

Horizon 2020 Steering Committee
July 13, 2015
Meeting Notes

Members Present: Comm. Thellman, Comm. Amyx, Bill Ackerly, John Gascon, Lisa Harris, Clay Britton, Kyra Martinez, Scott Zaremba, Marcel Harmon, Patrick Kelly, Charlie Bryan (ex officio)

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Scott McCullough, Amy Miller, Jeff Crick

Others Present: Several members of the public were present.

Commissioner Amyx welcomed everyone to the listening session regarding the Issue Action Report and gave background on the process to date.

State Senator Mark Buhler spoke about making sure there was consideration for new future industrial parks, making policies as broad as possible and making sure there was a revenue stream for economic development.

Larry McElwain, President and CEO of Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, thanked the committee for allowing them to bring an expert to talk to the committee about the retail market in Lawrence. He stated that they have liked the process so far, and especially that it has not been rushed. They appreciate the efforts to shorten the plan and make it easier to read, but are concerned that the incorporated plans may not be the best way to accomplish that. They would like the incorporated plans to be vetted just as much as the comprehensive plan is.

Brady Pollington, Economic Development Project Manager for the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce and Vice-President for the Economic Development Corporation of Lawrence & Douglas County, stated that he uses the plan in his daily life in that capacity. He focuses on workforce and real estate development, business retention and entrepreneurial startups. Asked that the flexibility of the plan be maintained.

Kirk McClure, stated that he is concerned about the absence of addressing certain issues, such as affordable housing, retail space, preserving downtown space and neighborhood stabilization. He is concerned that the Issue Action Report does not take a position on those issues. He suggested that growth management is a central theme surrounding those issues and is crucial for good land use planning. He defined growth management as keeping the pace of growth in supply the same as the pace of growth with demand and stated that overbuilding hurts the market.

Graham Kreicker, stated that overbuilding new development will destroy older development. 150 years ago, 159 people came here and shared all the water that came through rain. Now we have 90,000 people sharing that same amount of water. The plan should take into consideration water conservation.

Chris Tilden, Directory of Community Health for the Lawrence/Douglas County Health Department, stated that he appreciated all the input meetings that have been held so far. Wanted to encourage the committee to incorporate the Douglas County Community Health Plan by reference.

State Senator Marci Francisco, on behalf of the League of Women Voters, appreciated the strong community vision statement, but suggested that the committee look at alternate wording, submitted in writing for a portion of that statement. She submitted a letter on behalf of the committee that addressed a few other issues.

Gascon asked Francisco what revitalization looked like to her. Francisco stated that it looked like working to re-do existing housing stock through investment. Gascon asked how you balance that with affordable housing. Francisco responded that affordable housing needs to make sure that portions of developments should be affordable, but there should be a mix of housing.

Rich Mender, stated that good planning is more than just focusing on the physical land use, but how we plan for the workforce is important.

Gary Rexroad, stated that there were some issues with Chapter 12 and Economic Development. He noted that the impact that technical education can have on the economics of a community are great. He would the new plan to be amended to incorporate references to the Dwayne Peaslee Technical Education Center and the Lawrence College and Career Center. Also, a revenue stream for economic development needs to be developed. As a local small business owner, the idea that growth controls would be built into the plan is discouraging.

Dennis Brown, President of the Lawrence Preservation Alliance, stated that they are concerned about how preservation will be incorporated into the plan. They agree that an updated preservation plan should be incorporated. They appreciate the relationship between preservation and cultural arts, but there are times they should stand apart. They agree that increased height and density in the core is preferable to sprawl, but think that it needs to be planning driven that looks at the entire downtown area, not just on a lot by lot consideration.

Candice Davis, representing the Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods, stated that the comprehensive plan is a foundation for the community. They support following existing codes that are in place, but should call it planned growth instead of managed growth. She reiterated issues with the existing Chapter 5 – Residential Land Use that were submitted in the written correspondence from the Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods.

Nicki White, Therapy Works, member Board of Directors of the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce and past member of LiveWell Lawrence, stated that safe implementation of the complete streets policy is important, as well as water conservation. She stated that the plan should be amended to incorporate references to the Dwayne Peaslee Technical Education Center and the Lawrence College and Career Center. Also, Chapter 7 should be amended to incorporate business and manufacturing parks in other areas.

