

Monday, October 15, 2007

Meeting of the Ypsilanti 2020 Task Force

Minutes by Katy Wortman

1. Meeting called to order by Chair Gary Clark at 7:36pm.

2. Roll call taken

Members Present:

Lisa Bashert

Kent Baumkel

Gary Clark

Nat Edmunds

Kevin Hill

Linda Horne

Karen Mauer

Mark Maynard

Sean Stidd

Deborah Strong (arrived after initial roll-call)

3. Discussion and approval of minutes

Minutes from 9/4: minutes remain tabled

Minutes from 10/1: Kevin Hill moved to table the minutes, seconded by Sean Stidd.
Motion passed.

4. 2020 Task Force Partnerships – Follow-up to 2020 TF Presentation to the Eastern Leaders Group:

Kent Baumkel and Gary Clark reported on discussions with Washtenaw County Planning Director Tony Vanderworp.

Mr. VanDerworp reported that the county is interested in what the 2020 Task Force is doing.

Mr. VanDerworp's main points were as follows:

- The 2020 TF should make it a point to obtain information about community initiatives already in place
- The 2020 TF should seek out the ideas of stakeholders
- City/county collaboration on a joint regional EDA Grant may be premature because regional cooperation among local governments is lacking and needs to grow – for example the Eastern Leaders Group just began meeting in May 2007.

Mr. Vanderworp said that **UM's Economic Adjustment Assistance Program** focused on distressed communities w/ no plans or processes. He mentioned that Ypsilanti is not necessarily in that demographic.

Mr. Vanderworp mentioned that the county already has big project – an as of yet unnamed "community success project." The project will involve the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti corridor, as well as larger parts of southeastern Michigan. It was pointed out that Ypsilanti will play a vital role in this program. He said "without Ypsilanti being an integral part of this and without Ypsilanti moving forward, this will not be a success." Ideally this project will help to build an environment in Ypsilanti that positions it to be the next location for jobs and housing, drawing on its position as a link between Ann Arbor and Detroit.

Lisa Bashert mentioned that she already see that process underway. She said that she sees people from Ann Arbor moving to Ypsilanti for numerous reasons and that the task force can continue and accelerate that process.

Kent Baumkel reported that the County is more likely to support regional efforts via the Eastern Leaders Group. The 2020 Task Force is working on developing a connection with the Eastern Leaders Group right now, so our positioning is good.

5. Lisa Bashert read the resolution of the 2020 Task Force

6. Karen Hart, Ypsilanti Building and Planning Director: Current City Projects/Initiatives (see spreadsheet attachment)

Ms. Hart addressed the five main areas of the 2020 Task Force resolution as they related to city as follows:

1. Supplementing state funding

The state allows cities to raise revenues in 4 ways – revenue sharing (reduction by 900,000), property tax (37% of properties pay no tax, 49% land area pays no tax), fees/permits, income tax. Absent more revenue, the only other option is reducing services. "What's the quality of life you want?"

2. Economic and business development in a transitioning economy

As a community, we are not sure what will replace automotive and manufacturing. Ypsilanti needs to develop an identity beyond "not Ann Arbor." *Positive aspects* – diverse population, EMU, parks, Huron river, large historic district, a "real downtown" with local businesses, excellent proximity to highway and rail, exceptionally strong spirit of community cooperation.

Challenges – large percentage of poor residents, large percentage of renters, many old buildings that are expensive to maintain, division (racial and turf).

3. Transportation

Recent developments include: road millage, new bike lanes, active participation in commuter rail project, streetscape improvement.

Biggest challenge is AATA service. City solvency plan calls for elimination of payment

to AATA if necessary.

4. Partnership with local educational institutions

This is an area where the city is a bit weak.

5. Sustaining and expanding affordable regional recreation

This includes “friends” groups and the Depot town Community Development Corporation. The city no longer has a recreation department. Without more revenue grass in city parks will not be cut, snow will not shoveled, things will not be painted.

Ms. Hart handed out a spreadsheet listing all current city building and planning projects. Each project on the list was discussed in detail. The list included the following projects:

- Aerotropolis MOU
- Depot Town CDC
- Get Downtown
- Parkview housing
- Redevelopment recertification
- Developing a tax abatement policy
- Dealing with vacant/dangerous buildings
- Riverside Arts Center
- Water Street
- West and East Cross streetscape improvements
- Honeywell project
- Small solar project grants
- Dam
- Fire truck replacement grant
- Storm drain
- Community Development Block Grant
- I94 Billboard replacement
- DNR grant for riverside park for lighting & tridge repair
- Fire cooperation for city and township
- Wireless Washtenaw
- regional policing study
- Solid waste collection coordination between city and townships
- Information technology assistance contracted to Washtenaw County
- Parks and recreation plan update
- City income tax
- Upgrade road quality on South Mansfield
- Factory/spring street bridge repair
- Community forestry grant
- Bike path/capital improvement projects
- Rail projects
- Ypsi recycle 100 challenge
- Washtenaw Area Transportation Study
- City employee health care benefits (trying to limit to 7% yearly cost increase)
- Freighthouse
- 2010 census

7. Discussion of what to put on agenda for November 5, 2007 meeting

Visioning statement and asset map discussion were forwarded as possible topics to cover in the November 5 meeting

9. Motion to adjourn by Sean Stidd, seconded by Gary Clark. Motion passed.