

Notes September 2004

HEART OF THE CITY - 9/16/04

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

The next meeting is Thursday, October 21 at 6:30, Café Carpe.

(One half hour later than usual.)

Highlights:

- 1) The meeting time was shared with members from the Beautification Council. They joined our meeting and then we stayed for their meeting with discussion in between.
- 2) Rudy Bushcott attended, listened and patiently answered questions.
- 3) Excellent summaries of the Master Plan were presented. We will finish these in October.

NOTES

Beth provided another installment of The Natural Step that provides models for sustaining and growing communities in a responsible manner.

She presented the terms Forecasting and Backcasting.

We are all familiar with the term forecasting to plan for the future. The concept of backcasting is (I think) starting with the vision of where you want to be and then backing up in order to plan how we will get there. The concept begins with where you want to be and solves the challenges of getting there, rather than working from where you are with the barriers that currently exist. It invites us to change how we think about the process of growth.

Beth will be giving a presentation at the library during their Brown Bag on Thursday, September 21 at noon. Bring your lunch, refreshments and drinks provided.

Jill Ottows efficient summary of Master Plan chapters 1 and 2 are attached.

Whoever has my copy of the Master Plan, please return it. I need it to complete Bills summary.

Bill took the elements of chapters 3, 4, 5, Growth Analysis, Industrial and Economic Analysis and applied them to the Greenbelt concept. They include:

Establish and maintain complimentary land use

Development of efficient services

Providing adequate parks

Preserve historical sites

Protect existing natural resources

Provide for safe, affordable housing sites with equal access to green space

Prevent over crowding in sensitive areas

Coordinate planning on the edge of the town involving all communities

Provide adequate utilities to meet industry needs

Create a sense of neighborhood identity

Provide site that are suitable for multifamily dwelling

Provide safe pedestrian and bike transportation to neighborhoods and parks

Bill presented the concept of the Greenbelt area to the Beautification group.

The Beautification Council

Members introduced themselves. They feel their successes were hands on projects done in cooperation with the city.

Heart of the City is currently more theoretical, Beautification is hands on. Everyone agree that there is need for both. Both groups have the best interest of the city in mind. (and at heart!) Past projects of the Beautification Council include:

- Planting crab apple trees
- Planted trees in Bark River Nature park
- Downtown master plan and color scheme

- Employed landscape architect from UW Whitewater to advise planning
- Bicentennial Park
- Public Art sub-committee

Their current priority is planning and building an arboretum along the newly constructed bike trail along Janesville Avenue. They are hoping to have an Arbor Day event in 2005. The community will be invited to purchase trees in honor or in memory of friends and family. A list of recommended trees will be created by the city. \$20,000 is currently budgeted for trees this year. More money will be budgeted next year. Other areas of the city will also be reviewed. Both groups felt that having a representative at each others meetings would be helpful.

Other Notes

- Doris Krueger brought pictures of areas she is concerned about. They include vacant Hardees and Piggly Wiggly stores and the corner of Madison and Main Street. Concerns about what happens when large companys build here and then leave and asking new businesses to respect community aesthetics were discussed.
- Zoning for Fort Atkinson was reviewed and revised in 2002. Just because a development request meets the letter of the law does not necessarily mean it will pass the Planning Commission.
- If you have concerns or hear rumors dont get angry, get information. Call Rudy or Jeff and then pass on correct information.
- There is interest in being more informed about city projects and city process. A Web site was discussed. Leslies letter to that effect is attached. Funding might be requested from the Fort Community Foundation.
- Jill Kessnick has generously offered to draft a graphic of the Greenbelt idea to help others understand and visualize the concept. We will supplement this with our list of reasons why, concepts from Beths Sweden presentation and research from other communities. (Thanks to whoever passed me The Benefits of Growing An Urban Forest)
- There were questions about trees and parking lots along the river downtown. The city had to balance the requests from downtown businesses requesting more parking with those that requested more trees planted. All agreed that the balance is difficult.
- Hearts are encouraged to continue to think about ideas for our community.

Thanks everybody, Your Humble Heart, Ann