



COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

Pillar Team Members Meeting

Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.

WebEx Meeting

Members:

Mayor Mike McCann, Defiance County Health Commissioner Jamie Gerken, Past City Mayor Rita Kissner, DDVB Executive Director Kirstie Mack, Defiance County Economic Development Executive Director Erika Willitzer, United Way Executive Director Abby Wolfrum, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Sarah Tackett, MVPO Housing Coordinator Liz Keel, City Finance Director John Lehner, Next Gen Luis Rivera, Defiance ProMedica President Doug Bush, Dream Center Guiseppe Blanchard, Defiance College President Richanne Mankey, Councilman John Hancock, City Planner Niki Warncke, Defiance City Schools Superintendent Bob Morton, Dream Center Kent Stamm, Executive Assistant Debbie Stevens

Remarks by Mayor Mike McCann: The Mayor began the WebEx meeting at 1:30 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

Remarks by Niki Warncke: Discussed **Small Nation**, a group the city has contracted with for consulting work to help “reclaim our small town”. The city is very excited about this endeavor. Check out their website for more information: <https://smallnationstrong.com/> This group is coming to Defiance on May 26, 2021 to meet with downtown business owners and entrepreneurs to help each be more successful. Small Nation turned their neglected downtown buildings in Bellefontaine into beautiful destinations using local investors and a lot of hard work from their team. The Small Nation team is dedicated to creating development, revitalization, and business solutions for small towns and set out to help ten other cities and Defiance is the tenth. An email was sent to downtown Defiance building and/or business owners and entrepreneurs in Defiance informing each that Small Nation will be spending the day talking with building and business owners and people who want to become business owners in the downtown district. Most of the day will be spent walking the downtown and meeting owners in their own spaces, and this includes those who have vacant storefronts. An itinerary of locations will be developed. This is a tool and a great opportunity for the building and/or business owners that may help figure out how to get to the next step, whether that is learning how to partner up with a business renter, rehab their building, marketing and branding what they have, or even starting another endeavor. Utilizing the empty floors for apartments or creating loft areas for entrepreneurs or for co-working areas could be a start.

PILLAR PROGRESS REPORTS:



ABBY WOLFUM:

CONNECTIVITY PILLAR
DEFIANCE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

- In contact with the new Mobility Manager Kim Lammers on where she might need help with her new position.
- A reminder that the Maumee Valley Planning Organization (MVPO) Transportation Needs Survey is open until May 31, 2021. We need to continue to encourage Defiance County residents to fill out, and can be found at www.nwomobility.com



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

CULTURE & EDUCATION PILLAR
DEFIANCE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

CULTURE: MIKE MCCANN

- 1918 Building: The Purchase Agreement was signed. The property now belongs to the City of Defiance. There is a marketing consultant who has interest in helping with the 1918 Building and other housing opportunities to market the City of Defiance. The Mayor welcomes all investors/developers to take a look at Defiance and the 1918 Building.

EDUCATION:

RICHANNE MANKEY

- Defiance College launched the first year of Jacket Journey. The Jacket Summit is scheduled for this summer. Faculty, businesses, and community leaders will be invited to have conversations around everything that is changing in higher education and that includes legislation that could affect the College.
- In order to stay viable with the glimpse of possible effects of the pandemic on college enrollment and by the high school graduating class of 2020, the College is working on increasing adult completion programs. Defiance College is here to help the Defiance Community and engage with all entities.
- Defiance College is working with Northwest State Community College (NSCC) on students who complete their Associate Degree at NWCC to continue on at Defiance College for their Bachelor's Degree.

BOB MORTON:

- Principals and Staff have been internally trained on how to build a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) system within an elementary school. Adding multi tiers involves the entire community.
- A full-time school resource officer (SRO) will be at the elementary school to set a positive example and presence to the younger children to change their perspective on law enforcement. There is a three-year grant to fund the SRO.
- Vaccinating high school students age 16-17 is happening now, but it is still the parents' choice to do so.



ERIKA WILLITZER and JOHN LEHNER

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PILLAR

DEFIANCE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

ERIKA WILLITZER: Economic Development (DCED)

- The Manufacturing Summer Camp for middle school students held in conjunction with Senator Sherrod Brown's Office is June 14-15, 2021. The Defiance County Economic Development Office (DCED) is teaming up with the Defiance Dream Center on facilitating and instructing construction and automotive sections at the Defiance Dream Center. The students will also tour of manufacturing companies in the county.
- The Homegrown Program is for companies/businesses already in existence in the County. A plan has been drafted and the committee will meet soon to discuss funding options. MVPO shared with E. Willitzer that this endeavor may be eligible for one of the EDA grants. The cost would be for resources in obtaining a supply chain analysis for small and large companies.
- The DCED Office is researching potential new commercial and industrial sites, and looking for land owners willing to sell property is another key area.
- There are currently six expansion projects being worked on in the County.
- Defiance County is in the top running for a few other projects. The team worked hard to submit the needed information and that includes assistance from the City of Defiance and other entities within the County and region. Their help is much appreciated.
- In the process of posting the Workforce Manager position within the next few weeks.
- The DCED office is gathering all the open job listings in the county and placing each on their website (defiancecountyed.com/local-job-openings/) to get the word out and also on Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ) website. (defiancepauldgingfs.com/). Kortney Williams has been extremely helpful in her office with all of these initiatives.

