

Goal Setting Meeting
January 29, 2021
9:00 am
Via Zoom
Minutes

2021-GS

Present: Mayor Gawron, Vice Mayor Hood, Commissioners Rinsema-Sybenga, German, Johnson, and Ramsey.

Staff members, Mike Franzak, Oneata Bailey, Pete Wills, Sarah Petersen, Leo Evans, Ken Grant, Joe Buthker, Jay Paulson, Jake Eckholm, Frank Peterson, Dwana Thompson, Doug Sayles, Dave Alexander, Jeff Lewis, Beth Lewis, Kim Spittler, Jim Maurer, Dave Baker, and LeighAnn Mikesell.

Absent: Commissioner Emory.

Introductions

Beth Beulow facilitated the meeting. The meeting began with sharing one word that describes Muskegon. Words include: dynamic, engaged, hard-working, underestimated, resilient, beautiful, genuine, gem, change, vision, welcoming, evolving, re-evolving, passionate, resilient, opportunities, refreshing rejuvenated, moving, interesting, awesome, beautiful/gorgeous, home, momentum, attractive, and diverse.

Ms. Beulow spoke about active listening and using words like thank you, please, I hear you. Be mindful of language, tone, eye contact, engaged expression, and posture. Take notes. Practice actively listening. Conflict can be creative and productive and a reminder that we can only control our own response to our surroundings. Remember that we are all on the same team.

Public Comment

Comments were heard from members of the audience.

The group broke down into small groups to discuss youth/education, social justice, and housing. The results of those discussions are listed below.

Youth/Education Focus Group

- What resources are available to kids pursuing entrepreneurial ideas? Need to have an entrepreneurial culture to expose them to and give them economic opportunities.

- Needs to start at K-12 level. Schools affect every part of the students' life, from food availability to technology exposure. Need to be partners with schools, and work to bring exposure to different career areas for the students.
- Need to identify barriers to parental involvement. How can we support them and get them involved with both the success of their student and the school system? We know time and money are both constraints, for parents and schools. How do we hold parents accountable?
- The pandemic has only amplified these issues.
- How do we make students aware of opportunities that exist, while still ensuring they master the curriculum?
- How do we ensure that opportunities that exist in our city are taken advantage of by our residents? Often times we see opportunities that end up going to residents of other areas simply because there was a lack of residents aware of or interested in the opportunity.
- How can the city join and support the conversation and movement that already exist? We don't necessarily need to start a new one.
- We need to identify what works and what doesn't.

What is success? Getting the opportunities in front of youth and making connections. Ensuring everyone has equal access to the opportunities. We need to compile a list of what exists and then grow those connections.

What do we need to keep doing? Identifying the connections to youth and working to grow those connections. Working to grow parental involvement.

What do we need to stop doing? Stop being exclusive, and start being inclusive. We need to value all input.

What do we need to start doing? Strengthening current connections. Offering more connections and opportunities for youth and school-age children.

How do we measure progress? Possibly using school data, such as enrollment, but that can't be the only measure. Need to identify the relationship and connections that have been strengthened and increased. Maybe use a survey of parents and students.

What does accountability look like? We need to continually re-affirm our commitment to strengthened relationships and connections, and regularly re-evaluate that progress.

Social Justice

- A need to use the next year to define what social justice is and to have those conversations internally within City Hall and externally in the community. Public education.
- Equality vs. Equity in terms of just not providing the same to everyone (equality) but providing what each one needs to get to a common outcome (equity).
- It has taken generations and centuries for us to get to 2021 with special attention and effort to create injustice, it will take as much attention and effort to create equity.
- In the next three years, look at the DPW training positions being used to help create a workforce that looks like our city population. Similar efforts are underway in public safety – police and fire.

- To get beyond where we are at today in terms of social justice, we must be INTENTIONAL.
- The city has made progress in diversifying its workforce but there is a long way to go.
- The city is not always competitive in pay and benefits in attracting and retaining employees of color.
- In the next three years, replicate the intentional efforts in DPW and public safety to diversify the city workforce.
- In the next three years, go from an education Promise to a job Promise.
- In the next three years, downtown will be home to more minority owned businesses as the current mix is not representative of who lives in Muskegon.
- Create a Citizens Economic Equity Commission that as the planning commission looks at land use this group will look at economic development policies and projects.
- At the table on the issue of social justice needs to be members of marginalized groups who have not had a voice, especially black citizens., decision makers/gatekeepers, the private sector, educators and all citizens of the city.
- Keep: Training job slots, promotion of policies that create equity and conversations/engagement on social justice.
- Stop: Barriers to social justice/equity inherent in the city's civil service system, restrictions in the human resources system managed for the city by the county, staff/elected officials using social justice buzzwords that are doing little to further social justice.
- Start: Uniform understanding and use of social justice terminology, programs and policies to promote/support minority-owned businesses, a job promise for the youth of the city entering post high school training or education.
- Economic development and the creation/support of minority owned businesses not only focused on Downtown and Lakeside but other city commercial districts and neighborhoods.
- Progress in social justice needs to be data driven in counting people, ie, minority and women representation in the city workforce, the incomes of minority and women employees, and the number of minority-owned – mainly black-owned – businesses created or supported in the city.

Housing

What's the scope of our priorities?

To build more housing options that allow our neighborhoods to thrive.

Continue education on urban residential zoning.

Continue working with developers to ease the process for developing and construction.

Continue city's programs for housing rehab.

Continue scattered site brownfield, modify as values increase.

Use of the home buyer's assistance program.

Continue work with CenC on developing affordable housing.

Continue blight fight efforts, neighborhood stabilization.

Stop allowing exclusionary zoning.

Start expanding urban residential zoning.

Start showcase the success in Nelson neighborhood.

Start increasing funding for CDBG and HOME funded programs.

Start develop marketing materials for Froebel.

How do you define success in 1 year?

75-100 homes built

Incorporate missing middle housing, working family, larger apartment developments

Range of price levels – balance of affordable and market driven options

Increased property values on east side of city and urban core

A development plan for Froebel School

Increase in number of houses being rehabilitated

How do you define success in 3 years?

More infill housing focused in Jackson Hill, Nims, Campbell Field, McLaughlin, Angell neighborhoods

Urban residential zoning approved for all above neighborhoods

Range of price levels – balance of affordable and market driven options

Incorporate missing middle housing, working family, larger apartment developments

Construction project at Froebel School

Watermark completely built out

Increase in number of houses being rehabilitated

How will we measure progress?

See 1 and 3 year success goals

Number of building permits

Reduction of blight

Who needs to be at the table?

Residents

Neighbors, neighborhood associations

Neighborhood businesses

Churches

Youth, youth groups

Inspections

CNS

Contractors, minority contractors
Realtors
Landlords, landlord association
Renters
Housing service providers
Developers

What does accountability look like?

Who was invited to and came to the table
Whether developments occur
How the taxable values changed
Sharing results, outcomes, plans with those who gave input
What options are created in the housing market
Maintaining housing needs data
Provide up to date housing data to developers and

Closing Remarks

How do we feel after the meeting? Give one word.

Action, wow, success, engaging, diversity, accountability, live-in destination, prosperity for all!, opportunity, equitable, intentionality, expansive, home in the best sense of the word - safe, welcome, loved, filled, I knew it! Optimism, bright, complex, equitable, prosperous, welcoming, grateful (today), abundance (2031), diverse, home, destination

Public Participation

Comments from the public were accepted.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Ann Marie Meisch, MMC
City Clerk

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLSPI5hjyIJRGR61s-NXcA0iL4i7wA-tqM>