

City of North Vernon Comprehensive Plan Public Workshop - Meeting Notes

Date: Thursday, May 14, 2009 @ 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Location: North Vernon Education & Training Center

Facilitator: Scott Burgins & Erin Shane, SDG & Cory Whitesell & Lisa Dunaway, HWC (EGT)

Participants:

| Name |
|-------------------|
| John Aranfan (sp) |
| Robert Branham |
| Bob Brown |
| Rita Elmore |
| Steve Elmore |
| Barbara King |
| Chris Sauer |
| Donna Staublin |
| John Staublin |
| Pat York |

Scott opened the meeting and led the group through a visioning exercise. The following responses were provided:

What is your image of the City of North Vernon?

- Used to be dynamic town, but now it is not
- Downtown is becoming vacant
- Bypass will kill downtown
- Good place to raise a family
- Should be more of a bedroom community for Columbus because industry is not coming here
- EDC should be eliminated
- Need to keep tax rate down – need to see where we can cut taxes

What might the town want to work on to improve its image?

- Clean it up
- All we have downtown is storefronts – the rest is falling down
- Some new dwellings
- When you come into town – there is not a good entrance – it is all deteriorated

What about economic development in North Vernon?

- Should have taken ED money used for shovel sights and put it back in town
- Empty storefronts are an issue – Madison used to be like this too
- Madison has festival every month – to get people downtown – we only have one festival – railroad festival – festivals would work well
- Madison had BBQ cookoff, home and garden walks, etc
- Madison is a destination – so that is their success story
- Communities can succeed with bypasses
- Keep 50 where it is at – and keep downtown lively

What can we do to improve downtown?

- Parking is an issue downtown – we will need to have parking near the storefronts – like Shelbyville – we need more parking lots downtown
- We have two downtown pkg lots
- Downtown is a dwelling place now – people live upstairs mostly but some live downstairs
- We need more storefronts
- But the type of housing we have downtown is the issue- there are drug issues in the units

What is the status of parks / recreation in North Vernon? Adequate facilities?

- At the HS – sidewalk around high school a lot of people use
- A lot of people are health conscientious
- City park has a full loop
- We need a full service YMCA or such – w/ a pool, etc – like in Scottsburg
- We have a pool at the park – and at the schools
- We need more mini parks – you should not have to drive to get to a park- pocket parks; also need more benches and playground equipment
- Sidewalks are in disrepair – some areas don't have them. Can't get to the library or schools w/out a sidewalk
- Need to decorate our park more at Christmas time

The group then discussed that in order to implement a vision for the city, they need to support the area plan. Some participants believe that the area plan needs to have teeth in order to get things to happen.

The group is mostly from North Vernon, and they want to make opportunities to bring in more families, make a better way of life for the families that are here, and we need to take advantage of that opportunity now – before it disappears.

One participant stated that everyone in the city should set an example – get more in being “green” and do more sustainable projects like curbside recycling. The group noted that the City and County need to work together to fulfill some of this vision.

Cory then walked through the North Vernon maps. The following comments were provided:

- There is congestion on Hwy 50 from 8 am to about 8:30 by kids going into school; same thing at 3pm
- There is a farm out there that is open – no development – commercial ground that fronts on 50 – behind it there is farming; opportunity to put in road that goes in over tracks and gets to schools – gives people another access into schools – like an access road; it could also create room for more business then could put home back there as well
- Run a 4 lane through downtown - eliminate storefront
- Too many stop signs
- We have no idea what MUTC will turn in to over time, but we need to be prepared for it
- No issue w/ water
- Housing should go off Hwy 3 north about 3 miles outside of town – miller property
- Industrial should not be on our main roads – that should be left for residential and commercial
- There is not a lot of area to put in housing
- Areas on Hwy 3 are nice – it is expensive to live in town – so in this area a lot of people have been creating small subdivisions
- There seem to be a lot of accidents near Country Squire

Cory asked the group what areas in town need to be redeveloped. The following responses were given:

- The industrial park – could be commercial not heavy industrial
- CSX is a bad neighbor – need to clean up area
- Irish hill needs some attn – Hoosier street
- The area by the old post office

The group noted that North Vernon should bring back the railroad and act on that as a tool to bring in visitors. It was also noted that North Vernon needs to have niche marketing in order to compete with large stores like Walmart etc. One participant also wanted to make parking that is now reserved for city hall / police dept public – make city employees park farther out.