

City of Worthington
Community Visioning Committee
Monday, July 27, 2020 - 6:00 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members Present: Don Mottley, Paul Cynkar, Beth Sommer, Kathryn Burris, Jon Melchi, Catey Corl, Laura Abu-Absi, Graham Wood, Cindy Findlay, Matt Lees, and Joe Sherman

Committee Members Absent: Austin Mitchell, Linda Mercadante

Others Present: Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Management Assistant Ethan Barnhardt, Lauren Falcone Poggemeyer Design Group, and no visitors were in attendance

Mr. Sherman convened the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

MOTION *Mr. Melchi moved, seconded by Mr. Cynkar to approve the meeting minutes from the Community Visioning Committee meeting of July 14, 2020.*

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Sherman explained how the public input process is continuing and there is an additional focus group meeting on Wednesday with a group of Gen-Z individuals organized by Jack Conrath. Ms. Burris asked who will be in this group. Mr. Sherman responded that it is a Gen-Z group that is working on visioning not only throughout Worthington but also with other communities. They will go through the same focus group questions as the other groups. Ms. Burris asked if they are Worthington students. Mr. Sherman confirmed that they are. Ms. Burris asked if we are issuing any other public invite to other younger people, and whether this will be a closed group. Mr. Sherman explained that this was the session where we were looking to include the school kids. We will be doing a survey for Gen-Z kids to take and that will be how we get in front of other school kids. Because Mr. Conrath put this group together and it is his group, he believes the respectful thing is to leave this as being just his kids. Ms. Abu-Absi said that she was looking at the Worthington website today and saw that there is public notice of the youth focus group. Ms. Stewart detailed that it is advertised as public meeting due to the potential for the majority of the committee to be participating, and we have to allow anyone to observe who wants to do so. Mr. Melchi asked if there is any concern that we let Mr. Conrath self-select the young people participating. The other focus groups were able to sign up to participate. We have allowed one person to pick 30 participants in a session representative of an entire group. Mr. Sherman noted that we did not get a lot of participation otherwise. Ms. Falcone stated that we can fall back on the postcard went to every single house, so we did try to get to their houses. When looking at the public survey, 3% of respondents are of Gen-Z, so some of them are participating. Mr. Mottley explained that the response is that we are doing the best we can, and it is difficult to get people involved. None of what we are doing is going to be a statistically valid sample, we need to take everything with a grain of salt. We could be subject to some criticism if we overly rely on that data.

Ms. Abu-Absi updated that we have discussed using Instagram and other social media platforms as another way to easily reach youth if amplified on the right channels. She connected with Vicki Gnezda from the schools who said they would be happy to amplify and share using their social media channels to get out any type of survey or polls we would like to see. We should be able to make the same ask for their Facebook page. She explained Mr. Mitchell has put together a few draft questions that have been

distributed. There is a proposed three question quick poll “pulse” that asks: What do you think is best thing about Worthington? How would you describe its energy? and If you could change one thing about Worthington what would it be. The schools have over 3,000 Instagram followers on their page. It is a good way to reach out to this population.

Ms. Corl updated on the discussions of the Wednesday communications working team and how they are trying to pull all the insights together and create a format to move that forward. The goal is to use the template to pull insights together and to replace the tiles on the existing homepage to get people to respond to very specific ideas we heard. In the journey of visioning there has been lots of open input asking for broad thoughts. We now need to transition to what is the vision and aspirational future we are moving towards. What are the conflicts we have seen and the things needing resolution. She is not sure if all on same page about where we are going and how we get there. A vision outlines the qualities people want to have in the community, aspirational things that people use to explain the experience they want to have. A lot of feedback has been very specific so far, things they like and do not like. The next steps are centered on the need to align what are the very specific things we need to address or solve to have confidence in the vision. It has been heard loud and clear that community wants to talk about increasing diversity and there is the need to start outlining the things we value and what the community needs to do to get there. Ms. Falcone explained how with some of the big things such as housing, diversity, and economic development there were lots of commonalities in focus groups and surveys. Mr. Sherman asserted that it is not our job as the visioning committee to solve things. Topics such as diversity are a huge topic and that is something that is Council’s responsibility. The committee is to serve as the ears for the community, not as an advocate for the community. We will take what we have heard to Council and ask what they are going to do about things.

Ms. Corl described how asking these questions gives people an opportunity to generate follow-up conversations. Ms. Findlay noted that it shines a spotlight on disagreements and conflating desires. Ms. Corl explained how the thought is to get feedback so we can start moving forward to the last phase to be able to write out a vision. She overviewed the template she has been working on for creating insights to begin putting thoughts into one place. She asked other committee members to give their input and add on to this to make sure it is bringing the most important themes to the top. Mr. Mottley conveyed how he really likes the direction, and it is very insightful to lay out the areas of agreement and disagreement. Ms. Falcone said that she would post the template on OneDrive and people would then be able to go in and update it. She would like to get feedback as soon as possible to put it up on website.

Mr. Lees asked if the committee has a final analysis of all the things done so far and whether there is anything outstanding we do not have yet. Ms. Falcone said that everything should be in the OneDrive. She explained that Ms. Stewart and Mr. Barnhardt did some fact checking for the focus group and she will be sending along the comments from the focus groups soon.

