

**City of Worthington**  
**Community Visioning Committee**  
**Monday, August 24, 2020 - 6:00 P.M. – 7:30 P.M.**  
**Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams**

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

Committee Members Absent: Matt Lees, Linda Mercadante

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

**Mr. Sherman convened the meeting at 6:02 p.m.**

**MOTION**                      *Mr. Mottley moved, seconded by Mr. Cynkar to approve the meeting minutes from the Community Visioning Committee meeting of August 11, 2020.*

**The motion passed unanimously.**

*Mr. Sherman asked the Committee if they would be continuing with attending the Farmers Market. Mr. Mitchell stated that we have the option to, and his sense is that only a minority of the Committee is able to attend at the moment and it is a stretch from a resource standpoint. He would hesitate to commit to another weekend without knowing who would support it. Mr. Cynkar asked about being able to be within the ropes of the market itself instead of standing outside, that way we might be able to get more attention. Mr. Wood said the only time he was able to engage with people was when the line got really long so people were standing right in front of him. Mr. Mitchell explained how people are hesitant to engage at this time. Ms. Findlay asked if there was a jump in web traffic from the farmers market. Ms. Falcone said she did not think there was there a bump from the farmers market, it was more from the press release being put out. Mr. Sherman said we ought to think about keeping this going after Labor Day and creating a schedule of people to attend.*

*Mr. Sherman brought up there is a Lion's Club presentation tomorrow at noon. There is a CRC presentation on the first of September. Mr. Cynkar said he would distribute the link to tune into the Lions Club meeting.*

*Ms. Corl explained that there have been a number of discussions about starting to create and revise the draft visions. The communications working group thought it was important for everyone to give input. The plan for this meeting is to look at the example of Austin, Texas and their vision document and the format it follows, and then go over the draft vision statements together. After tonight if there is additional work to be done, we will breakout into small groups to take a couple of the statements and polish them. Ms. Corl showed the Austin visioning website on the screen. Ms. Falcone commented that the Austin visioning plan is clean, easy to replicate, broad, and has a lot of action items. Ms. Findlay agreed and said that she likes the level of detail Austin's plan goes into and that it is action oriented. Ms. Corl said that we need a vision that is simple and tangible, which is what Austin does with simple statements, then elaborating how with general actions and behaviors. They do not tie into specific topics that are hot right now. They give a statement of where the boundaries are. Ms. Findlay said that one thing she noticed is that they have a priority ranking. She feels like people will assume that the first vision listed would be the top priority. We are going to have to explain consistently what we mean by what a vision is and state that*

*these visions are not in order of priority. Mr. Mottley said he suspects that trying to prioritize would be difficult. Ms. Falcone said we would give education on visioning in the introduction. Visions will align with resources and will need to be flexible, which can be explained in the narrative.*

*Ms. Corl showed the draft visioning document on the screen. Mr. Cynkar commented on the first vision that Worthington is Livable, and he said that he likes the word livable, but it does not reach up. He wondered if there was a more effusive adjective that could be used. Mr. Mottley suggested adding “very”. Mr. Sherman suggested using “friendly” as another way to think about it. Ms. Corl said that we need to make sure all of these are aspirational and standalone. This first vision is about housing and we need to define what it means and how we talk about housing, zoning, and population. Mr. Mottley said that the word “friendly” was about more than housing, and Mr. Sherman agreed. Ms. Corl asked if this vision should be bigger or if it is just about housing. Mr. Mitchell suggested adding something about housing being more accessible or obtainable. Ms. Findlay explained how Austin talks about things like access to small business, libraries, parks, and recreation, which are things Worthingtonians value that could be worked into this. Ms. Stewart explained that Austin’s visions are more consolidated than where we are at right now, which we might want to work towards. Ms. Findlay wondered if we wanted to have a three-tiered approach including a vision, principles, and action steps.*

*Ms. Abu-Absi questioned whether a principle could be that Worthington is home from cradle to grave. For the action steps when we talk about things like building height, she asked if those came out in the surveys or focus groups and if we could demonstrate the consensus on this. Ms. Falcone said it came out in the key person interview, SOAR, and the focus groups. Height was a big issue; people were either fine or not fine with height and there was no in-between. Ms. Corl said for things like zoning, it should be along the lines that zoning should be done with livability in mind. Ms. Abu-Absi brought up the “Worthington Way for density” with no high-rises and asked if high-rises are defined. Mr. Melchi responded that high-rises in some areas could mean more than eight stories, but in Worthington it is three stories. Ms. Corl struggles with that too and she does not think that we heard no high-rises in the feedback. Mr. Mottley explained that we are putting out an aspirational document, not a legal document where everything needs to be precisely defined. Not everyone meant the same thing by no high-rises, but it could mean a tall building by Worthington standards. Ms. Falcone said what we heard is that people who wanted denser development, wanted to do it in a Worthington way and needed to be conscious of the City’s history and building heights. Mr. Melchi said he has a problem with us aiming to be aspirational, but then saying, “do not do this”. We need to be careful of how things are phrased. Ms. Findlay suggested putting more of an emphasis on Worthington’s character. Mr. Cynkar stated that character is a great word to use. Ms. Findlay stated that we heard a lot of people complaining about stodginess in Worthington getting in the way of progress. This will be the trickiest vision to state. Ms. Corl said that whatever goes into the principles need to be something that begins to unify everyone that we heard consistently. Mr. Melchi brought up that in Worthington we are talking about three parcels of land, but Austin talks about redeveloping their downtown and expansive areas. Ms. Abu-Absi said she likes the third bullet that mentions creative approaches and asked if we want to say that Worthington has clear guidelines to support creative approaches.*

