

City of Worthington
Community Visioning Committee
Tuesday, March 10, 2020 - 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Louis J. R. Goorey Municipal Building

Members Present: Joe Sherman, Austin Mitchell, Don Mottley, Beth Sommer, Matt Lees, Kathryn Burris, Catey Corl, Cindy Findlay, Laura Abu Absi, Graham Wood

City Staff Present: Anne Brown, Robyn Stewart

Present on Phone: Lauren Falcone, Poggemeyer Design Group

Mr. Sherman called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Mr. Sherman asked for approval of the minutes. Mr. Mottley moved to approved the minutes, seconded by Ms. Sommer. The motion passed.

Mr. Sherman suggested he would like to have the committee members out of the meeting earlier so he proposed the meetings be planned to end by 7:30 p.m. In order to accomplish this, each working team will be allocated 10 minutes for their updates. Everyone's time will be stretched so want to make these meetings shorter.

Mr. Wood arrived at 6:07 p.m.

Mr. Sherman summarized his report to City Council. He presented that the process has moved into the engagement phase. City Council was very appreciative of everything presented.

Mr. Sherman reported that the shirts are in. He asked for members to let him know if they don't fit. He thanked Mr. Lees for all his work on the communications.

Mr. Mitchell talked about the draft engagement strategy timeline/visual. We don't want to get lost in the noise of the election season, so we want the process to be complete by September/October. To meet this timeline, he is projecting to complete public input by July 1. This is a draft so he is open to feedback. Ms. Sommer and Mr. Mottley commented that it seems a good strategy to avoid the election timeline. Ms. Abu Absi asked if we're not hitting the 80% benchmark, will these deadlines move? Mr. Mitchell replied that it may depend on why the 80% was not met and how we define the 80%. Previous discussion around 80% being touch points may not hit the mark since we really want engagement. We should emphasize how we're approaching engagement and if we feel good about the amount of engagement we've achieved, we may need to concede the goal if we haven't been able to engage 80%.

Mr. Sherman touched on his comments to City Council. Council Member Robinson asked how engagement would be defined. Mr. Sherman mentioned it's more than just a touch point. He suggested engaging the applicants for the Visioning Committee in a working group. We can also reach out to the neighborhood Facebook pages to drive engagement. We can identify neighborhood leads to communicate and engage with the neighborhoods. Mr. Sherman also suggested using the planned focus groups, one of which will consist of business people and he's

reached out to Nina Parini on how to engage them. We will strive for 80% and we may not reach it, but we'll at least strive for it.

Mr. Sherman reported he talked with Dr. Trent Bowers with Worthington Schools about engaging high school seniors.

Mr. Melchi arrived at 6:21 p.m.

Ms. Burris commented about the schools and noted that each of them have electronic newsletters which could be a way to communicate. She has come to believe that the postcards sitting out are not very helpful. They are probably better used when distributed face to face.

Mr. Mitchell returned the discussion to the draft engagement strategy.

Ms. Mercadante arrived at 6:23 p.m.

Mr. Mitchell suggested that May and June become the two months when much of the work is done. There may be less need for the Visioning Committee meetings during this time. He suggested spending the next two months getting ready, the following two months out in the community and then two more months pulling it all together into a final document. Memorial Day and July 4 will be big events.

Ms. Sommer added the Arts Festival and Ms. Findlay commented on the Green on the Green.

Mr. Mottley commented that the Vision Testing phase is still public engagement. Perhaps we look at it as the engagement before July 1 is more open ended. He asked whether the timeline was supported by City Council? Mr. Sherman replied that we'll run toward this timeline and see if we can meet it. Mr. Mottley suggested if we have consensus on the vision, we may be able to meet it. He is willing to take more time if we don't have agreement. Mr. Sherman agreed that the recommendations shouldn't be rushed.

Ms. Sommer also mentioned the Picnic with the Partnership as another big event.

Mr. Mitchell wrapped up the discussion by saying the visioning should be very visible in May and June.

Mr. Lees discussed the report from the communications team. He distributed a handout illustrating the redesign of the website. We're trying to make it easier to understand the actions we want people to take. There will be essentially three sections. There will be a navigation bar on the top of the screen that rolls up the background information for visioning and why people should register. There will be Preserve our Traditions, Celebrate our Community and Shape our Future sections. There will be a section highlighting the upcoming events so people can engage at the event. There will also be a section summarizing what we've heard - taking the information and reflecting it back to the public for their reactions and comments. The Speak Out box can be used for active polls and surveys and other original ideas. The final section is for asking questions. This area will include frequently asked questions. Following those sections, the page

moves into three areas to generate discussions - Preserving our Traditions will focus on things people don't want to change; Celebrate our Community will focus on our current community; Shape our Future looks forward. We can include some of the trend information provided by Chris Boring. There are areas where people can post pictures in addition to comments.