Brad Finkledei, former Planning Commissioner member, stated that thinks the issues that have been identified are good and also agrees that issues that are not on the list shouldn't be on the

list. One example is managed growth, and he thinks that it doesn't need to be revisited. He is also the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce and wishes to have some of the changes in the new strategic plan be incorporated into the new comprehensive plan. He also stated that locations for industrial development need to be looked at.

Kreicker stated that there are 15,400 economic development entities in the United States.

Shannon Oury, Executive Director of the Lawrence Douglas County Housing Authority, stated that she was glad to see issue three in the report and stated how important affordable housing will be to the future of the community.

Brian Dennis, KU Small Business Development Center, wanted to encourage the committee to look at a continuity plan that would look at redevelopment, such as in the event of a disaster.

Kevin O'Malley stated that he moved here 10 years ago to buy a business before the growth rate slowed. He said that we need a dedicated funding stream for economic development. Stated that the plan should be amended to incorporate references to the Dwayne Peaslee Technical Education Center and the Lawrence College and Career Center.

Leslie Soden, Vice Mayor of Lawrence and past co-chair of the Affordable Housing Coalition, thanked the committee for incorporating affordable housing, but wanted to address the lack of cultural opportunities places other than Downtown Lawrence, especially on the west side of town. Stated that Action Step 11.3 was confusing and needed to be re-worded.

Luke Bell, Lawrence Board of Realtors, thanked the committee for their work and spoke regarding Action Step 3.1. He said there is conflicting data today and that the housing market definitely needs to be studied, and affordable housing needs to be defined before any policies can be adopted. He also stated that inclusionary zoning does not work well in a lot of communities and should not be considered. Stated that inclusionary zoning can't be applied to rental units by state statute. He also spoke against increasing building permit fees to provide funding for an affordable housing program.

(Commissioner Thellman arrived during the above speaker)

Dan Dannenberg, spoke about destructive elements of rental units on neighborhoods as a whole. Would like the rental registration program to be transparent and not under the City Commission.

Carol Gilmore, member of the Lawrence Douglas County Food Policy Council, spoke about water conservation and supporting the local food economy.

(This concluded the first session)

(The second session started)

Commissioner Amyx and Commissioner Thellman welcomed everyone to the listening session regarding the Issue Action Report and gave background on the process to date.

Dale Nimz stated that there should be an action step for green jobs and industry. Under Issue 12, connectivity is an issue that needs to be addressed, possible through the design guidelines. Need to investigate conservation methods under Issue 13, such as conservation subdivisions in the Urban Growth Area.

Frank Male, Lawrence Landscape, spoke about the continued need for industrial land, capitalizing on the new intermodal facility in the region, and the new plan should reference the Dwayne Peaslee Technical Education Center and the Lawrence College and Career Center.

Earl Schweppe asked when are we going to look beyond 2020? Amyx answered that this is just the beginning of the process, but the action report is the first step in doing just that.

Ward Lyles, Professor of Urban Planning at KU, would like to see more greenhouse gas reductions including a mandate.

Earl Schweppe, stated that we need to pay our workers better so they stay here. Would like to see more attention on science issues.

Dr. Janet Rose, Professor with KU School of Journalism, stated that she and some students had the opportunity to work with staff and committee members as a voice with the vision/mission statement and wanted to thank everyone for the opportunity. In their research, they looked at a lot of peer cities and it refreshed their opinion on the role that Lawrence plays in the Midwest and we should be proud of our community.

McCullough thanked Dr. Rose and her students for their help with the mission/vision statement.

Marci Francisco, speaking for herself, likes the first sentence of the purpose, and is also pleased to hear an emphasis on climate change and sustainability issues.

Earl Schweppe said the group should rename the plan 2020 Plan: Our Vision for the Future.

Jane Bateman, a former Planning Commissioner, believes in positive economic development. She also wishes the plan has a "how can we help attitude", meaning carrots instead of sticks. She wishes the plan would allow flexibility.