

Notes August 2004

HEART OF THE CITY August 5, 2004

Mission: Citizens for a pro-active process for community vision and planning.

The next meeting is Thursday, September 16, 2004, 6:00 at the Carpe.

There were too many items on the agenda. Most of them were tabled. Since the discussions are so lively it was recommended that we begin to meet monthly and concentrate on understanding the current Master Plan. Those who have volunteered to review the assigned chapters please plan to make a 5-10 minute review, noting highlights, at the top at the next meeting. If you can't make it we will hope you can make the October meeting.

There were many discussions and questions. I won't note them all but following are the highlights:

PRIORITY CONCERNS

Beth spoke with Jeff Woods and got a copy of the plans for Walgreen's. They were passed around. Kitty currently has them. Those with concerns about the plans are encouraged to contact Jeff for information on how to contact Walgreen's. Someone mentioned that Jude Hartwick was also planning to be in touch with them.

There was discussion about the Madison Ave/Main Street corner. Since this intersection is the entrance to Fort Atkinson from three directions and is a prime location for commercial development how can it be visually unique and pedestrian friendly?

Hearts are wondering how to be more active in the city planning, zoning and the development process. Where is the appropriate time and place to engage in discussion? The minutes for Council and Planning meetings come out on Friday and published in the paper on Monday. Several wondered if it was enough time to be thoughtful about input.

SWEDEN REPORT

Beth will be attending a conference in Sweden on Community Sustainability. The focus is how to address deteriorating natural systems at the same time population and consumption are rising exponentially. Sweden has established a framework called The Natural Step that helps municipalities develop policies and practices by incorporating the following four principles:

1. Eliminate a community's contribution to fossil fuel dependence and to wasteful use of scarce metals and minerals.
2. Eliminate a community's contribution to dependence upon persistent chemicals and wasteful use of synthetic substances.
3. Eliminate a community's contribution to encroachment upon nature (land, water, wildlife, forests, soil, ecosystems.)
4. Meet human needs fairly and efficiently.

Sweden is a world leader in new thinking about community sustainability and how it can be applied to others. Beth will be developing a Power Point presentation on her return and will present it to Heart Of The City and other community groups.

GREEN BELT DISCUSSION

Bill Camplin brought a concept graphic to assist in the discussion about the Green Belt idea. He described the reasons the plan will save the city money in the long run and brought some statistics about the rate of population growth for the area and what that might mean for development. There were questions and a good discussion that will be continued. Bill's plan also addresses some of the community sustainability issues that are currently found in Sweden. Also Crestwood development in Madison, a community outside Minneapolis and Pleasant Prairie in Kenosha are on similar paths. The big question was how much more defined does the Master

Plan have to be before it can encompass a Green Belt concept?

There were many questions regarding how the city incorporates new ideas. Do current codes need to be changed? Is there a person(s) looking at the longer, bigger picture? What ideas is the city interested in? What are John and Jeff's priorities? How does the city currently coordinate city improvements? Is there a way to have a regular exchange without adding yet another meeting for already busy city employees? How can we become better informed?

There is interest in asking John or Jeff to come to a meeting and provide a workshop or tutorial on how the current system works. A Brown Bag at the library was also suggested.

We now have a Web site. It's simple, primitive, free to me as a member of Earthlink and still needs to be edited but it is a start. The link is:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~aengelman/>

Please consider inviting someone from our Invitation Wish List to the next meeting.

Your Humble Heart,
Ann