



# Governing the Commons

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# Leadership for the Common Good

## “A serious meddling in the lives of others.”

Max DePree

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What we're here to accomplish:



- What is the "common good?"
- How do we achieve it?

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What Good is Government?

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The Founders took inspiration from:


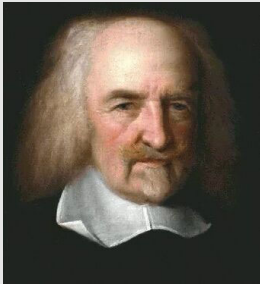


HobbesLocke

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## Jefferson

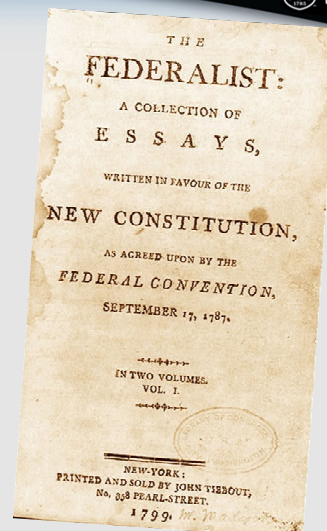


"I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves ..."

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## Madison

"Refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest ..."



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## More Madison ...

- “Complaints are everywhere heard from our most considerate and virtuous citizens ... that the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority.”
- “The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man ... human passions have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to co-operate for their common good.”

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## Ben Franklin on Civility

We are sent here to *consult*, not to *contend*, with each other; and declarations of a fixed opinion, and of determined resolution, never to change it, neither enlighten nor convince us.

Positiveness and warmth on one side, naturally beget their like on the other ... harmony and union are extremely necessary to give weight to our Councils, and render them effectual in promoting and securing the common good.

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- Public policy development is aimed at solving critical public issues
- How can we do that if we can't even talk to one another civilly?



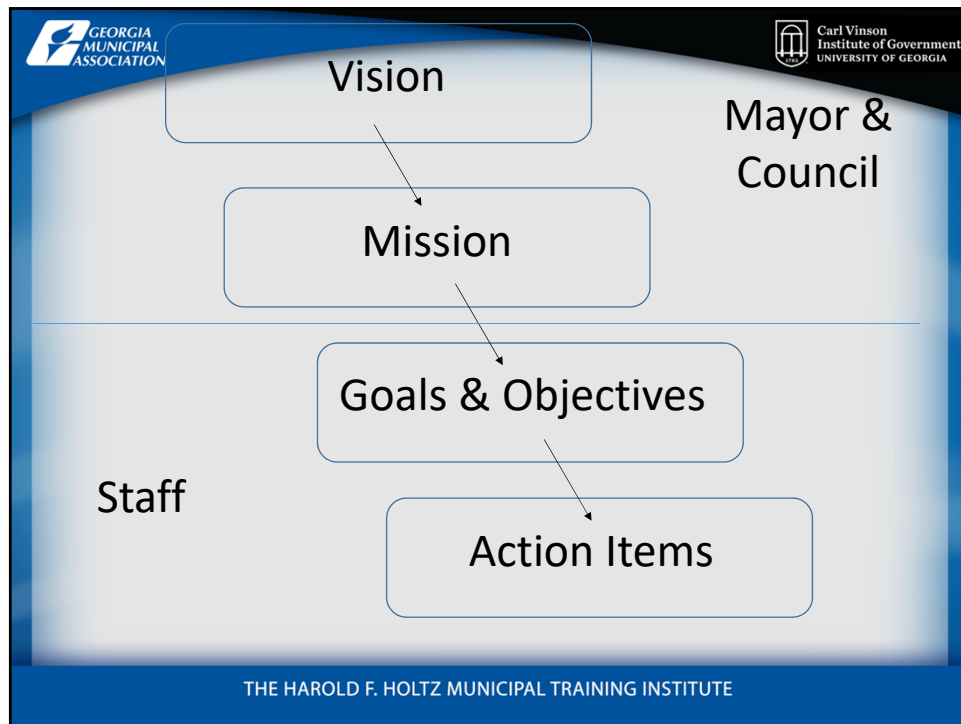
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## Traditional Idea



- Like unto a cruise line ...
- Council owns the ships
- Council hires professional staff to run it

