

Los Gatos Town Council Retreat Summary from March 5, 2022 “How We Work Together” (6/1/22)

Context:

The Los Gatos Council held a facilitated retreat on March 5, 2022. The retreat facilitators were Shawn Spano and Debra Figone. The desired outcomes for the retreat were to 1) Enhance understanding of each other, 2) Build trust and productive working relationships with each other and staff, and 3) Develop Council values, norms, and principles.

The Los Gatos Town Council is fortunate to have a history of good governance. This document attempts to capture what Councilmembers in this process expressed as having been past Council’s practices as well as what is important moving forward. Thus, it is forward-looking and intended to set expectations for the Town Council’s “culture”, regardless of point in time.

In their pre-retreat interviews with the facilitators and during the retreat discussions, the Town Councilmembers shared their desires for how they work together by expressing the values, norms and principles that are important to them. The ideals underlying these terms overlap and when considered together become the Council’s “social contract” of desired operating characteristics, conventions, and patterns as a governing body.

Per Council’s direction, Directors and upper Town Management identified their expectations of Town Council. Many of the staff ideas overlapped with Town Council values, norms, and principles. These have been organized and integrated together on the following page.

Los Gatos Town Council's Values, Norms and Principles:

- **Be Respectful and Professional –**
 - Council behavior should always be respectful and professional
 - Council sets a respectful tone for the community and staff
 - Respect staff and their expertise
 - Expect and practice civility and decorum
 - Demonstrate appreciation and value each Council member equally
- **Trust Each Other**
 - Trust each other and staff
 - Give each other the benefit of the doubt
- **Work as a Team**
 - Value the partnership between Council, staff, and the community
 - Demonstrate commitment, work hard, and come prepared
 - Treat each other with respect and as members of the same team, even if opinions differ
 - Work at building relationships as colleagues on an on-going basis
- **Appreciate Diverse Perspectives**
 - Bring your diverse views and perspectives to Council discussions
 - Appreciate the diverse points of view and perspectives of others
 - Stay open to other points of view before deciding/locking into positions
- **Bridge Differences**
 - Work at building consensus and compromise; collaborate and bridge differences
 - Hold no grudges; do not become polarized
- **Remain Open, Flexible and Adaptable**
 - Listen openly to each other, the community, and staff
 - Remain flexible and adaptable as the environment is always changing
 - Be responsive
- **Manage Governing Processes Effectively and Efficiently**
 - Know when there is enough information and move on; avoid excessive information and data requests
- **Follow Council Policy**
 - Follow Council policy frameworks or work together to change them through the democratic process