

MINUTES
WORK SESSION
MAY 2, 2019

8:00PM

YOUNGVILLE COMMUNITY HOUSE

115 E MAIN STREET

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Joint Work Session with the Youngsville Planning Board

Mayor Pro-Temp Joseph Johnson called the meeting to order at 8:11pm.

In attendance were Commissioners Catherine Redd, Graham Stallings, Larry Wiggins, Joseph Johnson and Terry Hedlund. Also in attendance were Members of the Youngsville Planning Board; John Cyrus, Hank Lindwall, and Janice Pearce. Members of Staff present included Planning / Zoning Administrators Bob Clark and Andy Thomas, Town Administrator Phillip Cordeiro, Town Attorney Edward Bartholomew, and Town Clerk Emily Hurd.

Diane Young, North Carolina Department of Commerce (NC DoC), welcomed everyone back for the second meeting in the Downtown Strong Initiative. She noted that she really enjoyed her time here. Mrs. Young stated that she walked downtown yesterday, talking to people and just enjoying the community.

Mrs. Young showed a PowerPoint Presentation. On Slide 2, she explained the Downtown Strong program is under the umbrella of Governor Cooper's Hometown Strong Program and Downtown Strong is out of the NC DoC. Mrs. Young noted that Youngsville was one of twenty-four towns participating. This program will show the best approach for downtown revitalization. This approach was created in the 1980's due to malls pulling people away from downtowns. The four key elements are Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Vitality. Organization relates to committees, task force, department of the town, etc. Promotion relates to keeping the projects on the radar, through events and social media. Design relates to how the project will look, promotions, and what people want to see in town. Economic Vitality relates to business recruitment and retention. Mrs. Young stated the Town would need to work on all of this at the same time to be successful. She explained this is never done as it is an ongoing process. Municipalities need to reinvent themselves as the times change.

Slide 3 explained the goal was to develop two economic development strategies that the community can accomplish in twelve to eighteen months that will move the dial of the downtown district in a positive direction.

Slides 4 and 5 showed Economic Drivers. Mrs. Young explained Economic Drivers hinged on what is currently driving downtown such as construction, proximity to major metropolitan areas, small locally owned businesses, location – location – location, good paying jobs, lower costs of living, proximity to

major highways / arteries, ABC Store, chain stores / restaurants, and recreation (both intown and the proximity to other recreational opportunities in a thirty-mile radius).

Slides 6, 7 and 8 showed Liabilities. Under Organization, liabilities included funding. Under Promotion, liabilities included traffic (people afraid to park downtown, which hurts businesses) and background noises generated by the high volumes of truck traffic. Under Design, liabilities include handicap accessibility to walkways and buildings along with narrow sidewalks in some locations. Under Economic Vitality, liabilities included the lack of a small business center at the community college, mostly Monday through Friday business hours in downtown businesses, not enough mass, some vacancies and the lack of sufficient medical services.

Slides 9, 10, 11, and 12 showed Obstacles. Under Organizations, obstacles included lack of volunteers and too small to have a structured Main Street / Downtown Committee. Under Promotions, obstacles included communicating with segments of the community that do not use social media. Under Design, obstacles included truck traffic and noise, balancing traffic flow designs with residential roads, business owners need to develop front and rear entrances if rear entrance is going to be utilized as a storefront, overhead utilities, connectivity to larger gathering areas and schools, and manufacturing businesses with front parking. Under Economic Design, obstacles include the size of downtown.

Slides 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 showed Assets. Under Organization, assets included Gather YV, Town Staff, special event collaborations and partnerships, and active service organizations. Under Promotions, assets included successful cross promotions, two event venues, promotion happening via word of mouth, a sense of synergy and working together on events is solid and increasing, successful events such as the Christmas Parade, Tree Lighting Ceremony and Trick or Treat on Main, locations off Main Street where events can occur, and guerilla marketing techniques like the Welcome Bags have been utilized. Under Design, assets include newly renovated buildings, murals, downtown not a cookie-cutter design, has its' own distinct character, experiencing the reuse of older historic structures, contractors willing / able to work on downtown projects, Main Street Improvements Project, road improvements, Mountains to Sea Trail, and pedestrian / bike plan. Under Economic Vitality, assets included Wine and Beer 101 (renamed to Burnt Barrell), Youngsville Pharmacy opening soon, business friendly Town Staff and processes, Yacht Club, Cross and Main, Charron's Deli, Scoops on Main, Tin Pig Antiques, history of successful businesses (what has opened here has stayed here), successful professional services, and low vacancy rate.

Slides 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23 showed Opportunities. Under Organization, opportunities included funding, tapping into organizations, youth groups for volunteers, Girl Scouts, communication, and one overall organization to communicate with individual organizations. Under Promotion, opportunities include Our State Magazine, downtown branding campaign, engaging Wake County organizations, increase communication via website tools, connecting social media to Town website, communications Staff (public official), capturing tourist traffic going to local destinations such as Hill Ridge Farms and Panic Point. Under Design, opportunities include parking lots, Art Department at local high schools, street furniture such as benches and trash receptacles, design assistance / guidelines, wayfinding signage, building signage, Five-Points Shopping Plaza, alternate truck route, entryways, and connectivity (360° around blocks). Under Economic Vitality, opportunities included tech incubators, restaurants, and some vacancies.

Slide 24 showed Economic Development Strategies. These strategies included capitalizing on location and traffic in and around downtown, developing one new reoccurring event, and developing a communication plan. Mrs. Young noted Mayor Flowers had stated "Living our Best Life" at the previous meeting. She stated that she spent the previous day visiting six different businesses and speaking with people. They all had positive things to say about the community and people.

