planning and policy and
program analysis. His responsibility in this respect includes,
but is not limited to:

   (i) formulating a work program for this combination of
sections, assuring in the process that no too many
important matters fall through the cracks. This may
be discharged in part or in whole through the section
supervision but will be Sheldon's ultimate responsibility

   (ii) directing and supervising staff in some cases and
circumstances.
I am also still of the opinion that Sheldon might best serve in the capacity of head haunches of the downtown planning and development function, whether or not a chief planner is hired. I think his appearance in New Haven prepares him better for this than is generally understood. Also, I am struck by the lack of options as to the chief planner. If we hire a new person, Rod will most certainly leave—if not the Bureau, at least the downtown staff. Then we will have no experienced staff in downtown matters. If we hire Rod, put Sheldon in charge, give Rod some different staff, I think you will see a great improvement in the process and in staff analysis and review, as well as additions to what staff can do (i.e., housing studies). Much of this improvement will be a result of Sheldon's influence and experience in other areas, and when combined with Rod's experience and knowledge here (much of which Sheldon can quickly acquire himself) it seems to me we would have an unbeatable team. If we hire nobody, leave Rod at Sr. Planner and change the composition of the staff, we could look to some improvement in staff analysis and review, but I doubt that significant changes in process or additions to the work they can accomplish (housing, etc) will result. I could be wrong. In short, the option that appeals most to me is to put Rod at Chief Planner, give Sheldon the
major responsibility for downtown and change the composition of the staff. Any other option appears to me to be second best, unless your judgment is that we can get such a fantastic person in that Chief Planner slot that he (or she) can rise above the tremendous disadvantages we will operate under. I am not convinced we can find such a person. In fact, I am convinced the other way. Finally, it is clear to me that the downtown must remain of some considerable importance to Neil. We must do much more in that area as well as much more in the neighborhoods. If Sheldon and Rod can put things together in the downtown, it will relieve me (and you, too, to a certain extent) from the day-to-day involvement in both short and long-term downtown matters so that you can limit yourself to those important decisions and attending while I can get into the neighborhoods, and get into the comprehensive plan. Most important, we must get some one person assigned and working so that the uncertainty plaguing that function is minimized. I think Sheldon and Rod can do that.
2. Dale Canady will be in charge when I go on vacation in August. He has been in charge before, he knows what routine matters are in the mill, and how to resolve them. He will be instructed to seek advice from both you and Sheldon when he has any question as to what to do. I will be gone Aug. 19-21 and 23-28.

3. A detailed work program for most Planning Bureau sections will be completed by Aug. 1, 1974. I will need until Sept. 1, 1974 to include that portion of the work program for which Mazziotti will be responsible. I intend to ask senior staff to report to me once a month (at a staff meeting held for that purpose) for a review of past month accomplishments. Eventually, I hope to have a time line and periodic review date for all long-range studies of the staff.

4. Dale and I are working on an early warning system for Council. We will have it to you by July 22.

5. Sheldon Lyman is responsible for community development programming. He will share this responsibility with Doug and Denny Wilde.
6. I expect complete supervisory staff on board by August 75. Each supervisor will be asked to evaluate all members of his staff. By Sept 15 or Oct 1, I should have a better picture of where improvements are needed.

7. See attached sheet.
The Bureau is authorized 47 permanent Civil Service status positions by the City Council. At the start of the calendar year the organization had fourteen unfilled positions with an additional six vacancies later experienced through employee resignations. Of those twenty original vacancies and resignations all but five have been successfully filled by the Civil Service process. Those hired were:

- Chief Planners (2)  
  - Doug Wright  
  - Dennis Wilde  
- Senior Planners (2)  
  - Don Mazziotti  
  - Leo Williams  
- City Planners (6)  
  - Tim Nolan  
  - Mike Lyons  
  - Art Barfield  
  - John Sparks  
  - Ernie Munch  
  - Bruce Martin  

- Planning Aides (2)  
  - Al Berret  
  - Wendy John  
- Senior Steno (1)  
  - Eileen Scheddel  
- Steno Clerk (1)  
  - Roberta Sue  

An additional vacancy was created during the course of the above round of hiring due to promoting of Leo Williams from City to Senior Planner. That leaves us presently with six unfilled permanent positions. The status of those vacancies are:
Chief Planner/Downtown: Civil Service is in receipt of a draft job description and has been requested to begin the recruitment campaign, a campaign aimed at a wider audience of potential candidates than was experienced in our earlier attempt. Incidentally, the Bureau of Personnel has assigned a personal analyst to the Bureau which should result in faster service by Civil Service with respect to our personnel needs.