BOB MORTON:

- For the last 18 months, Bob was working on a way to incorporate at-risk, non-college bound student who wants to work, have the desire to work, and the means to work but were not getting them the basic skill

training they needed. Bob Morton was working with various entities to help get this group of high school students headed in the right direction. Guiseppe Blanchard at the Defiance Dream Center assisted by building a plan and worked through the obstacles to make this work. Ohio Means Job supplied some funding. The first graduation for six students in this program is May 17, 2021 at the Dream Center. Northwest State Community College is taking care of the accreditation and certification processes. These students also received life coaching and soft skill training during this course to help them secure a trade job.

- Noted that in public Ohio institutions, first-year teacher education students are down about 40%. The high schools are short-staffed in the cafeteria area as in many other areas as well.

DOUG BUSH: Hospitals are experiencing a shortage in their nursing staff and support positions within the hospital now and most likely in the next three years as well. This is very challenging but they are keeping a close eye on this.

RICHANNE MANKEY: Defiance College (DC) is also experiencing a shortage in Administrative Assistants and in other areas. Defiance College is willing to help the area hospitals with the proper nursing model they are seeking. DC also offers an education major for incoming students.



JAMIE GERKEN, DOUG BUSH, RICHANNE MANKEY

HEALTH & WELLNESS PILLAR

DEFIANCE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

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:

COVID update:

- A roller coaster of cases happened over the last four weeks. Testing for the variant is here and there, but have not been notified of any positive variant cases. The Health Department is monitoring it closely, but having issues with contact tracing due to people being over covid and not willing to cooperate.
- Case investigation on contact tracing will be contracted through the State now for respite for their staff.
- There is a big slowdown in vaccine uptake. They are encouraging communities to hold vaccine clinics to decrease barriers for receiving vaccinations, reaching out to businesses to vaccinate within their locations, and being a facilitator on getting the need to who needs it.
- A community survey will be sent out soon to the community to help the Health Department on COVID related items.
- The final plan for the mental health/wellness trail is moving forward near Defiance County East.
- Will be starting to return to the Health in All Policy and revamping it back up.
- Defiance College and Bridget Winslow from the Health Department will collaborate on health focus groups for research opportunities.

Doug Bush:

- **COVID update:** Provided some stats: one million cases in the state of Ohio, 57,000 hospitalizations, 20,000 lost their life, age 41 is the median age right now with COVID cases, a third of hospitalizations are in the age group of 18-39 for COVID, and most of this age group are not vaccinated. A new way of sending COVID messages to this age group is necessary.
- The study at the ProMedica campus for a possible walking trail is continuing. Conceptual designs from an engineer firm were received. Securing funding is the next step and may need partnerships from other entities to move this forward.
- There have been ongoing discussions since May of last year for a potential Medicaid or underinsured dental clinic in Defiance. He is working with the Defiance Dream Center and Dental Centers of NW Ohio. A Grant has been secured for a feasibility study. Future fundraising with key stakeholders and local entity

contributions will also take place. Bob Morton offered part of his building as a possible location for their students who may qualify for these services. Doug Bush will connect with Bob Morton further on this and on possible funding opportunities.

- The Walk to End Alzheimer's is on August 28, 2021 starting at Triangle Park and are looking for teams, committee members, and fundraising opportunities. Reach out to Doug Bush if anyone would like to help.



LIZ KEEL AND RITA KISSNER

HOUSING PILLAR

DEFIANCE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

MIKE McCANN: There are two developers interested in building homes in Defiance but cannot find land to build them on. This is so frustrating. Building outside of city limits could happen with the possibility to tie into City water and sewer lines to the city boundary. In-fill housing is an option but not for big housing developers.

DOUG BUSH: The Wall Street Journal article recently mentioned that building homes and obtaining housing is the hottest market right now in years. The millennials are in a position to buy homes now or build homes, interest rates are low, some working from home, some moving to the smaller communities, etc. and now is the time to have the housing inventory in Defiance. Rezoning may help and that is a possibility.

LIZ KEEL: In the housing meetings, Liz is hearing the same thing with the builders in finding land to build the homes. The needs have been identified, but families cannot get a house quick enough due to the high demand.



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

PERCEPTION PILLAR

DEFIANCE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

- Northside Farmer's Market: started last Saturday. Days/hours are: Tuesday 2-6, Thursday 11-3, and Saturday 9-1 at the mall entrance though the end of October.
- Downtown Farmers Market: first Thursday in June from 4:30 – 7:30 on Third Street. There are 12 vendors.
- Live Music is coming back to the downtown area and parks.

The Perception Pillar team is working on:

- DNN Video segments with DHS students about the Defiance community are going great and will be shared on various social media platforms. Mayor McCann had his taping for one of the segments.
- The trailer wraps to be placed on Keller Logistics trucks are in the final stages.
- Conversations on digital marketing collaboration with the community are taking place. Gathering freelance writers for the feel-good stories, and how to market Defiance the best way is being discussed.

SARAH TACKETT: A few area businesses in downtown are adjusting their open days/times depending on available workforce and traffic in/out of their stores. If there is training the Chamber of Commerce staff can provide the community, please let Sarah know.

Next SPC Pillar Team Leader meeting: Tuesday, July 13, 2021, at City Hall Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted, Executive Assistant Debbie Stevens