Slide 25 showed Proposed Strategy #1. Strategy #1 stated the Town needed to develop a brand for Youngsville and utilize the brand to design wayfinding signs. She recommended hiring a consultant to work with the Town to develop a creative brand that embodies the unique assets of Youngsville and the downtown. The Town needs to include in this design process the development of wayfinding signs for primary arteries, secondary roads, and future pedestrian trails leading to downtown Youngsville and other prominent destinations. Mrs. Young noted signage could be developed based on locations.

Slide 26 showed Proposed Strategy #2. Strategy #2 stated the Town needed to develop a Farmers' Market / Artist Market to occur on a regular basis. Mrs. Young recommended working with local resources to develop a reoccurring market that highlights local produce in addition to locally produced arts and crafts. She noted Clark had given her a study done by Franklin County government that stated the best place in Franklin County for a Farmers' Market was Youngsville.

Slide 27 showed both Strategies together. Mrs. Young stated these were not set in stone and could be changed if the Board wished. Commissioner Redd asked if the Farmers' Market was proposed at the Luddy Park on Saturdays. She expressed concerns about the availability of the fields during baseball season. Commissioner Redd noted that she too had read the study by Franklin County. Cordeiro stated he had met with a woman that is interested in organizing a Farmers' Market on Saturdays, from 9am to 2pm, with approximately seventy-five vendors. He stated that she has put feelers out on social media. Cordeiro stated Andrew Smith, the Town's Parks and Recreation Director, had been included in the conversation. Available fields included the two smaller fields, but signage would be needed to direct people to lower portion of Luddy Park. Commissioner Redd noted that parking was awful at the Luddy Park, even if we could use the parking at Faith Baptist Church. She noted that signage would be important, for parking as well. Commissioner Redd expressed concerns that after seventy-five vendors parked, there was no room for customers and baseball families. Another concern was getting everything down to the lower fields. Commissioner Hedlund stated the key is talking to Faith Baptist Church as they are more than willing to be helpful with parking.

Mrs. Young stated the strategy is to work through and study the situation to find the best solution. Cordeiro agreed the Town needed to develop a plan on how to have the Farmers' Market in town with all the possible vendors, traffic, and parking without getting too far from the commercial areas. Attorney Bartholomew reminded the Board they could close a side street if we needed to. Cordeiro stated there was less parking in the downtown area than over by the Luddy Park. Member Pearce noted the Farmers' Market could still be at the Luddy Park with signage to direct visitors towards downtown. Mrs. Young stated there were options with the strategy. The Board could change Strategy #2 to be more of a planning / exploratory phase. Another option would be to use a different type of event that can be reoccurring without being expensive. Mrs. Young asked if the Board would like to change Strategy #2. When asked for clarification, Clark stated the study by Franklin County only stated Youngsville and not a specific location for the Farmers' Market. Commissioner Redd stated that if

someone was willing to help, she was interested in keeping the Farmers' Market idea. She noted that it just might take some work.

As for wayfinding signs, Mrs. Young recommended working them into the budget cycle. She noted they can be done over the course of several budgets if need be. Signage for walking / bike trails can be installed when the work was completed. Clark noted wayfinding signage would make a significant difference. It would help get people to stop and see all the reasons to come to Youngsville. Clark stated the wayfinding signage can be done tastefully.

Commissioner Hedlund wanted clarification on if the Town was interested in hiring a consultant and Cordeiro stated yes. He stated that he would look for grants but felt it was worth budgeting for either way and Attorney Bartholomew agreed. Mrs. Young explained she recommended consultants because of the process for creating the new brand.

Mrs. Young noted she will have a work plan for the Board on her final visit. This will be a template that addresses all four points.

Slides 28 and 29 showed Mrs. Young's recommendations for Strategy #1, to develop a brand for Youngsville and utilize the brand to design wayfinding signs. Under Organization, she recommended the Town hire a design firm to develop the brand and wayfinding sign designs and assist in scheduling meetings with the local stakeholders, as needed, to support the firm's work. Under promotion, Mrs. Young recommended the Town promote the start of the branding process and organize a launch of the final product. Under Design, she recommended the Town integrate the brand into all outlets including websites and social media. Obtain pricing on the initial wayfinding signs so they may be included in future budgets and installed over time. Under Economic Vitality, Mrs. Young recommended the Town share the brand with existing businesses and destinations, encouraging them to weave the brand into their own marketing campaigns.

Slides 30 and 31 showed Mrs. Young's recommendations for Strategy #2, to develop a Farmers' Market / Artists' Market to occur on a regular basis. She stated that she did not want to go into these recommendations since they will look a little bit different based on the discussion we just had.

Mrs. Young stated that her next visit will be her last and she will bring a template for both Boards to follow. She noted the NC DoC had regional planners available that will work with the Town on these strategies as we move forward.

Stephanie Schenck, Yacht Club, suggested using the courtyard in front of the Yacht Club for the Farmers' Market. She stated there were forty parking spaces on SE Railroad Street and there was additional parking close by, for example the Post Office. Brandon Schenck stated it would be good to have the Farmers' Market in the downtown area, possibly spread over downtown in the open spaces between businesses. Customers would pass the downtown businesses as they moved between the vendors. Cordeiro stated this was great information and he would like to have a couple of work sessions that included the downtown businesses. Mrs. Young reminded the Board to do this "Youngsville's way".

The Work Session ended at 8:59pm