*Mr. Sherman discussed how it has taken 45 minutes to work through this first visioning statement and asked the group whether this was the most efficient way to handle this. Ms. Corl agreed, noting that it takes a little time to get a footing. She then detailed a plan to go through the action steps and principles. Ms. Sommer stated that she thinks we have too many principles and thinks we should focus on which ones*

*the group needs to work on and which ones need to be combined. Ms. Burris agreed and said that going back and reading the principles she thought they are all really saying the same thing. The Austin vision is an example of them saying a lot in very few words, which should be a goal of ours. Ms. Falcone said she also wants to finish tonight with the vision statements nailed down.*

*Ms. Corl moved on to discussing the second vision regarding diversity. Mr. Cynkar said that the third statement about diversity for all people, is inclusive of all people. Ms. Findlay said she loves the last one that Worthington is Welcoming to All. Ms. Corl noted that welcoming was a theme heard throughout the process. Ms. Findlay said that it opens things up to more than just housing stock. Ms. Corl asked how this is different from the first vision with diversity for housing. Ms. Findlay said she did not take that to include social diversity. Mr. Mitchell explained how we should be welcoming with systems, processes, and governance that are accessible and clear to all. He also mentioned actively promoting and celebrating differences through events. Ms. Sommer said that housing diversity needs to be included.*

*The group began discussing vision three. Ms. Sommer said that she thought this was the vision that encompasses economic development and that is different. Ms. Corl asked what the aspirational thing is to make people buy-in and feel excited. Ms. Falcone said that she likes the statement “Worthington Seeks Prosperity for All”. Ms. Stewart wondered if this is relating to the City government being financially secure, or if it is individually focused. Ms. Falcone suggested that she thought she heard through the process is that it would be Worthington’s financial base would be secure. Mr. Mottley stated that we are trying to make this too big, talking about economic security goes into what the Worthington Resource Pantry does. Ms. Stewart said that Mr. Mottley suggested three principles in his statement including a strong tax base, opportunities for people living here, and options for goods and services. Mr. Cynkar said that if you have that, it eliminates some of the insecurities you could find in the community. Ms. Burris said she took this to mean that the City itself is strong financially and economically to provide services that everyone wants, maintaining the standard of living people look for here.*

*Ms. Corl read aloud an example from Austin noting that they did not have separate statements all about housing, diversity, or development. They just said that they are prosperous which cuts across multiple development and planning buckets. Mr. Mitchell said that it strikes him as a bit utopian, just saying a bunch of aspirational things about how we want to describe an ideal place, he struggles with the value of doing that. With this vision he wants to know what the “Worthington Way” actually means and what makes this place unique. Ms. Corl said one thing captured in the “Worthington Way” is being forward thinking, diverse, vibrant, and competitive while still preserving our history. Prosperity is a great word but does not have the same emotional feel. We need to define what the “Worthington Way” is as a part of this vision. Mr. Mitchell wondered what would be unique in the way that we would be prosperous. Ms. Corl stressed that this one needs more emotion to it. Mr. Mitchell said that it is we are not trying to be everyone else, and we will do this our own way. Ms. Sommer said that she heard a couple times the “Columbus Way” about getting private and public dollars together for economic development, we need to define what the “Worthington Way” means. Ms. Abu-Absi said that she heard people in the focus groups talk about economic development and how we are not Dublin, and any development needs to maintain the current character of the City. She thinks that everyone has a different sense of what the “Worthington Way” means, it could be a negative. Ms. Corl suggested redefining the “Worthington Way”. Mr. Cynkar suggested the words character, tradition, and spirit. Mr. Melchi read the values and principles that make up the “Columbus Way” from the Columbus Partnership website. Ms. Corl stated that the “Worthington Way” would be the code that details the partnerships, how we collaborate, and the idea of the qualities of*

*the community. There is the emotional side and the practical side. Mr. Cynkar asked if there was something included in this that the economic opportunities of the City provides vitality for all. Ms. Corl said there are a few components in this. First is the sort of practical discussion about a strong tax base, opportunities, goods, and services. Then there is this code about public-private partnerships and how we guide that collaboration. Finally, there is the maintenance of the culture, spirit, and community.*