Chief Planner/Policy, Program and Analysis: This position has just been filled with Ken Hampton. remains unfilled although there is an existing eligible list.

There are four approaches available to us:

1. Hire off the existing list either as a Policy and Program type or assign the individual to work in some other capacity (Land Use Controls). However, since Mazzioti is slated to direct the EP&A section it doesn't make much sense to hire someone off the list to do something he'll be doing. It makes better sense, given the appropriate candidate, to hire and switch the job's responsibilities and duties to another area.

2. Leave the position unfilled in which case we'll lose it.

3. Restructure the position into another position—either into a different type of Chief Planner or into another planning classification altogether.

4. Underfill the position. This still leaves the position officially unfilled and subject to budget cutting.

City Planner: We are currently conducting a promotional exam and expect the position to be filled within a month. Civil Service
has already printed the job announcements and will be taking applications for a period of two weeks before dating the applicants. **Assistant Planner:** This position will also be filled through a promotional exam. As the job description tends to "select out" individuals who do not fit the training and experience criteria, and as the Bureau is responsible for preparing the job description, certain members of the staff will be effectively disqualified from contention upon our submission of the job description to Civil Service. I have spoken to the staff about the pre-selection process and will be individually discussing it with those staff members interested in competing for the position, giving them my honest appraisal of their chances for promotion. **Administrative Assistant:** Filled temporarily; Kelly awaiting Civil Service exam. **Steno Clerk:** Currently awaiting a new eligible list.

With two of the above positions being filled through promotion additional positions will subsequently fall open—one Assistant Planner and at least one Planning Aide. The Assistant Planner slot will be filled through an open competitive, as there is no eligible list from which to appoint. There is, however, a Planning Aide list which remains in force until January, 1975. Doug and Kelly are examining the list and will see what the options are.

**Temporary Employees**

We are dealing with temporary employees on a case by case basis. Each employee is being told what options are available to them with regard to permanent employment and specific dates are being
agreed upon for the termination of their duties.
8. Danny Wilde will begin his supervision and direction of the Corbett-Terwilliger plan (as well as the Marquam Hill plan) by July 15. I want him to take a look at what's going on first, then sit down to develop a program that will assure a professionally-sound product in the end.

9. This question does not have a simple answer—maybe it has no answer. In some respects, I am sure we will never be able to avoid going back to problems presumably resolved. We should talk about this so I am not sure what you mean by the question of respect to the two examples given.

10. As to insuring internal communication, we are beginning several programs:

a. Staff Meetings—We have been holding 51 staff meetings almost weekly for the purpose of assigning employees and developing a work program. This definition of sphere of responsibility and work will clarify for the employee what is expected of him or her. Additionally, all staff meetings are being held periodically to keep the staff informed as to areas of interest common to all—such as renovation plans, personnel opportunities, and administrative procedures.
b. Informal Meetings—We have in the past held lunch hour
expositions and discussions of Bureau activities and studies open to all
staff. We have had scheduling and attendance problems
but will continue for the time being. Maybe over the
Summer we'll get together in the park for a kegger.

c. Administrative Support Team—Focusing in on the secretarial
section where jobs and duties can be the most tedious
and unrewarding, Kelly and Ben are to come up
with Bureau-wide projects the secretaries could carry
out as their own. Projects such as filing procedures,
including minutes, form letters, etc. would add to the
Bureau's efficiency while involving secretaries in the
"team" with substantive and challenging projects.

d. Accessibility and Openness—Providing an environment
where the staff feels it can approach anyone for
information or problem resolution is an attainable goal.
Kelly does a good job of offering himself to this
need—though some continue to want to talk directly
to me. I usually ask those who have not checked
with Kelly to do so before coming to me. In order to
provide general info on what's going on, I have
told the staff that if they take me to lunch,
I'll tell them everything they've always wanted.
know about the Planning Bureau, but were afraid to ask. I think, however, I am going to have to pay if I want any licenses.