



## COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

### Pillar Team Members Meeting

Tuesday, January 11 at 11:30 a.m.  
City Hall Council Chambers

#### **Members Present:**

Mayor Mike McCann, Past City Mayor Rita Kissner, DDVB Executive Director Kirstie Mack, Defiance County Economic Development Executive Director Erika Willitzer, Defiance ProMedica President Doug Bush (WebEx), Defiance Public Library Director Cara Potter, Defiance County Health Commissioner Jamie Gerken (WebEx), City Planner Niki Warncke, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Sarah Tackett (WebEx), Executive Assistant Debbie Stevens, MVPO Housing Coordinator Liz Keel, United Way Executive Director Abby Wolfrum, Defiance Area Foundation Director Chris Yoder, Defiance College President Richanne Mankey, City Finance Director John Lehner, Next Gen Luis Rivera

**Members Absent:** Dream Center Guiseppe Blanchard, Defiance City Schools Superintendent Bob Morton, Councilman John Hancock

**Remarks by Mayor Mike McCann:** The Mayor welcomed all in attendance. Niki Warncke gave an update on the Comprehensive Plan that was recently approved by City Council. This will be the Master Plan for the City with a long-term plan that would be updated every five years. This is a foundation to give the City the tools needed to complete the Community Strategic Plan.

### **PILLAR PROGRESS REPORTS:**



#### **ABBY WOLFUM and ERIKA WILLITZER:**

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##### **ABBY WOLFRUM:**

- **Transportation:** Information from the Mobility Manager Kim Lammers stated there will be a meeting on Tuesday with Defiance County Commissioners to request they put out a call for proposals. ODOT says the commissioners can select a non-profit from the proposals. If approved, the non-profit selected would be able to apply for grant funding on behalf of Defiance County. Triangular Process may be the non-profit and working with now as a non-profit to sub contract to K&P Medical. There is a non-profit willing to apply for funds and subcontract the work to K&P Medical or if not available to the Henry County Transportation Network; for example, DD Medicaid waiver transports. However, it will be up to the County Commissioners to decide the non-profit proposal. The application process will start in March 2022.

**RICHANNE MANKEY:** Defiance College is not affected as much with transportation needs for their students. Defiance College issues are sporadic since the College is currently in the classroom and not remotely learning.

##### **ERIKA WILLITZER:**

- **Broadband:** The Defiance County Board of Commissioners will be using the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to fill in the broadband gaps in the County. The plan to proceed is to hire a consultant to review the county area and complete a community assessment along with exploring the cost and a hiring a company. Surprisingly, the most underserved area is the City of Defiance. Assistant City Administrator Ryan Mack will be working more closely with Erika on this endeavor.

##### **CARA POTTER:**

- **Hotspots for underserved areas.** A hotspot is a device use to connect for internet access. Cara Potter mentioned that the Defiance Public Library has these devices and most are used for school-aged students. An individual can check it out like a book with return after four weeks. There is a monthly fee and a subscription needed.

**MIKE McCANN:** In November, 2021, the House of Representatives passed a \$1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and President Joe Biden signed it on November 15, 2021. The legislation creates a path to invest billions of dollars in roads, bridges, water systems, transit, and broadband.



### **RITA KISSNER (CULTURE), RICHANNE MANKEY AND BOB MORTON (EDUCATION)**

**CULTURE & EDUCATION PILLAR**  
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#### **EDUCATION: RICHANNE MANKEY**

- The Defiance College Jacket Journey started this week for the students.
- The College is working on expanding the adult completion programs for online classes.
- COVID update: On the College campus masks are required indoors, and also outdoors when in close proximity to others. All classes are in-person unless a student is quarantined, and continuing COVID testing. Dr. Mankey reported vaccinated staff is at 81% and students at 66% and will offer a vaccination clinic in January.



### **ERIKA WILLITZER and JOHN LEHNER**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PILLAR**  
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#### **ERIKA WILLITZER: Economic Development (DCED)**

- The 2021 year was a very successful year for economic development in Defiance County, but work force and labor issues were a deterrent.
- Workforce: Kortney Williams is developing strategies for companies to assist with local employee recruitment. Companies have needs in this area and Kortney is there to help.
- A Wage and Benefit Survey is being sent to employers to gather data and will be kept confidential.
- Kortney Williams will also develop a Daycare/Childcare Survey for community input after realizing this has not been done in the past.
- Their office is finding that employers are being creative and changing the way they operate their business. They are offering new employees a job as a “Weekend Warrior”. These employees are paid a higher premium for working weekends and that seems to fit certain employee’s life schedules.



