



## COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

### Pillar Team Members Meeting

Tuesday, July 13, 2021 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, United Way Executive Director Abby Wolfrum, City Finance Director John Lehner, Next Gen Luis Rivera, Defiance Area Foundation Director Chris Yoder, City Planner Niki Warncke, Executive Assistant Debbie Stevens

**Members Absent:** Defiance County Health Commissioner Jamie Gerken, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Sarah Tackett, MVPO Housing Coordinator Liz Keel, Defiance ProMedica President Doug Bush, Dream Center Guiseppe Blanchard, Defiance College President Richanne Mankey, Councilman John Hancock, Defiance City Schools Superintendent Bob Morton, Dream Center Kent Stamm.

**Remarks by Mayor Mike McCann:** The Mayor welcomed all in attendance.

**Remarks by Niki Warncke:** Niki Warncke shared a slideshow of the City Parks and a video on future development concepts of Memory Park, Gateway Park, and the Native American Tribute/Buchman Park on the Glaize. There are several community people willing to donate funds towards these parks, but these may need a levy on the ballot for the voters to decide, specifically Gateway Park near the Purple Heart Bridge. Developing nice things in the community typically comes with a high price to pay. Actual numbers on the costs won't be determined until the engineering is finished. There was excitement from the group after seeing the video. This could be used as an attraction piece for developers to bring more business and housing to Defiance. The Defiance and surrounding communities love the parks.

The University of Toledo focus groups are meeting today on riverfront development and quality of life questions about Defiance County.

### PILLAR PROGRESS REPORTS:



#### **ABBY WOLFUM:**

CONNECTIVITY PILLAR  
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#### **ABBY WOLFRUM:**

- Focusing on the transportation piece of the Connectivity Pillar is her main goal. Broadband, walkable connectivity, and transportation is also under this Pillar.
- The new MVPO Mobility Manager Kim Lammers worked on the transportation survey and is complete. A first draft of the regional mobility plan is finished and being reviewed. Funding for transportation is always an issue on where the responsibility falls to fund it.
- Mike McCann will be meeting virtually with a staff member from May Mobility, a transportation business, on their autonomous shuttle services.
- Erika Willitzer is willing to be on this Pillar with Abby Wolfrum.

#### **ERIKA WILLITZER:**

- The County Commissioners, CIC, and City have been all working together and meeting recently on researching internet service providers for 5G and fiber and are making great progress.
- The City/County is working on educational and promotional material, signage, and the development of an APP for the Buckeye Trail and the North Country Trail that runs through the City and Defiance County.



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

CULTURE & EDUCATION PILLAR  
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### CULTURE and EDUCATION: RITA KISSNER

- Many thanks to the Defiance Development and Visitors Bureau for working diligently on the culture aspect for the Defiance community. There are more events happening for all ages to enjoy.
- The Defiance College Jacket Journey which is a program joining industry with the College to decide what educational skills students need to prepare them for the workforce after graduation is happening virtually on Thursday.
- Rita Kissner is working with the Dream Center on workforce development. Lydia Molholic, Director of Development Services Agency visited the Dream Center and very impressed with the construction/automotive education, but even more so with the Dream Center's approach that goes beyond the technical training of teaching life skills along the way. Cooperation and collaboration with NWCC, Four County, Defiance City Schools are at the table to better support workforce development.



## ERIKA WILLITZER and JOHN LEHNER

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

- Continuing to meet with the City and County Engineers on expanding inventory for new sites to offer for economic development projects.
- A new and updated Defiance County Economic Development website is live now.
- There are a lot of job openings and DCED is assisting with sharing these positions on the DCED social media platforms.
- The DCED Office has great partnership with OhioMeansJobs (OMJ) and is referring companies to make contact with OMJ to list their job openings on OMJ's website.
- A tax abatement is complete for the new Keller Development Group for their \$7.1 million investment on East Commerce Drive for a new packaging plant.
- Interviewing for the open DCED Workforce Development position is finished. An offer was made to a candidate and waiting for a reply to either accept or deny the job.
- A recap meeting was held recently after learning Defiance was not chosen by a huge business considering to locate here. The City learned from this that the Baltimore Road corridor needs improvements especially being in close proximity to US 24. Each county will be receiving \$1 million to abate Brownfields and Defiance should focus on the Zeller property building which is located on Baltimore Road.
- The Manufacturing Summit is on July 29, 2021



## 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

### **KIRSTIE MACK:**

- The Farmers Market has 14 vendors now. The Northside Farmers Market on Saturdays is very busy. All vendors are doing very well.
- A location such as the future Gateway Park would be a great place for the vendors to set up.



## LIZ KEEL AND RITA KISSNER

### HOUSING PILLAR

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**RITA KISSNER:** Senator Sherod Brown was in Defiance recently and visited with a few key people on housing issues. It was a good visit, and the benefit was to get everyone to the table to collaborate on housing.

**MIKE McCANN:** Residential developments: Built-to-rent options for single family homes has been in the news lately. Granite Ridge Builders and Duane and Janelle Keys are both interested in building residential homes in Defiance, but finding land or farm ground to build on has been very difficult. There is a very high demand on buying homes in Defiance.



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

### PERCEPTION PILLAR

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#### KIRSTIE MACK:

The Perception Pillar team is working on:

- Niki Warncke: After visiting Defiance, Small Nation's report should be coming to us soon.
- Niki Warncke: The City website is being updated to better showcase the Parks.
- The Defiance trailer wraps to be placed on Keller Logistics trucks will be in September.
- 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 developed. There are two stories ready to push out to the public.
- DDVB is working with the Crescent-News on geo-fencing blog ad campaigns. One segment being developed is "Five Things You Must See in Defiance County."
- Perception is good! Events are highly attended.
- The City Bicentennial is next year (2022). The DDVB is planning a week-long activity to celebrate the event. Committees will be formed and co-hosting with the Defiance Public Library for this. A large fundraising event will happen this fall to fund various shows/events.
- The DDVB is researching more ways to promoting Defiance County and the businesses serving our community.

#### LOU RIVERA:

- Working on social media outlets to get the word out about what Defiance has to offer to the community.
- Hashtags of #ParkitDefi or #DefiLetsPlay for social media was suggested.
- "Parks Board" is the name of the Facebook page being developed which will carry over into Instagram and Twitter.
- Archive Social will need administrative log in credentials to add the Parks Board Facebook Page for records retention.

#### CHRIS YODER:

- Information on the Defiance Area Foundation's "Project 2030" was shared. Information can be found at [defianceareafoundation.org/project2030](http://defianceareafoundation.org/project2030)

**Next SPC Pillar Team Leader meeting:** Tuesday, September 14, 2021, at 11:30 a.m. at City Hall Council Chambers.

*Submitted by Executive Assistant Debbie Stevens*