*The Committee began discussing vision four that “Worthington is Natural and Sustainable”. Ms. Falcone suggested moving this one into the vision about being livable, however, we did hear this a lot throughout the process. She thinks parks and sustainability came out very strong. Mr. Mottley stated that this is separate from livability. Ms. Corl asked what the core principles are that belong in this. Mr. Sherman replied to protect and preserve. Mr. Mitchell mentioned local production of food and energy. Mr. Melchi said he did not know how you can talk about being sustainable without talking about transportation, walkability, and the bike and ped plan. Mr. Mitchell asserted we could be the most bikeable, walkable suburb in Central Ohio if we wanted to be. Ms. Falcone mentioned someone in a focus group mentioned creative use of parks and greenspace, there is an aspect of intracommunity collaboration when it comes to parks and greenspace. Mr. Cynkar explained this could include things such as the pools, and the Selby Park shelter house.*

*Ms. Corl moved the group to vision number five that “Worthington has the Infrastructure to Support Current and Future Residents and Businesses”. Ms. Falcone commented that she thinks that this one is too long of a vision statement. Ms. Findlay wondered if this needed to be folded into other vision statements. Ms. Falcone suggested folding this into “Worthington is Livable”.*

*The Committee moved on to overview vision six that “Worthington is Forward Thinking and Proactive Instead of Reactive”. Mr. Cynkar mentioned that reactive pertains to the Zoning Commission and the Review Boards. The aspiration would be that we would be forward thinking and proactive. Ms. Corl asked what the principles are that we do well and what is important to get to that. Mr. Mitchell suggested that we set the pace for communities like ours, looking ahead at challenges and addressing them. Mr. Cynkar asked when we say proactive, can we address that we need to be a little bit broader in our thinking about ordinances and laws. Ms. Falcone suggested being creative, thinking outside the box. Ms. Corl mentioned she heard from the input that the community wants to be more proactively engaged about governance for processes. Mr. Melchi suggested people do not have a clear understanding of what engaging in these conversations means, or what is possible. There is a lack of understanding which is causing arguments. Mr. Cynkar made the point that it is pretty sad when so many people say they get their news from the City at the billboards on the Village Green. We need to have other ways to get news and information to people. Ms. Findlay responded that the City does a lot of communicating, but people do not go to it.*

*Ms. Corl moved the discussion on to vision seven that “Worthington is a Model for Intra-Community Coordination and Inter-Governmental Cooperation”. Ms. Falcone suggested rolling this into the prior vision statement. Mr. Cynkar commented that he did not hear a lot of passion about this that it was not working. Ms. Falcone said she heard it about the pools and the schools. Mr. Mitchell explained how the bus routes end near the train tracks, but it has never seemed okay to expand those services. It is the mentality of do we want to help people be connected to work, or do we not want to have buses in our city. Ms. Corl agreed that this does not have much emotion and is very tactical. She asked what it is that we are trying to be best at with this. Mr. Mitchell stated that if we leverage the resources around us, we will be better off.*

*The Committee began discussing vision eight that “Worthington is Mobile and Interconnected”. Ms. Sommer stated that she does not believe that this should be on its own. Ms. Findlay explained that it is a standalone statement because there were so many comments about walkability and the work that the Bike and Ped Committee did that has not been followed through on. Mr. Cynkar asked if inter-connected should just be connected. There were comments about localized internet access like Dublin has or WI-FI hotspots. Ms. Falcone stated that internet should be listed under infrastructure. Ms. Corl expressed that she likes how it details that we would be different from other parts of the community. She challenged the Committee to keep the aspects of the soul of Worthington that keeps us different from other communities. This vision is something that was heard consistently. Ms. Findlay suggested adding to the principles section a focus on enhancing public transportation and providing better connections throughout the community such as the “Worthington Mile” concept.*

*Ms. Corl moved the discussion to vision nine that “Worthington Values and Respects Its People”. Ms. Falcone wondered if this one could be rolled into the vision that “Worthington is Welcoming to All”. Ms. Corl explained that some of the ideas about engaging residents could be included in the one about intracommunity coordination.*

*The Committee discussed the final two visions. Ms. Sommer expressed how she understands the schools are important to our quality of life, but our vision is not to influence the school system. Ms. Findlay suggested putting in a nod to the school system under the vision about intracommunity coordination. The Committee generally agreed. Ms. Falcone suggested adding something about the schools in the vision about Worthington being livable. Mr. Sherman expressed that vision eleven that “Worthington is Balanced” be rolled up into the first vision. Ms. Sommer stated that she does not know what it means. Ms. Corl explained balanced is a nice word and it can work into some of the principles. Mr. Mottley said that the idea of balance can work into economic development, where we have a balance of residential, businesses, and land uses. Ms. Corl expressed that when it is said that “Worthington is Home”, you will know what that means, and you feel that. She suggested when working on these visions, Committee members should work on the emotions and feelings.*

*Ms. Falcone detailed how she wants to get a mailer out with the visions and principles to the community in order to get responses back by late September or early October when we are writing the final document. She will work to consolidate all of the comments from the Committee that she has heard so far tonight. Mr. Sherman said that this will be sharing what the Committee has heard so far out to the community. Mr. Cynkar expressed that if we can combine the ones that need to be combined, we can then put the emotion and spirit into the visions. Ms. Stewart suggested sharing the action steps that have been discussed with sub-working groups to be defined further a little bit.*

**The meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.**