Ms. Findlay expressed concern about the Preserving our Traditions area and whether it focuses too much on the past. She suggested the title of the area may be able to be changed. Ms. Mercadante suggested the Shape our Future area move up further.

Mr. Lees asked for any additional feedback to go to him and he'll get with Ethan when he returns from vacation to make the changes.

Mr. Wood highlighted the work on the Meeting in a Box. He has just about all the materials and has created a sign up sheet that he will put on Sharepoint. There will literally be a box with iPads, flyers, table, tablecloth, etc. He reported we'll need to coordinate with the event people regarding each specific location and any additional information they want us to have.

Mr. Sherman offered up a table that folds up and Mr. Wood offered up a table also, so there should be enough materials for two boxes. Mr. Mitchell asked if the meeting in a box would be used for the speakers bureau. Mr. Wood replied he thinks only the cards and maybe the iPad would be useful there. Ms. Stewart reported the iPads have been set up for the presentations.

Mr. Mitchell reviewed the list of groups for the speakers bureau and walked through the contacts. Committee members volunteered to reach out to various groups. Other groups suggested to be added to the list included the various churches and synagogue in town, WIN, AARP of Ohio, and Worthington Pools. Ms. Brown suggested the community groups section of the Worthington Libraries website has contact information.

Ms. Findlay reported from the stakeholder team. Mr. Wood has created an online interview to send to the Visioning Committee applicants. Ms. Falcone indicated she has a few tweaks and will get those to Mr. Wood. The Committee indicated they don't need to see those before they go out.

Ms. Falcone reported on the summary of the key person interviews. Overwhelmingly people are very positive about what is happening in Worthington with the exception of divisions around development. Ms. Findlay stated that initially they plan to use this information to determine the questions to be asked of the broader community. The group on the Wednesday morning call will discuss how to use this information.

Ms. Findlay indicated she still needs to prepare the Survey Monkey documents for City Council candidates, which will be more focused on what they heard when they were campaigning.

Ms. Falcone commented that for anything we do online, we need to add choices so we can get data and bar graphs to be able to evaluate the responses. Mr. Wood added that some questions really need to be open-ended, however others were able to be tailored with choices. Ms. Findlay and Mr. Wood will work together to summarize the responses.

Ms. Falcone asked for Committee members to provide estimated ages of the people they suggested for the stakeholder interviews so we can track the demographics.

Ms. Brown reported the newsletter was dropped at the post office yesterday so households should get it in the next week or so. She anticipates there will be another mailed newsletter this summer so we could incorporate visioning into it. The City's annual report is in production and will be mailed in early April. The letter to residents at the start of the report will include some information about visioning in it.

Ms. Stewart mentioned the Coronavirus that is starting to spread and the Committee should anticipate the need to postpone or modify its engagement strategies as large groups are starting to be limited. There may be additional orders that limit interactions.

Mr. Sherman asked about the option to do the SOAR event online. Ms. Falcone replied that she thinks we lose some of the input and dynamic so suggested the event be postponed.

Ms. Abu Absi summarized the information sent out from the Governor and she thinks even if we have the event that attendance will be hurt and so we may not want to move forward on the original schedule.

Mr. Mottley suggested there are two paths forward - we can wait to hear from Columbus Public Health or we can proactively cancel because of concerns about turnout. Mr. Melchi suggested a decision be made by March 16 so we can give it a little time to see what is happening then. He suggested Mr. Sherman and Mr. Mitchell have the authority to cancel the event. If cancelled, we can take the next Committee meeting to plan the next steps.

Ms. Corl asked if the SOAR event is delayed, how will it affect the rest of the schedule? Mr. Sherman replied that we can look at it. Mr. Mitchell suggested we consider whether we could do something digitally. Ms. Corl shared information about an online board with post it notes to capture ideas and discussion. Ms. Falcone commented that it's possible to do online events; it's just not the same dynamic.

Mr. Mitchell raised the topic of the focus groups. Of the four focus groups, one could be tied to businesses, which leaves three groups for neighborhoods. Mr. Mitchell asked whether one should be dedicated to nonprofits. Ms. Findlay asked about the size of the focus groups. Ms. Falcone replied it depends. She likes the idea of breaking up into quadrants, then we know who is saying what. We could conduct the groups with up to 50 or 100 people. People participate more in smaller groups. Mr. Sherman raised the question of whether we want to have more focus groups. He asked the Committee members to provide feedback and it could be discussed on the Wednesday morning call. Mr. Sherman asked Mr. Mitchell to draft up his thoughts on the focus groups and share a draft with the Committee. Ms. Falcone will share some information with Mr. Mitchell to consider for the focus groups and how they work.

Ms. Falcone touched on the door to door campaign which will likely be targeted at people that haven't participated. It is really important to track addresses for people with all of the engagement activities so we can identify the gaps.

Mr. Mottley commented that he likes the concept of having these Committee meetings just focus on reporting out and not in depth discussions.

Mr. Sherman asked that any items for the next agenda be sent to him before the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.