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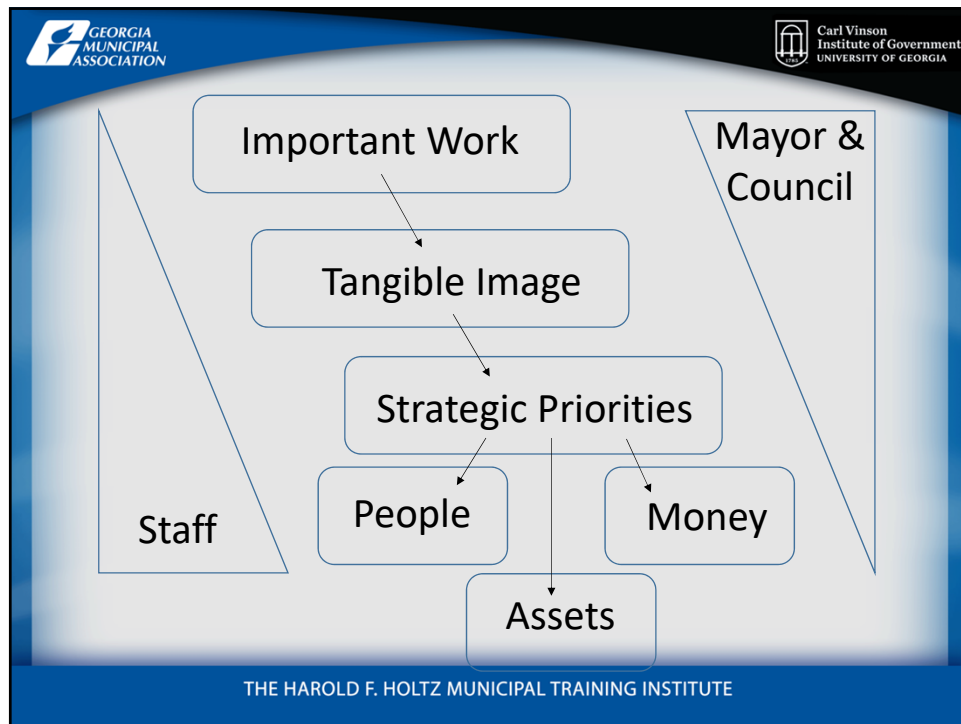
## More Modern Idea



- More like being in a boat paddling together
- Staff participates more in determining direction and actually helps to steer

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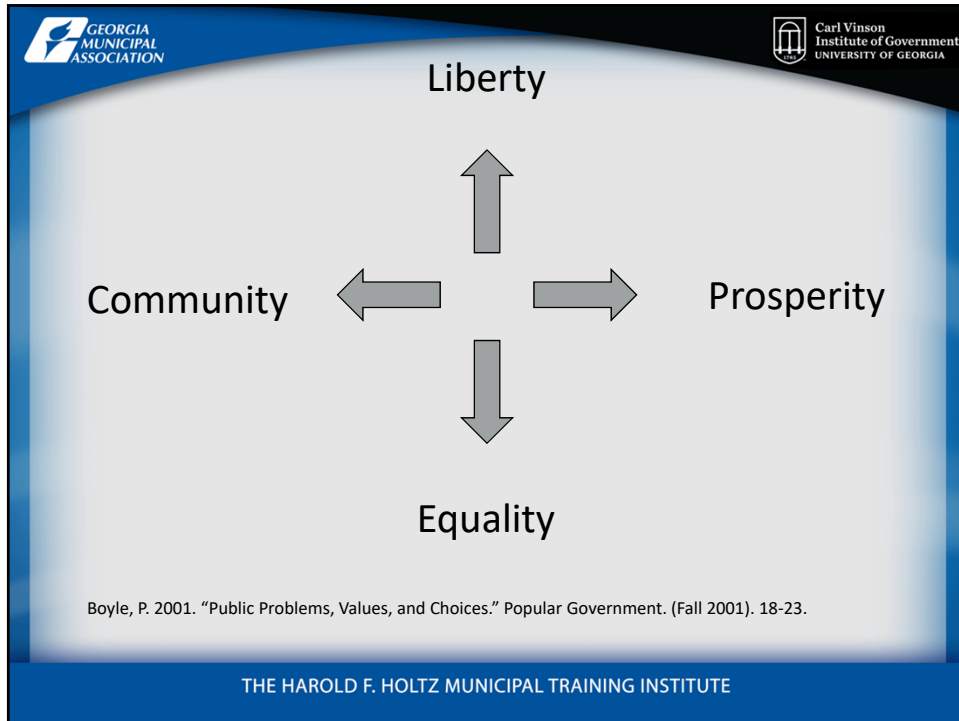


What makes an issue public?