Ms. Falcone explained how going through template, it will be pulling everything into it from SOAR, Focus Groups, and website what has been heard so far. Ms. Corl said that it is time to bring things down into top level themes. Ms. Corl overviewed the various topics that have come up such as infrastructure, diversity, parks & greenspace, multimodal transportation, excellent city services, intra-community coordination, and governance. Ms. Findlay said that the committee is not supposed to be working on specific issues or projects, but rather reflecting back to Council and the community. A lot of people mentioned that certain recreational amenities are very important, and they want the situation resolved,

she wondered what do we do with those specific comments. Ms. Falcone responded that can be put under action, maybe the pool could be placed under Parks and Recreation. Ms. Corl asked about what is the quality of the city that a pool starts to serve. We can talk about proactive versus reactive stances and engage different viewpoints and leverages to get things done. Mr. Melchi said he wants to be clear we are not just regurgitating what we are hearing and that is the vision given to council. The goal is for us to go a little bit beyond that. If we just say people want to see a resolution to the pool, that seems a little empty. Mr. Sherman asserted that we are not solving problems, but we should tell them exactly what the community is feeling not just staying. Ms. Falcone explained that a group of educated and involved people want diversity but not diverse housing. We want to be able to show if you want to do one thing, you have to do another thing too. Maybe there needs to be more education, communication, and collaboration done. Ms. Stewart explained that picking up some of the bigger picture question for the pool, it is a broader question. We are a city with a 14,000 person population, that supports a community center, a senior center, and an arts center. There needs to be discussion about how 14,000 person city serves a much broader population which includes Northland and the school district. Ms. Corl explained how the example of Austin, Texas's visioning is important to look back at. What is relationship of what Worthington has as a vision and what Columbus has as a broader vision. There is lots of talk about the Columbus way. There may be opportunities to ladder up to Columbus, or opportunities to differentiate from other parts of the city.

Ms. Abu-Absi brought up Ms. Falcone's comment about historic not rising to the top. Ms. Falcone expressed how it just feels like historic did not rise up in the focus groups. There was some of that in the SOAR and was put in with economic development. Ms. Findlay said that we heard a few people say Worthington is too consumed with the historic character and charm and needs to freshen its look. Ms. Falcone said we need to put this on the website as a tile and get feedback. Ms. Findlay suggested a tile with "Conflicting Opinions".

Ms. Cynkar brought up the targeting of the neighborhood Facebook pages. Ms. Abu-Absi connected with Vicki Gnezda, and they reaffirmed they had a lot going on but were willing to let us use their social media. Ms. Gnezda did remind them that they sent out information about visioning to the district newsletter. We were contacted by Worthington Lions Club and Joan Bird who reached out that they are back meeting regularly and would like to set something up. It is not a huge group, but it is a well-connected group. Ms. Falcone suggested we could do a Facebook live speakers bureau to reach people.

Ms. Falcone overviewed the public survey, sharing that there have been 926 responses, with a 71% completion rate. On average it has taken 17 minutes to complete. Both residents and non-residents have been participating. Gen-Z is at 3% of survey responses. 73% are getting information from social media. 63% are hearing from word of mouth. The City is going to work with their GIS to get the number of houses in neighborhoods to compare to the percentage responding in neighborhoods. She overviewed how a large amount of people have no opinions on social services, multifamily housing, or traditions and values. Maybe there needs to be more education on those items and how they are related to economic development. It is interesting that 12% rank food waste composting as least important. There was nothing crazy said about city services, people are very pleased with their city services. A surprising number of people had no opinion on police, fire, and EMS. When doing a final vision, we need to have lenses to look through the vision such as COVID, diversity, and police issues. There are lots of things here that would not have bubbled to the top six to eight months ago. Ms. Falcone said it was odd that people ranked the least important planning element as intracommunity coordination and governance. We need to balance

what the population says in survey versus what people say in the focus groups. We need to represent what the overall public is saying. The survey needs to be left open while a press release is getting ready. We are still getting responses and had 52 responses on the 19th of July. Ms. Findlay stated that she is worried that we are not getting a lot from certain geographic parts of Worthington. She does not want to close it until we figure out some way to get southwest Worthington or the Linworth area participating. Mr. Wood brought up how there is a question on the survey about where folks are hearing about the survey. Maybe we could dig into specific demographics and see where they are hearing about the survey.

Ms. Falcone explained how in a perfect world, the community would come together in meetings and go over visioning boards. We could put the boards up in different places, but she does not know how that would work in COVID times. She floated the idea of putting them on website and get people to give feedback on vision statements. Ms. Findlay expressed she likes the idea of people seeing the boards in different places with more visibility. Ms. Abu-Absi asked how easy it would be to do a QR code for each, because there was some success with using QR codes at farmer's market. She likes the idea of advertising as much as we can. Ms. Corl stated that maybe this is a nice change from having to do everything online, we are doing the best we can with the website but are not getting tons of feedback. Ms. Findlay said that we will really reach new demographics if we can work something out with grocery stores or maybe CVS which are some of the few places people are going. We might get people who do not spend a lot of time online at Kroger. Mr. Sherman asked about if we could rotate these through the Village Green signs? Mr. Melchi shared that he worries that stores may be a little skittish having things up right now. Mr. Sherman asked whether the farmer's market is viable. Mr. Cynkar replied that it is now a park and walk. Ms. Sommer said that it is very well attended but her guess is that more than half are not from Worthington. Ms. Stewart said that a quarter to a third are from the school district. Ms. Corl expressed that she has heard about long lines and how we could make we are getting feedback on all the different ones.

Ms. Falcone asked whether the committee still wanted to put the five focus group questions up on a website tile. Mr. Barnhardt expressed that doing so would be very easy if that is what the committee desires.

Ms. Abu-Absi brought up the decision about how to handle the Charette. Ms. Falcone replied that she thought we talked about doing a Teams meeting and breaking into rooms. Ms. Stewart said that staff can reach out to MORPC about how they have administered their Teams meetings. Ms. Abu-Absi asked whether the committee is still looking to do in August. Ms. Falcone replied that is something that needs to be decided upon. Her concern with doing the charette online is that there could be people dominating the conversations which we saw somewhat in the focus groups. She would like to see how the visioning goes before doing the charette.

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.