

Notes May 2004

Minutes of the Heart Of The City Meeting - May 19, 6:30, Cafe Carpe

There was an earlier gathering to discuss some issues at 5 pm. Present were: Kitty Welch, Greg David, Cathy Zimmerman, Bill Koehler, Patti Lorbecki, Lue Ehinger, Paul Hable, Jill Sireno, Beth Gehred, Kathy Kauffman, Mary Linton, Mark Bardenwerper Sr., Bill Krupinski, Greg Misfeldt, Kathy Misfeldt, Michael Clish, and Leslie LaMuro.

Kitty Welch facilitated.

Greg David, Jefferson County supervisor from Watertown district, chair of the Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium (JCEDC) and its subcommittee, the Jefferson County Sustainable Development Committee, led off with a report saying that this is a time of tremendous opportunity for the county to define what we want by way of growth. Due to the attention focused on the issue because of dissension in the city of Jefferson with Wal-Mart's attempt to locate a superstore there.

People are striving for a different answer to sprawl and conventional growth. The JCEDC all agreed to send a representative to sustainability study circles to find different answers than W-M type development. Discussion courses must happen for new answers to come to light. He congratulated Heart of the City on its efforts.

<>He asked people to consider volunteering to be on the Jef. Cty. Sustainable Dvlp. Committee, as it has been somewhat inactive due to lack of volunteers.

He talked about the difference between hope and optimism. Hope is where you try to make a positive difference whether or not your ends are met; optimism is working with the belief that your desired outcome will be attained. He says he works with hope.

Beth Gehred then spoke. She urged Heart of the City to:

1) Join 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, a statewide nonprofit whose mission is exactly in line with Heart's. \$35 from treasury would be required.

2) There is a bus tour of Dane County's New Commercial and Residential Developments, sponsored by Lake Mills and Johnson Creek, has been scheduled for June 11th. The bus leaves from Johnson Creek Park and Ride at 8:30am, with another stop in Lake Mills before heading to Madison. There is an itinerary of the places being visited, some of which are 'new urbanist' models. Capacity of bus is 55; price is \$15 with no lunch provided. Bus returns at 4 or 5 pm. To be included contact Greg David at prairiedf@globaldialog.com or Paul Moderacki, Administrator of Johnson Creek, 920/699-2296 or www.johnsoncreek.govoffice2.com Could Heart of the City foot the bill if someone is willing to take the trip and report back? It would be great to have a presence on that bus and make ourselves known as well as the education we could get so we are abreast of what 'new urbanism' theory looks like as practiced nearby.

3) Volunteer in some capacity to help the development of Rockwell Elementary School's Outdoor Learning Center. Vicki Wright, the principal, put in a special request for someone to organize some activities for Earth Day 2006 for the grade school. Those of you looking for a hands-on opportunity to teach the idea of sustainability and waste-reduction to young ones, might consider taking this on as a project. There is a wonderful resource called 'ECOTEAM'; that has dozens of ideas that could be implemented. If interested call Beth at 920/728-3170 or 920/568-0181.

4) Everyone needs to keep an ear and eye open for opportunities to grow Heart's mailing

list. If you are in conversation with someone who seems like they care about Fort Atkinson's future and community feel, launch into a description of Heart and get their email address. Email them to Ann Engelman aengelman@earthlink.net and our group will have that many more talents and voices to help with projects.

5) Perhaps we should consider making committees as different projects can be isolated and will need focused leadership.

6) Encouraged people to call or write the city council of Jefferson to state their feelings about W-M.

Encouraged people to call or write Dave Ward/Scott Fitzgerald to tell them the importance of Smart Growth and have the Joint Finance Committee reinstate its funding.
Rep.ward@legis.state.wi.us 920/563-2769 and sen.fitzgerald@legis.state.wi.us

Beth, Patti, and Greg had to leave early, but Greg generously shared some fresh asparagus and other greens for lucky Hearts.

Mark Bardenwarper also had to leave early and stressed the importance of framing the Jefferson Annexation/Big W problem in terms of global economics and the peril America faces from China and the devaluation of the US dollar. He suggested striking fear into the hearts of all Americans by the loss of jobs, the importation of cheaper goods from China and how in the long run this will bring ruin. Suggests heading toward more sustainable industries and manufacturing based growth to help the tax base.

The rest of those in attendance agreed to focus on the Annexation/BigW problem as a priority, so a lengthy brainstorming session ensued.

- A petition has been started stating: I live in Fort Atkinson and will never shop at Walmart regardless of location, 5 Fort Atkinson members have signed so far if anyone else is interested please add your signature to the list at Café Carpe.
- A list of questions to send to Council members to ask the Walmart people at the presentation on June 6 was started.
- A suggestion that The Coalition for A Better Jefferson get together and come up with some clear arguments against the annexation, and talking points to discuss with individual Council members who might be swayed to vote against the annexation.
- Find out if Walmart has First Right of Refusal on the properties to be annexed, if they do then there is no question that this annexation is a Walmart issue.
- Check with the DNR to see if an environmental impact study has been done?
- Jill Sireno feels that it is best to frame the arguments against annexation on the basis that this location for a Walmart is poor. The traffic congestion, the inability to make a left hand turn when exiting plus the fact that there is really no additional room for growth in that area make it a poor location choice.
- Attention should be focused on those members of the Council who could be swayed by valid arguments, and potential votes in the next election. It was suggested that the Coalition gather their forces and make phone calls to those in voting districts who would show up at the meetings, and at the Walmart presentation in large numbers.
- Jill also suggested papering the neighborhoods with contact information for the council members and a sample letter against the annexation.

· Suggestion that the Bill Moyers Walmart tape should be shown on Jefferson's new cable access station. Greg Misfeldt has a copy and would be willing to loan it out.

Several other suggestions were made however; I am lacking as a note taker and was unable to get all of it down.

The Coalition is fighting the good fight and we should try to support them as much as possible by attending meetings, sharing ideas, writing letters to the editor and signing the petition.

<>Heartfully submitted,
Leslie LaMuro