

**Ypsilanti 2020 Task Force Special Retreat
Meeting Minutes
Sunday, August 26, 2008**

Attendance: K. Baumkel, G. Clark (acting chair), N. Edmunds, K. Hill, L. Horne, R. Maurer, M. Maynard, S. Stidd (acting secretary); D. Strong (Absent: L. Bashert, N. Brown).
Others Attending: S. Pierce

Special Announcement:

Next Special Meeting (Planning Grant Summary): Sunday, Sept. 2, 2007 from 2 – 6 PM at High Scope (if necessary). Meeting scheduled with the understanding that we may not have to meet in person if we can accomplish the work via e-mail.

General Business:

Meeting called to order 2:30 PM – Adjourned 7:01 PM

Break: 5:53 – 6:13 PM

Minutes from last meeting are still being processed, so were not submitted for approval.

Individual Projects: G. Clark: Members to proceed with our own parts of the overall vision plan/individual projects and report back at the next regular meeting.

Special Business for Retreat:

K. Baumkel and G. Clark: Meeting with Graydon Krapohl from UM CEAP regarding Goals Development and a Planning Grant Summary. UM CEAP's recommendations:

- * 2020 list 8-10 goals related to economic development to address
- * 2020 draft a 1-2 page Planning Grant Summary (PGS)
- * 2020 hand-deliver PGS to the US Dept. of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) representative at the 9/7/07 ACH Plant meeting.

UM CEAP Community Toolkit Documents:

Committee members are asked to review the following UM CEAP CD contents:

* **Strategic Economic Recovery Planning Workbook:** Outlines the process we will be following. G. Clark and K. Baumkel report that the Workbook appears to be a valuable resource and addresses some of the issues faced by the group in an exceptional manner.

* **Ypsilanti Community Profile:** Data providing picture of Ypsilanti (older data – some inaccuracies also. K. Baumkel contacting Jim Rhein at the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth for more current data).

* **Resource Guide:** 300 federal grant, state grant and local foundation grant programs. (Web-interactive but some hyperlinks not working. UM CEAP sending corrected CDs for everyone on the Task Force. Note: 2020 agreed to utilize this free grants resource for now, revisit eCivis Grants Network at later date (fee-based grants locator/management service). The eCivis information has been forwarded to the City Manager for review.

U of M CEAP Suggestions:

Short-term (Fall 2007)

Immediate short term planning to arrive at 8-10 goals
Write a Planning Grant Summary to submit 9/7/07
Hold a Community Workshop Fall 2007
Develop SWAT workgroups
Submit a full Planning Grant application for funding

Long-term:

Hire Program Manager/Coordinator (grant funded)
Engage in Community Inventory & Assessment
Engage in longer-term economic development planning
Draft an Economic Development Plan
Implement Economic Development Plan

Discussion #1:

U of M has approached Ypsilanti looking to take the lead in economic development planning as our city is suffering the biggest economic distress and has an auto manufacturing plant closing coming up in 2008 (ACH).

M. Maynard: What are Planning Grants used for - can they be used to hire people? K. Baumkel: Planning Grants are written and funded to support economic development planning for a community/region. Contractors or temporary staff needed to carry out objectives or provide support during the grant project period is permitted.

K. Hill expressed some reservations about longer-term planning; K. Baumkel agreed and said that we can do short-term things and generate activity right away while applying for grants, etc. to take care of the bigger picture. She pointed out that we will do better off if we coordinate overall (at least ideally) and that's a point to doing regional cooperation and working with the U of M office; there are some larger meta-grants for regions that we can't get alone but which would benefit us and which would be a reason for regional cooperation. She talked about the planning group/work group distinction and how our task force essentially has to be (or at least organize) both, bringing others into the discussion. G. Clark pointed out also that the overall coordination takes longer; local things happen right now. K. Hill emphasized the importance of immediate local action while K. Baumkel and G. Clark pointed out the benefits of cooperation; both approaches can be undertaken at the same time.

All parties agreed on top priority: have a Planning Grant Summary ready for the Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration representative visit to ACH on Sept. 7, 2007.

R. Maurer clarified with K. Baumkel that a considerable amount of work goes into writing grants properly. K. Baumkel says that we need to do as much planning as possible as soon as possible to get essential background info for the grant.

N. Edmunds pointed out that the Depot Town CDC is chasing down grants all over the place already. Also city hall is working its own angles. Is there a list of what's going on in the city already? How can we coordinate this effort? That's our job and we need the tools to do it.

L. Horne agreed that the planning process was good way to go, and she thought that there needed to be a city-wide meetings of groups for both information and buy-in. This information was later incorporated into the outlined strategy for our planning grant.

K. Hill says we can use the city manager's solvency plan to identify the stuff that's going to be hit first/hardest and use that as a focus for bringing people to the table to plan with us.

Mission Statement:

2020 developed the following:

“Our mission is to help create economic and social recovery, stability, and growth for our community in response to the adverse impacts of the Ypsilanti automobile plant closing and other forms of sudden, severe, chronic, and long-term economic dislocation in our region.”

K Hill moved, M. Maynard seconded that we adopt this as a mission statement for the Task Force for this planning grant and as a template for future grants sought by the task force. D. Strong and N. Edmunds emphasized that we should not over-commit to this particular language for all grants in advance. This ‘sense of the Task Force’ statement was passed along with the motion.

Discussion #2:

Problem Areas. Our biggest sister city was hit by the Pfizer closing, we've been stressed a long time already, and now we're getting a local plant closing.

