

Town of McCandless Implementable Comprehensive Plan

Steering Committee No. 4 – May 8, 2018, 7:30-9:00pm – CCAC Room 3024

Meeting notes

Key Issues Discussion: (50 minutes)

1. Pop-ups

1.1 Volunteers from the popup events at Library and Whole Foods reported on their discussions with residents:

- Overarching sense that residents appreciated being asked their opinion, and it was a positive experience for the volunteers. It also created good vibes for the Town.
- Some input was contradictory from one person to the next, and overall the input reiterated the themes we've been hearing. People might say, "I want a community center," but they don't really know what they wanted it to be.
- Some non-residents commented: "I wish my township would do this."
- Some residents took the opportunity to dive deeper into issues, with answers backed by additional thought.
- The volunteers were able to tout McMail, Savvy Citizen, other communications channels, and many residents were not aware of these
- The volunteers noted that many people don't seem to know what town they are in, with "Ingomar" and "Wexford" being cited as town names

1.2 These suggestions arose in reaction to the report from volunteers

- Toby Cordek suggested a "Five Zips, One Community" campaign
- Elaine said more input into Phase 1 of the comp plan isn't needed at this time, but maybe the steering committee can collect reactions to Phase 2
- Toby thought an ongoing effort would be terrific, such as a feedback booth at Community Day. He also suggested brief videos about the comp plan that could be posted.

2. Key Issues finalists lists

Jim and Elaine presented about the 6 finalists for Key Issues, with Jim showing images of how similar projects have been tackled in other communities. Please refer to attachments for details

2.1 Active transportation and connectivity

- Why isn't traffic/congestion included?
- What about public transit?
- Jim: These can be part of the "other" chapter, and dealt with in far less detail. Pashek+MTR's understanding is that the Town staff and engineer maintain constant list of trouble spots or complaints and where improvements are needed on Town-owned roads. There is a long-term plan that the Town updates and coordinates with Southwestern PA Commission, which is the clearinghouse body for PennDOT improvements, or Allegheny County for county-owned roads.

2.2 Community gathering space

- A gap analysis and survey of space utilization would be useful
- Create a kind of Air BnB for spaces, listed in one place
- This part of the plan would provide the Town with enough information for the community to make a decision on this issue.

2.3 A plan for Blazier Drive parcels

- Why just Blazier Drive? There are other places that need redevelopment
- Toby and Bruce Betty noted that the owners are developing plans/proposals for the developable areas of Blazier Drive and their work could overtake the timing of this plan.
- Previous work, including 2013 traffic study and other review by Pitt engineering students, both concluded there were insufficient incentives to make developers want to proceed.
- Make this topic “redevelopment and infill” in a more general way.
- What if the comp plan created a process to help the developer stay engaged with the community, with very public act of asking “What do you want to see happen here?”
- Jim said the topic will change to be more broadly focused on redevelopment.

2.4 Natural places and features, community sustainability

- This should build on the previous natural resources inventory.
- It could help create long-desired routes, such as the east-west linkage from Duncan Ave to North Park

2.5 A community “brand”

- Does this include strategies for implementing the brand?
- It might be good to hold random focus groups as a way to continue hearing from citizens.
- Elaine and Jim related how it worked in Jeannette.
- Make this topic include “engagement.”

2.6 Recreation programs and activities

- How is this different from Natural places and features or Community gathering space?
- Jim discussed how this is the effort to create and implement activities and “what to do,” whereas the other two topics are the locations and facilities, or the “where to do.”

2.7 Other

- What about topics that residents don’t know they should be thinking about? This could include technology?
- Jim noted that those are still important but will be covered in less depth in the “Other Topics” chapter.
- The two topics from the finalist list that do not become Key issues in the plan also get moved to the “Other Topics” chapter, and are covered in less depth.

3. Voting and discussion

The group voted with these results:

Active transportation and connectivity	13
Community gathering space	6
A plan for Blazier Drive parcels and redevelopment	9
Natural places and features, community sustainability	10
A community “brand” and engagement	12
Recreation programs and activities	2

A lengthy and thoughtful discussion ensued about a concern that “Community gathering space” is not on the Key Issues list though it has been a highly contentious and publicized issue in the community. Some key points were:

- Differentiating between what steering committee members feel is important to the community vs. what they feel the consultant should be spending time on
- Asking whether items can be combined (Jim said that both dilutes the issues but also represents more time and fee than is in the budget)
- Whether there could be 5 instead of 4 Key Issues (Jim priced another key issue at \$10,000)
- The upshot of the discussion was that the group asked Jim to attend an upcoming Council meeting on Monday 5/14 to explain the situation publicly. Jim in turn asked that the committee members to please be in attendance to help explain the situation. *NOTE: A subsequent discussion amongst Toby, Bruce and Kim Zachary yielded the determination that since “Community/Rec Center Analysis” had been part of the RFP, this should be one of the Key Issues.*

4. The group briefly discussed the public meeting planned for June 19, 6 p.m. at the Carson Middle School Lobby and Cafeteria. The meeting may be delayed due to the discussion mentioned above. When the meeting takes place, these individuals volunteers for these tasks: Amy and Deb on photos; Renee and Ted on sign-ins; others “floating. Bruce is to look into getting the ice cream.

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