- It's not private ...
  - Resident complaining about her neighbor's pecan tree
  - Some would have you frame the question as "You have to figure out how to be good with money or good to people"
  - Its really "How can you be good with money *and* good to people"

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# Liberty

- Freedom
- Choice
- Opportunity
- Independence
- Due Process
- Individual Rights

LIBERTY AND UNION

AMERICAN LIBERTY

DON'T TREAD ON ME

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- Economy
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Productivity
- Performance Measurement
- Quality of Life

## Prosperity

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- Equity
- Fairness
- Justice
- Representation
- Equal Opportunity
- Equal Access

## Equality

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- Safety
- Security
- Social Order
- Collective Action
- Sense of Place
- Culture



## Community

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Government  
ought to be run  
like a business.  
Agree or  
disagree?



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## Dimock's Description of Difference

- Business administration is essentially a dictatorship, or at any rate a monarchy
- Governmental administration is less responsive than business management because it is more accountable. It must adhere to the law; this being the case, meticulous regulations are promulgated
- Another advantage enjoyed by business management is the greater continuity of policy and executive leadership
- Governmental administration is more complex because of the nature of public duties. Government regulates, prohibits, prosecutes

Dimock, M. E. (1937). "The Study of Administration." *The American Political Science Review* 31 (1): 28-40.

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## Collins' Argument

- "The whole purpose of the social sectors is to meet social objectives, human needs and priorities ..."
- "There aren't that many great businesses out there."
- What he suggests is that government be run like a great organization
- This requires good *organizational* principles like performance measures, and efficient and effective service provision

Collins, J. (2005)., *Good to Great and the Social Sectors; Why Business Thinking is not the Answer*. Harper Collins: New York

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## Differences According to Mikesell

1. Governments may tax to enlarge their resources
2. Ownership is not clear
3. Value of government services is neither easy to quantify nor reflected in a single measurement

*“The value of the government service is collective, for the community as a whole, as opposed to the individual value received by purchases of business services.”*



*John Mikesell, Indiana University, Fiscal Administration, 2002*

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- Why can't private businesses selling their products in free markets be relied upon to provide all goods and services that ought to be available?
- What makes some services a governmental responsibility?
- What makes something a public good?



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## Provision-Production Dichotomy

1. Government provision/government production
2. Government provision/private production
3. Private provision/government production
4. Private provision/private production



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## When might privatization be appropriate?

1. Smaller government
2. Operating efficiency and response to clients
3. Cash
4. Lack of appropriate personnel/expertise
5. Greater flexibility, quicker implementation



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## When might privatization not be appropriate?

1. Very few potential suppliers
2. Costs of switching from one producer to another are high
3. Information about production process and supplier performance is expensive to obtain
4. Good or service being provided cannot be clearly defined

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## Public Good

1. Once made available, denial to those who have not paid is impossible (non-exclusion)
2. Any number of people can consume the same good at the same time without diminishing the amount of that good available for anyone else to consume (nonexhaustion or nonrivalry)

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## *Getting to Yes*

- Don't argue over positions!
  - Produces unwise agreements
  - Small concessions are inefficient
  - Endangers ongoing relationships
  - Even worse when there are many parties
  - But ... being nice is not the answer

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## *Getting to Yes*

- The Method
  - Separate the People from the Problem
  - Focus on Interests, not Positions
  - Invent Options of Mutual Gain
  - Insist on Using Objective Criteria

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## Getting to Yes ... Yeah, but ...

- What if they're more powerful?
  - Try collaboration
  - Determine what you would take if an agreement can't be reached ... compromise
- What if they won't play?
  - Don't attack position ... look behind it
- What if they use dirty tricks?
  - Deliberate deception
  - Phony facts
  - Ambiguous Authority
  - Stressful situations
  - Refusal to negotiate

Fisher, Roger & Ury, William. 1984. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving in*. Penguin Books.



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## Peeling the Onion ...

Sometimes  
it makes  
you want to  
cry

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## Case: Considering Privatization

1. Are the services of libraries best considered to be public goods, private goods, or something else? Explain your reasoning.
2. What sort of privatization do these officials appear to be discussing? What would you expect to be the results of such privatization?
3. What is your opinion regarding the privatization proposal as you understand it?

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