

City of Worthington
Community Visioning Committee
Monday, October 26, 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, Matt Lees, Jon Melchi, Linda Mercadante, Austin Mitchell, Don Mottley, Beth Sommer, Graham Wood, and Joe Sherman

Committee Members Absent: None

Others Present: Assistant City Manager Robyn Stewart, Management Assistant Ethan Barnhardt, Public Information Officer Anne Brown, 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 October 13, 2020.*

The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Falcone thanked everyone for their work on finalizing the draft vision statements. The next documents that need to be worked on are the chapters for the final report. The Committee's presentation to the City Council is coming up on November 9th. There were almost 300 draft vision mailers received in the mail and online from residents giving their feedback.

Mr. Sherman expressed that for the presentation to City Council, there are six vision statements, and he would like to see six of the committee members walk through the slides for each vision. He asked for volunteers to do that, and they will work to figure out the details of how the presentation will go.

Mr. Lees overviewed the process that has been undertaken over the past few weeks on refining the vision statements. There was a substantial editing and review process undertaken, including rewriting the statements in a single voice and tone. Ms. Corl reviewed the revised statements and compared them to the original document to make sure things were not changed inadvertently. There was some feedback that the tone was changed too much, so they worked to nuance the tone to ensure the community were the owners of the visions and principles. The statements are still undergoing reviews by committee members to make sure they are truly capturing what was heard by the community. Ask for an accuracy test – they should look to write down things heard that should change about Worthington.

The Committee began reviewing the economic development vision, "Worthington's economy is balanced and resilient". Ms. Falcone expressed how the phrase "Forward Thinking" was left out and how that was something that she thinks was heard time after time throughout the public engagement. Mr. Lees explained that could be added if the thought is not contained anywhere else. Mr. Cynkar stated how he does not like the word "cautious", it should be replaced with, "discerning". We want development, but it should be planned and organized. Mr. Lees stated that the final guiding principle is a sentiment that needs to be in there somehow, a combination of forward thinking, deliberate, and playful. That needs to be captured. Mr. Cynkar stated that the last sentence of the vision statement needs a little seasoning. We want thriving development, but we are deliberate in our approach. We want to welcome business, but it

needs to be the correct type. Mr. Melchi agreed, explaining how he felt like he heard that things take so long to get done. We need to be quick but do not hurry. There is a contrast between being deliberate and deliberate to a fault. Findlay suggested changing to a more explanatory sentence, that "Cities thrive with creative, innovative, human-centered development." Mr. Lees suggested that approach will concern some, but elate others. However, that is what we keep coming back to, the philosophy of development for Worthington. Mr. Mottley suggested adding "Worthington Mile" to the second bullet point. Mr. Mitchell asked if we should refer to visions about being sustainable and walkable. Mr. Mottley asked about adding something about extending some of the qualities and feel of downtown beyond downtown. Ms. Burris recommended taking "educated" out of the vision statement because it smacks of elitism.

The Committee began discussing the vision "Worthington is connected". Mr. Melchi asked whether there is a reason we do not say anything about bike and pedestrian. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee spent a lot of time making a master plan about how to connect all of Worthington for either biking or walking, and yet we do not reference the plan. Ms. Stewart described how the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee is a standing committee and will continue meeting. The bike and pedestrian plan has been adopted by the City Council. Mr. Melchi suggested adding something about implementing the plan. Ms. Stewart explained how the City has funding to begin chipping away at the plan, but it will not happen overnight due to the amount of work recommended. There could be a principle or action step that is suggesting quicker implementation. Ms. Findlay stated that calling out specifically the bike and ped plan would be like calling out a development plan. She brought up the previous statement to make Worthington the most bikeable and walkable in Central Ohio which is not included here now. Mr. Mitchell suggested, "Worthington is the most walkable and bike-friendly suburb in Central Ohio". Ms. Stewart agreed that a broad statement makes sense. Ms. Falcone brought up how there were a couple comments about sidewalk ramps and asked if that should be included. Ms. Stewart suggested language around multi-modal transportation infrastructure. Mr. Lees commented on the principle mentioning modern technologies. Ms. Stewart agreed it is very broad and reads like it is talking about autonomous vehicles. Mr. Mottley suggested the language, "Modern technologies that connect us" and removing "bold steps".

For the vision "Worthington is dedicated to the vibrancy of its downtown", the Committee liked the word "vibrancy" and agreed that it is a well written vision.

The Committee began discussing the vision, "Worthington is diverse and equitable". Ms. Falcone suggested adding the word "abilities" and the Committee agreed. Ms. Burris asked to change "evaluate" to "identify" in the second bullet. Mr. Mottley responded that we need to evaluate and identify.

Committee members moved on to the next vision, "Worthington is a model for environmental stewardship". Ms. Falcone brought up that there is a typo in the opening paragraph.

The Committee began discussing, "Worthington is known for its quality of life." Ms. Falcone expressed that she does not like word "exemplary" because some focus groups found this vision to have dog whistles in it. Mr. Mottley suggested using "livable" instead of "exemplary". Ms. Falcone replied that people in the mailers did not like the word "livable". Mr. Mitchell pushed back, explained how we all moved here, Worthington can't be that bad. Ms. Abu-Absi expressed how the first three are that we are not willing to change, but then the last one reads that we are willing to change. She wondered if there is a different way to talk about the neighborhood character. Ms. Sommer explained that the way she sees this, there are two neighborhoods that need to be protected, Old Worthington and Rush Creek. Rush Creek is very

important and needs to be preserved. Ms. Abu-Absi suggested, "Our community is committed to the preservation of its historic districts and unique neighborhoods." Mr. Lees wondered if we need to be re-writing the vision statement to be less redundant. Mr. Melchi brought up how it talks about meeting the needs of people, but also the protection of neighborhoods. The statements come to odds. He agreed that we have heard both, but they are in conflict. Mr. Mottley described how we are not talking about tearing down existing housing but talking about developing new. We are not talking about preserving structures but preserving character. Each vision is focusing on a different aspect of what makes Worthington a great place to be.

The Committee began discussing the final vision, "Worthington's leadership is open, forward-thinking and collaborative." Ms. Falcone shared how everyone from the mailers loved this vision. Mr. Mottley suggested adding, "timely decisions". Ms. Falcone discussed the opening paragraph section "elected leaders carefully and respectfully..." and described how respectfully came out again and again in comments. Mr. Cynkar suggested the need to include citizens lending a hand and helping to make this work. Mr. Lees explained how this is an expectation of leaders of our community, not necessarily City Council, but community leaders. It is focused on the expectations of leaders, not each other. Ms. Sommer stated that she really likes this and the call to action for leaders.

Mr. Cynkar expressed that he believes the top section is too long and hard to read. He loves the points of it and what we are trying to do, but it is just too much. Mr. Lees replied that it is an introductory section. Ms. Findlay suggested putting in paragraph breaks.

Ms. Stewart asked if the Committee has thought about the meeting schedule for November. Mr. Sherman stated that the Committee will meet on November 10th, but not on the 23rd.

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.