

Mayor Berke Discusses Priorities of City Government with Community Leaders

Thursday afternoon, Mayor Berke hosted a group of 20 local community and business leaders at City Hall. The round table discussion was facilitated by Mayor Berke and highlighted the common areas of concern felt throughout the city.

“There is tremendous momentum to make our streets safer, build opportunity in all areas of the community, and invest in our youth,” Mayor Berke told the group. “We must have people in city government waking up every day, thinking about the issues that matter most to our community.”

The 20 individuals in attendance provided a wide variety of expertise and represented a range of companies and non-profits throughout the city. Mayor Berke and his staff heard concerns and recommendations on numerous issues, including the role of the city in economic development and neighborhood issues.

“Our neighborhoods are strongest when those living in them have the chance to be successful,” said Donna C. Williams, executive director of Chattanooga’s Habitat for Humanity. “That means a city that is focused on how our growing prosperity can impact every part of Chattanooga.”

“The key is collaboration,” said Ben Ubamadu, Vice President of Economic & Community Development at Chattanooga State. “Economic development and community development fit hand-in-hand and the city has a role to play in pushing them both forward.”

Several at the round table shared their thoughts on additional priorities like community engagement, small business development and transportation.

“An important role of city government is to create a strategy around our infrastructure needs,” said Rick Hitchcock of Chambliss, Bahner & Stophel. “By looking at transportation from a comprehensive viewpoint, we can better coordinate and improve the quality of life of Chattanooga.”

Yesterday’s round table discussion follows a month of information gathering and community involvement, including an exhaustive review process of city government by Berke’s transition team as well as two open forums, where over 500 community members attended each night to address key issues like Public Safety and Youth Development.

###