K. Baumkel: we need the Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township solvency plans, development plans, etc.; we need to know what the township and broader community are doing. D. Strong pointed out that small/local businesses are actually better in terms of community investment vs. big business. K. Baumkel has looked at the Ypsilanti Township master plan - IT development is something that we could pursue (the township is not pursuing development of this new industry). SPARK would also have an interest in our pursuing IT development. Also, the township is trying to build an “Old Town” shopping district abutting our downtown, this is something we might be able to take advantage of or co-plan with them as we have a large historic downtown district – the new and the old might connect and complement each other.

Goals Development:

Per UM CEAP Workbook, we listed goals under Econ/R&D (ERD) and Social Service/Community Response (SSCR) headings:

1. Supplementing state funding (Both)
2. Spurring business development (ERD) – here we identified individual areas
 - Depot Town (there is a Depot Town CDC)
 - Michigan Av. Downtown
 - Water Street

- Harriet/Spring Street
 - Business Park on Mansfield S. of Michigan Avenue (is the city EDC still in existence for this?)
 - West Cross Business District
 - Washtenaw Corridor
3. Encourage affordable transportation options (ERD)
 4. Partnering with local educational institutions (SSCR)
 5. Sustaining & expanding affordable regional recreation (SSCR)
 6. Encouraging health & wellness in our community (SSCR)
 7. Job retraining & retention (Both)
 8. Job creation/development (ERD)
 9. Housing (Both)
 10. Replace lost tax revenue from plant closing (ERD)
 11. Strengthening neighborhoods (SSCR)
 12. Social services for residents (SSCR)
 13. Historic preservation (ERD)

While somewhat vague and general, this identifies most of our community's concerns.

Quality of life issues:

1. Jobs
2. Health
3. Education
4. Housing
5. Recreation/entertainment/cultural events
6. Transportation
7. Neighborhood safety
8. Community spirit
9. Public safety (code enforcement – retention of city staff to enforce code violations – also problems with county jail system)

Historic Districts/Preservation as Primary Asset: N. Edmunds brought up the importance of historic preservation and suggested that elements of it be incorporated into any plan we come up with.

Water Street Site: There was some discussion about how to deal with the Water Street project.

Infrastructure: Utility/Inventory Items: Sewers, water, and roads all in fairly good shape. County-wide wi-fi access is a possible plan.

Talent: M. Maynard mentioned the importance of attracting and keeping young professionals and other well-paid citizens. S. Stidd noted importance of well-regarded public schools for retaining such people

A2 SWAT Team Model: K. Baumkel reviewed the SWAT (Strategic Action Work Teams) work groups structure adopted by Ann Arbor to address the Pfizer plant closing and now continuing in use as economic development teams. 2020 members discussed the A2 model and whether we could adapt it to address Ypsilanti needs like the ACH plant closing and as an ongoing format for addressing Ypsilanti's economic development (for more information on this model, visit www.annarborspark.org):

1. Talent Team
Talent attraction & retention.
2. Community Team
 - * Govt/Municipal
 - * Quality of Life (multiple)
3. Business Team
 - *Business Attraction
 - *Business & Entrepreneurial Development
4. Communications/Info Sharing Team
5. Site Team
Land, Facility & Equipment (reuse, redevelop, sell)
6. Policy & Funding Team

The Ypsilanti EDA Planning Grant:

- K. Baumkel explained that scope of work outline for typical 1-year Grant usually looks like this:
Pre-grant planning usually follows this outline, adding detail specific to project:
Q1: Planning & prep, agreements, hiring/contracting, scheduling.
Q2: Implementation of activities/programs
Q3: Implementation of activities/programs
Q4: Complete activities/programs, collect and analyze data, reports.

Some frustration was registered about the difficulty of preparing so much material so quickly for working on these grants for the U of M. It was discussed how we want to proceed.

Some people reflected that it is very hard to get appropriate information out of the city and its different branches; it's hard to know what's going on in different areas, etc. This is a historic problem that our committee is trying to surmount. There is currently no centralized repository where information on development/planning projects/efforts is posted, regularly updated, used by city personnel and shared with the public - this is a major handicap.

The possibility of cooperating with churches etc. was also discussed. These can be vehicles for service distribution as well as bridge-builders between different communities. We need to reach out to all groups if we are going to continue the city.

Planning Grant Ideas:

- **One-year planning grant** – EDA provides possibility of two successive renewals to complete economic development provided we meet each grant's goals in the economic development process (planning – implementation)

- **Matching requirements:** minimum/norm is 50/50 but you can have an in-kind local match (often the local part is half in-kind/half cash). An 80/20 is possible in extenuating circumstances if EDA standards for distress are met.

Q1 Activity:

- **Identify Partners / Stakeholders**
- **Hire Coordinator**
- **Community Inventory** (resources and needs):
 - Planning Stage – meet with and involve partners.
 - PR/Outreach/Invitations to stakeholders. Advertising strategies discussed including ‘reframing’ as popularized by George Lakoff’s Moral Politics.
 - Methods: Community forum series, focus groups, selected individual interviews, on-line survey, in-person physical survey to reach those without computer access.
- **Progress Review & Plan Adjustment** for Q2,Q3, Q4 to keep on track (Retreat format?)

Q2 Activity: Community Inventory – data collection

Q2-3 Activity: Community Inventory – data collection finished

Q4 Activity: compile data, analyze data & draw conclusions (assessment), summarize results, report to partners, report to City Council/public, finalize and submit final report to Funder. Reports include recommended next steps.

Members determined to start piecing together the Planning Grant Summary (1-2 pages describing community need and desire to submit Planning Grant for EDA funding to help Ypsilanti engage in economic development planning processes). We will do so via email and small individual meetings, with the possibility of a Sunday meeting of variable length based on subsequent developments.