

Notes from Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Presentation

Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2010

Dr. David Metzen, Metzen Leadership

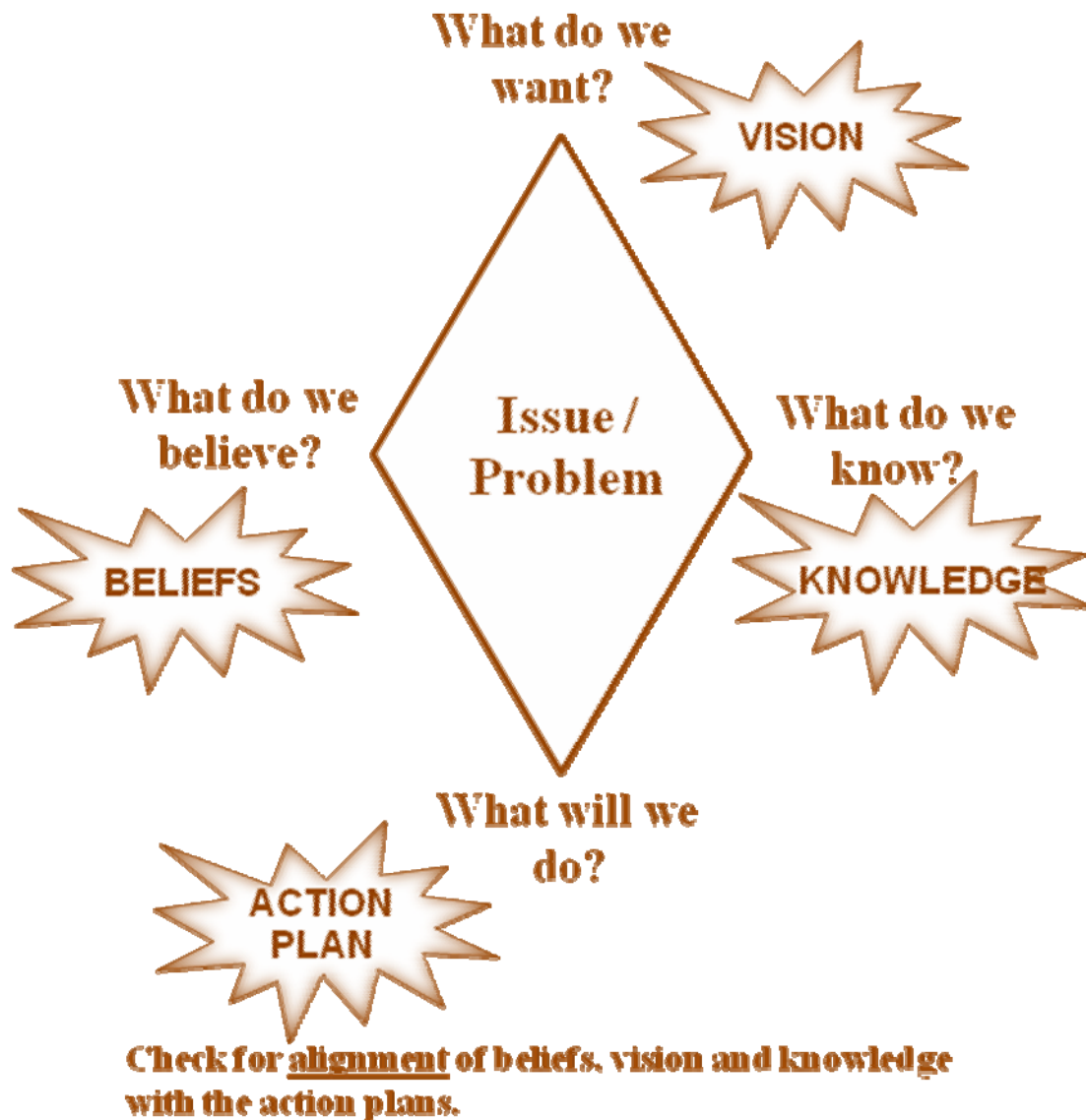
- A. Dr. Metzen introduced the session and reviewed the purpose of the session with commissioners. The purpose is to set the stage for a successful process to hire the very best superintendent for Minneapolis Parks and Recreation.
- B. Dr. Metzen shared his thoughts on the process moving forward.
- Split votes on extension on current contract = good people can disagree. Now focus on being a total board working together to find the next superintendent.
 - A good start, willing to make a smooth transition
 - You will make hundreds of decisions as a board – choosing your next superintendent is the most important decision you will make.
 - Your board chair is your quarterback – there can't be 9 quarterbacks responding to the public and to candidates.
 - You will only get good candidates if board is considered functional.
 - Have timelines that are realistic – stick to them; but have a “Plan B”.
 - There is no perfect candidate – all have strengths and weaknesses. It's all about “fit”.
 - In the end you will have to sell yourself and the community to get the right person.

Dr. Metzen asked each member to speak about their thoughts moving forward. Talking points from the discussion included:

- We're a new board
- We need to sell Minneapolis
- There will be a challenge in providing the right incentives (e. g.salary cap)
- Timelines are important; good idea to have a Plan B
- This is a very important task
- Recruitment of a new superintendent started the moment the vote was taken to not extend the current contract
- We need to be flexible, be willing to compromise
- We need to be a team, we need to keep unified
- We need to give the board president latitude to lead
- It's important to have the right people applying

C. Dr. Metzen introduced a decision-making model (see handout). The model emphasizes understanding the group's beliefs, vision and knowledge in formulating an action plan. Dr. Metzen included several examples under knowledge, vision and beliefs that the group identified in its January 13th 2010 session.