### **JAMIE GERKEN, DOUG BUSH, RICHANNE MANKEY**

**HEALTH & WELLNESS PILLAR**  
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#### **The Wellness Focus is on 4 Key Areas:**

1) The Farmers Market, 2) Walking Program/Trails, 3) Research, and 4) The Health in all Policy

#### **JAMIE GERKEN:**

- Staff changes were updated: Bridget Fisher resigned to be with her family. Brian Heil was hired to take over as Health Promotion Coordinator.
- COVID positive cases are increasing at this point. They are seeing issues with rapid antigen tests as individuals are not proctoring the test and are under-reported. The Health Department’s COVID test supply goes quickly, as they only receive 1,000 tests for each order. They are seeing an increase in cases in the schools and the Omicron variant is milder. The reporting of the positive cases is far behind at least by 4-5 days for results of notification to the tested. The Defiance Public Library has extra COVID tests if needed.
- The Defiance County Health Improvement Plan will be released in January and will focus on goals and action steps in the next three years. Priority areas are community conditions: affordable housing, early childhood education on home visiting, workforce, obesity, access to health care, transportation, family

service guides, dental, workforce shortage, and mental health and addiction. They will be partnering with the Public Library on Health Literacy.

**DOUG BUSH:**

- COVID is in the hospitals. Three weeks ago, The Cleveland Clinic, which is the epicenter, had 800 inhouse COVID patients at one time. All ProMedica Hospitals are at an all-time high. All hospitals struggle with staffing to support the surge in COVID-19 patients. All employees are overwhelmed trying to manage all of this at one time and are tired mentally and physically. Defiance Hospitals were built to send sick patients to Toledo Hospitals for all severe cases but are all maxed out and there is no place to go. COVID-19 Crisis Standards of Care are happening now in all hospitals. COVID is affecting the younger generation now, and all are hoping that the Omicron variant runs its course soon. The Hospital Leadership Teams are doing a great job managing all of this. Hospitals were built to do this and will get through the COVID crisis. They will be here for the community to get everyone healthy.
- “Get vaccinated” is the message. Do the right thing for protection-stay home if sick, mask up, distance, and wash hands frequently. The booster is necessary for protection against the Omicron variant. As a testing perspective for the last three weeks at ProMedica Hospital: there were 5,000 tests given, then 8,000 tests, then 11,000 tests. Short on supplies and staff.
- 100 members of the Ohio National Guard were deployed to Toledo Hospitals and dispersed into the area and they made a huge impact on staffing relief. There is also a drive-up testing site at the Lucas County Rec Center in Toledo available for anyone for the next few weeks.



**LIZ KEEL AND RITA KISSNER**

**HOUSING PILLAR**

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**MIKE MCCANN:**

- HOUSING: At the next Planning Commission meeting there will be a review of site plans for:
  - A 390 market-rate apartment development behind Walmart. A traffic impact study will need completed.
  - Six, two-unit, market-rate condominiums next to Circle K on East River Road overlooking the river and downtown will be developed soon.
- A residential development is in the planning process to develop 30-50 single family homes and duplexes/villas and most likely be market driven and built to suit.
- There is progress on housing options in Defiance. Homes are selling as quickly as they become available. There are currently 13 new homes being built, plus three additional homes coming online to sell.



**LUIS RIVERA, JR., KIRSTIE MACK, CHRIS YODER, SARAH TACKETT**

**PERCEPTION PILLAR**

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**KIRSTIE MACK and LOU RIVERA:**

- A tourist-based mobile app is being reviewed and hopefully developed for the City of Defiance.
- Downtown bathroom hours of operation have been changed to open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 5:30 p.m.
- The string lights on Clinton Street are a wonderful addition to the downtown. There have been a lot of compliments and only a few concerns. The string lights will stay up throughout the year. The 600 block of downtown will be added in the next few weeks. There are concerns about placing lights on the 200 block of Clinton Street with oversized loads passing through the area.

**Next SPC Pillar Team Leader meeting:** Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at 11:30 a.m. at City Hall Council Chambers.

*Submitted by Executive Assistant Debbie Stevens*