



Middletown Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee Meeting #4 January 8, 2004

Minutes

Present:

Steering Committee – Sam Ashworth, Valerie Back, Doug Bean, Dane Donham, Dee Florence, Harold Jackson, Larry James, Ted Karchner, Cathy Newkirk, Nancy Nix, Sandra Pierce, Virginia Ritan, John Sawyer, Bob Stacy, Laura Williams, Tom Williams, Larry Wood Wilma Wood

Consultants - Caleb Faux, Brad Schwab

Staff: Marty Kohler, Brian Forscher

Mr. Faux started the meeting with introductions. Mr. Faux then moved to the topic of the proposed public involvement process. He outlined the process proposed and asked the Steering Committee's assistance in involving residents in this process. Methods of encouraging involvement were discussed. The discussion then turned to previous efforts to identify issues in Middletown and the question was raised as to the need to repeat that process.

- **Consensus Building Initiatives – Public Involvement Components**
 - Steering Committee.
 - Open to larger audience.
 - SWOT Analysis.
 - Community Survey.

- **Public Outreach Methods Discussed**
 1. Council Meetings
 2. TV Middletown
 3. City Web Page
 4. Newspaper
 5. Public Service Announcement on TV Middletown
 6. Public Service Announcements on radio
 7. Clergy/churches
 8. Miami University – Younger and non-traditional students
 9. Informational display at Mall
 10. Civic Organizations



11. City Youth Council.
12. High School Student Council
13. Chamber of Commerce/Business Community Chamber Mailing List
14. Give survey to kids to take home.

- **Information/Questions on the survey**
 - Do you plan to move out of Middletown?
 - Include Meeting dates for upcoming events.

- **Discussion about level of public involvement.**
 - Public is good at responding to options, not telling you what should happen.
 - Idea is to have the public validate ideas and alternatives that Steering Committee comes up with.
 - Use school district as an example. They made a plan and sold it the community. The leaders stood up.
 - We don't need additional public involvement, we need action.
 - We need to have more work done before going out into the community.

- **Additional Economic Development Needs/Observations**
 - Better schools to keep people in Middletown.
 - People leaving decreases housing values.
 - City needs private participation in economic development/cannot go it alone.
 - All City Stakeholder should be active participants.
 - Must make sure all big stakeholders buy into this planning process and the final product.
 - City must sell plan to important stakeholders so they are involved in implementation.
 - Consider establishing a quasi public organization
 - That is willing to take risk.
 - Middletown Hospital, AK Steel, and schools should be active players.
 - Organizational structures
 - We need players to get on the same page - developers, bankers, realtors, and public servants.
 - All locally owned firms have been bought by out of town corporations.
 - We need benchmark examples to illustrate that Middletown's issues can be overcome. Findlay, Ohio and Wheeling, West Virginia were discussed.



- **Need to survey and summarize previous planning initiatives.**
 - Middletown Own It. Get their materials, understand process, and learn from mistakes.
 - Action – Middletown Hospital
 - MEDC Strategic Plan and SWOT analysis
 - Barlow - Creating a competitive Community and Economic Advantage
 - Others?

- **Common Stakeholder Interview Themes**
 - Apathy
 - Lacking a united front, efforts are diffused.
 - Longing for good old days.
 - Things are so far gone they can't be fixed.

Next meeting set for February 13 8.