

Community Strategic Plan Committee

Pillar Team Members Meeting on Tuesday, November 6, 2018

In attendance:

Mayor Mike McCann, Carla Hinkle, Jerry Hayes, Carrie Wetstein, Jamie Gerken, John Lehner, Liz Keel, Rita Kissner, Niki Warncke, Luis Rivera, Jr., Debbie Stevens

Absent: Richanne Mankey

PILLAR PROGRESS REPORTS:

PILLAR 1: Connectivity: Carrie Wetstein

- She is working with MVPO Ellen Smith on the ODOT Mobility Manager Position and right now it will be more of a regional position with focus for the four counties of Fulton, Williams, Henry, and Defiance. It will be parked at Triangular Processing in Fulton County and looking at transportation in all four counties for needs, gas, and service. Funding is through the United Way and MVPO. The Grant is approved and NOCAC is the lead agency and looking at transferring that lead agency to Triangular Processing Group through ODOT and it's approved by ODOT to do so. Fulton County Transportation Team will discuss this as an option then bring in all four counties together to discuss and perhaps expanding Henry County Transportation Network Group services throughout the other three counties. Williams County is not officially onboard yet.
- Asked if there is there any talk regarding transportation when the Clinton Street Bridge closes. There were preliminary discussions of offering Vouchers for \$10 to be used through J & M Cab for residents living in the city needing transportation within the City of Defiance limits. Details and criteria need to be discussed further. United Way has funding leftover from the Flex Ride Program to use for some type of transportation funding to assist. K & P Medical will be contacted to see if they are interested. The Clinton Street Bridge Replacement will be totally closed for 9 months, and for 6 weeks before with one lane each way, and 6 weeks after with one lane each way. A start date has not yet been determined by ODOT. Carrie has guidelines from the Flex Ride that we could use as a guide to start the voucher policy. A meeting will be set up with Carrie, John, and Mike to discuss the details for the vouchers. Jamie Gerken has information for us on census tracking on where the majority of people without cars that may help us.
- It seems like the WiFi discussions are going nowhere. In the past, there were 5G downtown discussions with Metalink. Defiance County and the City of Defiance needs to meet to discuss this further.

PILLAR 2: Culture and Education: Rita Kissner (Cultural) and Richanne Mankey (Education)

(Cultural) Rita Kissner

- Culture ideas are pending on the decisions on the 1918 School Building. Another option for senior housing may be the St. John's Catholic School building that is empty. There are other areas in town as well.
- The Neil Diamond show was well attended.
- The Tackett's performances are doing well.
- The calendar of events needs to be used more. A Public Information Officer (PIO) training is coming to Defiance County EMA in the spring.

Mike McCann: The hotel project feasibility study is underway, and we should know within the next month or so of the results. There are other hospitality groups interested in the 1918 Building as well.

(Education) Richanne Mankey: Absent.

- A small business development group is something the group is looking in to developing. The county had one 7 years ago but funding stopped. Currently, Lisa Beecher is used as an on-call basis. The group is developing a task force for small business development. They are currently making connections with individuals to provide IT courses such as accounting for small businesses, Microsoft programs, etc. to be potentially offered at Defiance College.
- Sally Bissell, Carla Hinkle, and Jerry Hayes met to discuss meeting soon with Credit Adjustments, Inc. on possibly partnering with them to train on various business areas as a future opportunity for the College.
- Liz Keel mentioned the need for more Lead Abatement contractors and there is training available.

Pillar 3: Economic Development: Jerry Hayes, Carla Hinkle, and John Lehner

Jerry Hayes:

- NAI Harmon released their first marketing brochure for the Harmon Business Park of Defiance and is very impressive. Infrastructure planning is going well.
- In 2019, his office will be working on the Harmon Business Park, continue to track food manufacturing and distribution companies, and continue with the connectivity. Jerry met with RTech Telephone Company in Ridgeville, Ohio on fiber connectivity to see what they have here in the City of Defiance. He had a follow-up meeting with Phil Maag from Metalink and they are installing fiber option lines along East Commerce Drive. We need to draw these two parties together and come up with a strategic plan on connectivity.
- There have been more Enterprise Industrial Park (EIP) conversations lately with Jobs Ohio who are looking at it, but there are issues of accessibility on that site.
- He is working on marketing Defiance County with an emphasis on workforce development.
- Brownfields: A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. There are four identified Brownfields in the city and the goal is to get at least two of them fixed with potential opportunities on both. A county-wide land bank is needed for this objective.
- He is working with the City and private developers to seek out attorneys for help with TIF's on housing efforts as a funding mechanism.
- He is working on opportunity zones which provide tax deferrals and tax savings for people getting capital gains. EIP and Harmon are both in these types of zones. He is working with the City and property owners to create an opportunity fund to accept investment from people who have capital gains to reinvest and channel the funds towards assets within the designated geographical opportunity zones to spur investments. This is a great opportunity.

Pillar 4: Health and Wellness: Jamie Gerken

- Jamie distributed informational handouts on citizens wanting safe sidewalks, safe places to gather, etc. The GIS group that was formed are selecting indicators to design maps for parks, trails, sidewalks, walking, and gathering places.
- Jamie had a meeting with UT staff on an environmental assessment survey to hold focus groups regarding waterfront development, water quality issues, etc.
- Jamie distributed the Community Health Status Assessment data and will be presenting this data to different agencies.
- "Save the Dates" information for Defiance County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) was distributed.
- Jamie is working on a "Does Place Matter" report that includes various census tracking information and honing in on Defiance and other villages using the Defiance county data to segment the tracks.
- The "Health in All Policy" will be brought to city council soon to pass a resolution to make it formal.

Pillar 5: Housing: Liz Keel

- Liz is waiting on results from the housing survey.
- Niki Warncke mentioned there was only 75 results from the survey. It was asked if a reminder email to businesses for their employees to fill it out would help. Debbie Stevens will resend again, and through Nixle as another option to get more results.
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) (www.lisc.org) representative Kim Cutcher and Promedica staff Kendra Smith and Doug Bush are meeting soon with Liz Keel, Niki Warncke, and Mike McCann to discuss housing needs to see how that Corporation can help. A tour of the city will take place as well. LISC is one of the largest organizations supporting projects to revitalize communities and bring greater economic opportunity to residents.
- MVPO was funded for their CHIP grants – close to \$4 million in grants – and Liz wants to meet with the City to get names of residents that are in need of any house repairs on their homes.
- Liz mentioned the Eastside Neighborhood Meeting Update on Monday, November 12 at 7:00 p.m. at Hebron Ministries. Defiance College students and staff will be there to present a college project for that area.

Pillar 6: Perception: Luis Rivera, Jr.

- A handout was distributed with the survey results from the Rib Fest responses on perception.
- The group will be distributing it to private areas, nursing home, schools, concerts, etc., to get more responses.
- The group will be meeting with Alesia Yakos-Brown from Defiance College to share what their perception is of the city and vice versa with a group of 9 students and 9 community members.
- Luis will talk to Joe Eureste on branding.

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at 11:30 a.m.