

# North Vernon Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting Notes

**Date / Time:** Tuesday, June 23, 2009 @ 11:30 a.m

**Location:** North Vernon Education and Training Center

**Attendees:** John Howard, Mayor Soup Campbell, Col. Chris Kelsey, Pat York, Roger Short, Joe Decough (sp), Micheal Gowan  
EGT: Scott Burgins, Cory Whitesell, Erin Shane, Jim Rice

Scott opened the meeting and provided a summary of tasks accomplished for the comprehensive plan thus far:

Public workshop highlights:

- Downtown – vacancy
- Bypass
- No good entrance to downtown
- N. Vernon needs to be more of a destination
- Need YMCA
- Enforcement of codes
- Congestion on hwy 50 – big issue
- MUTC
- N. Vernon needs to have niche

School focus group:

- Effect of recession on the schools
- Positives in north Vernon
- School access
- Parks and trail recommendations

Downtown merchants focus group:

- Apts are an issue
- Historic preservation

The committee noted that the Main St. square is a gem. They voiced the need to close the downtown for festivals and such to attract people. The status of train depot was discussed; it's very close to track. CSX owns the depot now and the city is trying to buy it.

Large employers focus group:

- Stimulus money
- Lowes not going to build another DC – so existing might be
- Workforce
- Tough to fill professional positions
- Water is an issue – supply limits growth

The committee noted that Metaldyne filed for chapter 11 recently.

Realtor's focus group:

- Only 2 houses sold for over \$200K
- No big bubble but no big crash
- MUTC impact discussion
- Average price him b/t \$60-70k

Community leader focus group:

- Need for improved water
- Annexation
- Code enforcement
- Areas downtown that are still zoned I – need to be cleaned up

The committee noted two farms have been rezoned heavy industrial –north of Hwy 3 – Miller and Staublin property. They both can be annexed after 2010 census.

Scott then led the group through a development principle and goals exercise. He noted that a common theme that was consistent through the public meeting and focus groups was: “North Vernon could be much more than we are”. This is the approach that Scott will use for the comprehensive plan.

Scott asked the committee to provide guidance to develop the goals and development principles. Several categories were addressed, specific comments are as follows:

#### **Community image**

- Park theatre –could be center of activities at any given time; area could be blocked off and theatre could be center; if could get depot; visitors centers
- Used to be RR – that was the focus here
- The Carnegie civic center – the structure of that building will enhance the government center; it will need to be a government center

## **MUTC**

- Should open a museum around what MUTC does; that would be a good idea here; the story could be the old state hospital and the new urban training center
- Comp plan – recognizing working w/ MUTC
- One mile buffer
- Would be nice to have an MUTC rail spur

## **Downtown**

- We want it to be vibrant; a historic gathering area; stores should stay open later during certain times; should be a focal point that also represents county
- Old apts need to be removed downtown
- If the depot was an old railroad museum, that would be a draw
- Regal bldg and Arvin bldg - if Arvin could be leveled and clean up – could be parking and gathering area

## **Hwy 50 Bypass**

- It is imperative
- Should have been done by now
- How address downtown? It will enhance downtown w/out having to worry about trucks
- The low end apts could become high rent apts if trucks are gone
- Will need signage and gateway on bypass to get downtown
- The bypass is the answer to traffic problems? Yes!
- Bypass will bring growth areas
- Open to multi modal environments along w/ bypass

## **Economic Development**

- Support it and diversify it

## **Housing**

- Revitalization of existing neighborhoods
- New annex – Cundiff property – west of the school – strip mall on front w/ housing in back
- There is an area behind school – 80 acres of property – by established housing – excellent place to exit Norse Avenue; install new road and then could get more moderate to higher end housing
- Housing for the base – long term we push people back to communities; the young people look at schools and where they spouse can get a job – those are the priorities; the guys will be here 2 to 4 years; boon for rental market; their salary ranges are about \$60k a year
- Stone Ridge – 3 new houses that are not selling

## Area Plan

- There needs to be fewer exceptions
- Enforcement – needs to be in city and county needs to have their own
- Bldg code issues
- Shared personnel – guidelines for North Vernon
- Watch dog ourselves; every wed we meet w/ area plan and try to resolve current issues
- The tools that we need take funding – so area plan works for us
- There are two code people now – one should be for city and one should be for county

## Infrastructure - Water supply

- We need expansion capacity
- Tie into Jennings water – should not do b/c of cost; users would pay too much
- Jennings owns rights all around north Vernon
- We need more infrastructure – west side is critical – there is plan to upgrade system – new service line at Hayden Pike; new dist line; w/a loop on west end and water tower will bring up to adequate pressure
- 4 inch mains all over town need to be upgraded to 8 inch
- 6 inch need to be upgraded to 8 inch
- Need quarry to hold 2 years of water
- Acquire quarry and upgrade mains is the solution over time
- We are tied into Jennings water for emergency usage

## Infrastructure - Waste water

- We can grow w/ waste water
- MUTC hopefully will tie in – this will open up growth on east side of town
- Southwest side of county – growth areas here

Cory went over 8-10 maps with the committee. Maps included soils maps, agricultural intensity zones, cultural resources maps, an existing land use map and the draft future land use map .

Scott wrapped up the meeting noting that the EGT would start to draft sections of the comprehensive plan for the next meeting. EGT will post all focus groups minutes, steering committee minutes and draft land use map on website (at <http://www.sdg.us/northvernon.php>). EGT will mail packets of materials to those who were not at today's meeting.

Next meetings are scheduled for:

SC 3: Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 – 1:30 pm

SC 4: Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 – 1:30 pm