

Recalculating: City's comprehensive planning process hits reset

By Tom Lindfors Jul 13, 2017



Community Collaboration Principal Todd Streeter explained the purpose of the CAP Committee and broke down how the subcommittees will work and what kind of time commitment will be required. Tom Lindfors / RiverTowns Multimedia

Following a bit of a misfire earlier this year, New Richmond Community Development Director Beth Thompson looked to get the city's comprehensive plan revamp back on schedule following a recruitment meeting on behalf of the Community Action Plan (CAP) Committee Wednesday, June 29 at Champ's.

Communities are required by Wisconsin state statute to update their comprehensive plan at least once every 10 years. Those plans must address nine essential elements: issues and opportunities; housing; transportation; utilities and community facilities; agricultural, natural and cultural resources; economic development; intergovernmental cooperation; land use; and implementation.

A number of familiar faces filled the audience at Wednesday night's meeting including City Council members Scottie Ard, Craig Kittel and Jim Zajkowski, along with a number of city administration. About a third of the audience was carryovers from the process started last February and the other third were new faces.

Thompson introduced the audience to project consultants Todd Streeter, principal with Community Collaboration, in charge of facilitating the committee's and subcommittees' activities over the next six months, and Hoisington Koegler Group Vice President Brad Scheib, responsible for putting together the actual comprehensive planning documents.

The primary goal of the meeting was to recruit residents, business owners, property owners and community organizations to participate in a number of subcommittees charged with forming new ideas and recommendations over the next six months that can be incorporated into the city's comprehensive plan. Attendees were asked to fill out a committee sign-up form prioritizing their interests in any of five subcommittees along with particular skills or knowledge they bring to the process.

"The subcommittees' research and recommendations will be transformed into projects the City and community will begin to work on together, ultimately making your CAP work and recommendations a reality. These recommendations will also be turned into our City's official comprehensive plan," explained Thompson.

The five subcommittees are: Creating Community (Land Use & Housing), Economic Prosperity (Economic Development), Community Connectivity (Transportation & Infrastructure), Quality of Life (Parks, Trails and Recreation), and Community Pride (Public Facilities, Safety & Services).

Streeter explained the purpose of the CAP Committee and broke down how the subcommittees will work and what kind of time commitment will be required. He also led an enthusiastic brainstorming session to generate a logo and slogan for the committee to use going forward.

"It takes a community to make a community. The community input process is an incredibly important piece of the creation of the final document, the comprehensive plan. We want all of you to not just be a voice but to actually create the future of New Richmond by virtue of the work you will be doing on the committee. You will actually be doing the research and going out and trying to find solutions to some of

these issues and also try to find new opportunities and things that aren't here in New Richmond that you think might be nice to have here. You're going to be working in these subcommittees to really start painting the picture of what New Richmond could look like," explained Streeter.

Alderman Craig Kittel summed up the importance of the work participants will be performing the next six months.

"I think the way this city looks today can drastically change in the next 10 years with the bridge, with expansion, and with what we've done so far. I honestly think that this document we are going to create is probably one of the most important documents the City of New Richmond has ever made," said Kittel.

For additional information and committee participation opportunities, contact Beth Thompson at 715-243-0402 or bthompson@newrichmondwi.gov.