

Woonsocket Comprehensive Plan, Steering Committee Meeting

January 11, 2022. Kickoff Meeting.

Attendees

- **Core Team**
 - Kevin Proft: City Planner
 - Carl Johnson: Zoning Official
 - Michael Debrosse: Interim Planning Director (former Superintendent of Engineering)
- **HW Team**
 - Jeff Davis
 - Nate Kelly
 - Kellie King
- **Scott Gibbs:** EDF-RI (EDF = developers and managers of Highland Park)
- **Glenn Dusablon:** Veterans Memorial Museum (previously worked for City, electrical)
- **John Hoyceanyls:** CVS Health, VP of property (Hoy-see-an-ulz)
- **David Soucy:** City Council Representative
- **Carl Johnson:** Zoning Official
- **Meg Rego:** NWBRV NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley (CDC). CDC focuses on affordable housing and other activities (small kitchen start-up, after-school programs, etc.)
- **Tamara Burman:** HEZ Director for Woonsocket/W. Warwick & Thundermist Health Centers
- **Brad Fesmire:** Artistic Director at Riverzedge Arts (arts/design focused youth-serving organization)
- **Benjamin Craig:** O'Neill and Associates in Boston, transportation focused.
- **Jon Pratt:** Planning Board & City Engineer
- **Linda Plays:** Dir. Human Services
- **Peter Coffin:** Blackstone River Coalition Coordinator & ThunderMist Task Force for stormwater improvements in City. Former park ranger with Heritage Corridor.

Notes

Introduction

- [Kevin Proft] Baseline Report largely wrapped up.
- Steering Committee members love...
 - Woonsocket is a very giving community.
 - Woonsocket's potential and energy. Includes development potential and potential to move businesses into City (especially in older manufacturing buildings).
 - Woonsocket's rich history.
 - Main Street and its culture. Potential to be a destination.
 - Woonsocket has "great bones" and the river as a major asset. Wealth of history and pride that's focused along the river.
 - Woonsocket's neighborhood parks (ex. Globe Park).
 - Robust existing infrastructure—drinking water and sanitary sewer system.
 - Recent changes under current Mayor. More self-sufficiency, development.
 - City employees and staff. Work well together and proud of their work.
 - Diversity.

HW Presentation Questions

- [Scott Gibbs] Adding note on what a comprehensive plan is... must also be inspirational and something that people can work towards.
- [Glenn Dusablon] Comp plan as an advertising document is also important.
- [Meg Rego] Curious about who is going to inform the strategic plan. Kevin has done a lot of community outreach to get people on Steering Committee. But at that same time, is the Steering Committee representative of Woonsocket's diversity?
- [Glenn Dusablon] Engagement strategies? How to solicit ideas from public in low-effort way (have feedback posts set up around City)?

Scheduling

- [Jeff] When to have Steering Committee meetings?
 - [Michael Debroisse] Let's try a one-hour meeting. Be more efficient, make meeting more accessible to any additional individuals we'd like to add to Steering Committee.
 - [Linda Plays] Agrees with Michael.
 - [David Soucy] But let's still be okay with committing to additional meetings as needed when one one-hour meeting isn't sufficient.
 - [Kevin] Seconds.
 - [Kevin] Will send around Doodle poll as needed to figure out availability for future SC meetings.

"Homework" and Engagement Thoughts

- [Jeff] Kevin will distribute key messaging ideas for project for SC members to review before next meeting. Is the messaging appropriate to get people excited? Also want to start with community survey engagement. Next meeting, how can we diversify SC membership?
 - [David Soucy] Can community survey be available online?
 - [Jeff] Press release is drafted, online community survey drafted as well. Waiting on Mayor approval on press release, then good to release other engagement materials to get started.
 - Will email engagement master list to SC members, need feedback on any other individuals that are good to add to engagement list. Also sharing PPP.
 - Will make comprehensive plan website live soon, likely this week. Will link survey and other information about comp plan on website.
 - [Meg Rego] What's the timeframe on the survey? To help inform engagement homework.
 - [Jeff] Will likely keep the survey open through the first round of public meetings. Public meetings likely to start in March/April.
 - [Kevin] Also hoping that SC members use their channels into diverse communities to get public input.
 - [Meg Rego] Certainly have those channels. Plan and process would still benefit from including more diverse members on SC.
 - [Tamara Burman] Agrees with what Meg says about diversity. Does survey clearly articulate how input will be used? Or how can residents be compensated for participation in heavy-lifting activities for comp plan process?

- Let's also be intentional about sharing feedback and information. Continue to engage folks throughout the process.
- [Kevin] For Tamara, can you explain resident-advisor role?
 - [Tamara Burman] Resident-advisors participate in HEZ activities, help inform their direction. They're compensated for their time and work. Generally, compensation comes from grant funding.
 - [Kevin] What do resident-advisors participate in?
 - [Tamara] Activities are self-governed, often serve on sub-committees and the governance committee.
- [Tamara Burman] Are all resources currently in English?
 - [Jeff] So far, but we're aware of language needs (Spanish, French, Portuguese, etc.). Looking for ways to make materials accessible in different languages.

Follow-Up

- Homework materials and scheduling Doodle poll to be distributed by Kevin (Jeff to send packet to Kevin).