Decision Making Model



ODDM

Dr. Metzen asked members to pair up and identify other key items related to knowledge, vision and beliefs. Items identified are listed below; examples cited by Dr. Metzen appear in italics:

Knowledge: What do we know?

- *There is not enough money for repair and maintenance*
- *The population we serve is changing*
- *We have an incredible asset base in an urban environment*
- We have the financial support of our community
- We have support for the independence of our parks
- Each park is the center of the community
- The population we serve is changing a lot
- We are an unique system because of our combination of parks and recreation
- We have a talented staff
- We have our own police, this is unique
- 96% of citizens think we're doing a good job
- We (our community) don't speak the same languages; board may not reflect that diversity
- Everyone wants partnerships, but they can be difficult
- Our dependence on property taxes is difficult
- Community is essential
- We have some barriers to attracting people (e.g. weather, salary cap)

Vision: What do we want?

- *To have a better park system*
- *To offer great programs*
- *To maintain our independence*
- *To be a steward of the environment*
- We want to have safe parks that are well maintained
- We want equal opportunities with regards to park locations; location can be a physical barrier
- We want the best urban park system nationally
- We want to build our future through youth through engagement, youth on board, young ideas
- We want a system that is culturally reflective
- We want a system promoting health of all citizens of Minneapolis
- We want a role in social equality issues
- We want the park system to be a green leader in the city
- We want to be an attractive plan for citizens to go, use of their free time
- We want a system attractive, accessible and used by seniors

- We want to offer great programs citywide, recreation and sports; we are one of the few sports programs
- We want a green system
- We want to be paperless in 5 years
- We want safe parks
- We want to meet and improve upon the goals of the comprehensive plan
- We want citizens to continue to love and be happy with us
- We want everything in the comprehensive plan (equity, stewardship, changing delivery model, etc)

Beliefs: What do we believe?

- *We are 9 members dedicated to one focus = PARKS*
- *We are caretakers for a great resource*
- *Our assets – the lakes, river, green space – all are valued by the citizens*
- We are caretakers improving upon our resources
- As economically viable, we can expand the system, especially the ribbons of green around the bodies of water
- We have a community park system, including hard to reach neighborhoods
- We have a strong history that got us to where we are today
- Green space enriches people's lives
- Grassroots democracy created the park board; we are a great example of being inviting, great model of good government
- We are the commons and should continue to be so
- The system is enhanced if cultural diversity reflect in decision making & participation
- We provide place to do events (e.g. loppet, neighborhood celebrations), places to get together as a city, community
- There is room for improvement, innovation and creativity in staffing, in delivery; be cheaper, better, faster; we can do it
- System will be different; change is not bad; are prepared for change
- The system will be continually challenged to be greener; if we're to be leaders, we better get rockin'
- Despite our shortcomings and opportunities for improvement, we do have the best system in the country, and that's not recognized
- We will have a social impact on the next generation
- We have a role in solving social problems in the city, county, country
- Everything we want we can accomplish

D. Dr. Metzen asked members to identify the skills and attributes of their next future superintendent by completing the sentence below. Members were asked to identify 4 to 8 items each.

The next superintendent should be _____ .

Members were also asked to identify their top four skills/attributes using colored dots to rank their choices from one to four. The list of skills and attributes appears below in rank order with the voting choice listed adjacent.

A chart displaying member comments and voting choices appears on the next page.

E. Dr. Metzen closed the session with questions from commissioners.

Skill/Attribute	Comments				
ABLE ADMINISTRATOR	Able administrator	Knows maintenance and operations	Manager and motivator	Supervisory skills	
ENVIRONMENTAL BELIEVER	Believe in environmental stewardship and directs organization as such	Believes in green movement, sustainability	Passion for parks	Loves trees and water	
VISIONARY	Visionary in conjunction with board	Visionary			
CREATIVITY	Innovative	Inspired	Entrepreneurial spirit		
LEADER	A Leader	Effective ambassador, advocate, and diplomat	Strong backbone		
RESULTS ORIENTED	Productive	Be results oriented	Continuous improvement		
RESPONSIVE	Responsive	Customer focus			
INTELLIGENT	Intelligent				
POLITICAL KNOW HOW	Politically savvy	Has political skills	Understands politics	Not afraid of Minneapolis politics	Able to work with other government
SOCIAL SKILLS	Likeable	Interpersonal skills	Emphasizes persuasion	Understands group dynamics	Has a sense of humor, but can be serious
FINANCIAL MANAGER	Fundraising background	Financially competent			
CAN IMPLEMENT PLAN	Able to implement comprehensive plan, focus on sustainability				
RESPECTFUL	Respectful	Respectful of Board			
DIVERSE	Be culturally reflective of Minneapolis				
KNOWS PARKS	Knowledge of park system				
COMPASSION	Compassion				
FACILITATIVE	Able to work with community groups				
LONG TERM	Willing to stay a long time				
INDEPENDENT	Desires continued independence of system				
RESIDENT	Lives in Minneapolis				
SOCIAL AWARENESS	Background in broader social issues				