

Members Present

Kent Sherry, Walt Szczesny, Max Cordle, Charlie Rinehart, Dan Martin, Kevin O'Neill, Bruce Smith, Leo Shanayda, Matt Parrill, Herb Greer, Dean Blair, Dan Kelly, Trent Schuler, Peg Chapman, Brian Wagle, Barbara Wagle, George Liebold, Officer Mitchell Hurst, Betty Goodrich & Pat Richards.

Others Present

Jeff Briner, Heather Whitmore, Thea Walsh & Shane Farnsworth.

Comment Record

- I. Introductions**
- II. Review Agenda**

Introductions were made by all present and the agenda for the meeting was reviewed.

III. Review Eastern Edge Planning Process: Vision

Members of the Planning Advisory Committee (Jeff Briner, Heather Whitmore, Thea Walsh and Shane Farnsworth) presented an overview of the visioning process through a powerpoint presentation (attached).

IV. Review Plan Considerations

Each of the members of the Planning Advisory Committee spoke briefly on the elements of the corridor relating to current land use, economic development and transportation issues. Shane Farnsworth suggested consideration could be given to incentives as a way to encourage building and landscaping elements. Buildings in the downtown area may be very different from those found at the other end of the corridor (in Harmony), in part, because of the timeframe in which they were built. There are areas along the corridor that are blank, like missing teeth. In those areas we may wish to promote development. Local landmarks should be considered and promoted and surrounding development should complement those landmarks. Setbacks, façade improvements or standards, maintenance issues (mowing vacant properties), road access are all a part of those items to be considered, keeping in mind that the corridor is actually a part of the "National Road" system.

Jeff Briner spoke about some of the landmarks and historic properties within the corridor that should be preserved, including Schuler's, the Westcott House, and the Melody Cruise-in. It all hinges on what we want to preserve.

Trent Schuler commented that with the relocation of the hospital he thought there might be more of an enticement for businesses to locate closer to downtown. The area where his business is located is zoned residential, but there's been nothing built in the last 30 years. He thought the smaller lots along the first segment of the corridor would be appropriate for businesses dislocated by the hospital project, i.e., Mader Electric, etc. Further, he suggested that restaurants in the area might prosper with the hospital changes.

Thea Walsh spoke about the transportation safety plan already completed for the City of Springfield, indicating issues found included lot layout design poor access management, and driveways too close to intersections. This study will coincide with another study (now under contract with the County Engineer) for the corridor area to the east. The "Arby's" exit was shown

as one of the most problematic areas lacking sight distance standards. Thea also spoke about the “Scenic Byway” component of the corridor and stated that East National Road encompasses all of the criteria in the byway program, i.e., historical, archaeological, cultural, recreational, natural and scenic features. She mentioned the importance of maintaining these elements ~ for potential funding opportunities through byway grants. Thea further identified that historical resources of the 50’s are being depleted, such as the motor lodges and gas stations. Mile markers are another element to be maintained along the corridor.

Heather Whitmore reviewed the Comprehensive Approach vs. Incrementalism and a Segmented Approach, indicating the objective is a vision clearly defined. Current segments along the corridor are not clearly associated to each other. A single vision will make segments interdependent.

- V. Comprehensive Planning Discussion**
- VI. Review Uses Along Corridor: East National Road**
- VII. Review Uses Along Corridor: Segment**

Jeff Briner identified the maps provided as illustrations around the room, including the land use map, zoning map, utility map and the larger corridor map with photographs. He suggested that the planning process being used for this corridor could become a model for other corridors in the community.

Trent Schuler suggested that we should preserve areas and development should have some consistency. He stated that Schuler’s Bakery was built on four (4) lots originally zoned as residential. There was additional discussion about how to maintain the economic viability of businesses while creating complementary business development. Mixed use zoning could be developed to address this. Heather Whitmore indicated consideration should be given to protect property rights for viable businesses on balance with the needs of the corridor. Aesthetic standards, including sign standards might be a way to help address the needs of the corridor.

Jeff Briner indicated that the situation in which we find ourselves is a “product of old style” and that we’re dealing with the legacies of our predecessors. What might have been a good idea “at the time” may not be appropriate now. We have to try to come up with a way to plan ahead.

Heather Whitmore spoke about how decisions are currently made on a case-by-case basis not necessarily looking at the long-term impact on the neighborhood or the corridor.

VIII. SWOT Discussion

What will make sense? The SWOT process will allow the group to determine the Strengths (S) ~ such as Schuler’s Bakery and new city housing, Weaknesses (W) ~ like the “missing teeth”, Opportunities (O) ~ perhaps new housing and more commercial development, and Threats (T) ~ suggested as when the lights were turned off and crime escalated.

The thought behind this exercise is to share our collective thoughts toward recommendations and create a consistent dialogue related to aesthetic issues, mixed use, economic viability, and the co-existence of recreational, business, residential uses. Pedestrian features may be considered. Thoughts on in-fill were discussed briefly.

Jeff Briner commented on the green space in the downtown plaza and the new granite curbs, saying they add value downtown.

Kent Sherry said there are opportunities from Spring to Greenmont with an “art deco” theme. Proper zoning will encourage such things as mixed use, antique shops, etc. Heather identified architectural features along this segment.

Trent Schuler identified Segment #1 as “Old Main Street” and suggested an area for business growth, housing and unique street lights.

Jeff Briner indicated that when prospective clients are brought into the community their first impressions are tied to the Harmony exit, the rural area, farm market, NextEdge Research Park,, etc. along the corridor.

Charlie Rinehart identified the diversity along the corridor starting at Bird Road (west) to the modern building of the new WalMart. There are mixed uses as one travels further west past Springview Government Center and then the main traffic pattern follows North Street.

Thea Walsh mentioned design standards could be incorporated in the plan for facade, signage, lighting, etc., perhaps from a historical perspective. She also identified the fact that the bike trail is located in this first segment.

Dan Martin saw the “Old Town Area” (Old Main Street) as having potential opportunities. In the newer stretch from Greenmont to Burnett, quality assurance opportunities may be available. In the segments there may be the option to assemble properties, to create the lot sizes needed for development.

Shane Farnsworth indicated as redevelopment is reviewed, the properties abutting the Main Street frontage should also be considered. How will the changes affect, positively or negatively, those properties to the rear of the businesses?

IX. Vision For Future Land Uses: East National

X. Vision For Future Land Uses: Segment

As the stakeholders' group moved into smaller groups, Heather Whitmore asked them to consider how does segment #1 and #2 fit in the context of the whole corridor. New businesses should be located where? Where are the unique qualities in the segments and along the corridor?

All of the corridor is part of the same economy; all is within the scenic byway. What will make the economy thrive in Segments #1 and #2 without negatively impacting other areas?

The stakeholders then moved into small groups and using maps of Segment #1 and Segment #2 of the corridor shared their thoughts and ideas. One group suggested that sprucing up the areas in segments #1 and #2 with street lighting (lamps), benches, green space could help the community move in the right direction. Additionally, signage, maintenance (such as mowing vacant lots), addressing line of sight issues by moving signage setbacks to at least 10 feet from the sidewalk/curb would help. Parallel feeders or exiting to the rear to work towards better access management might also be helpful. Beautification was a key component.

XI. Review Questionnaire

The questionnaire will be linked to the website – EasternEdgePlanning.com – allowing individuals to share their thoughts related to the corridor. A paper version was handed to the participants in the meeting.

XII. Identify Stakeholders Along Corridor Segments

XIII. Next Meeting Agenda

XIV. Wrap Up – Final Comments and Questions