

COMMUNITY CONVERSTATIONS

CITY OF TITUSVILLE

JANUARY 28, 2017

Facilitated by

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Titusville held a Community Conversations workshop on January 28, 2017 to give residents and other stakeholders an opportunity to share their ideas about issues the city should address in the next year. A diverse group of approximately 60 people attended including long-time residents, newcomers to the community, home and business owners. The Mayor and entire City Council were also present along with several staff members.

Ms. Marilyn Crotty, director of the Florida Institute of Government at the University of Central Florida facilitated the session.

After a welcome by the Mayor, The City Manager described the strategic planning process the city has used for many years. The existing goals were shared as well as a review of the accomplishments of the past year related to each of the goals.

Ms. Crotty divided the attendees into eight small groups where they responded to questions she posed. After hearing reports from each of the groups, Ms. Crotty identified areas of consensus and led a general discussion.

This report is a summary of the discussions that were held during the workshop.

TITUSVILLE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Small Group Discussions

Each group was asked to respond to the following questions and to select the three most important issues they discussed which are marked with an asterisk.

- 1. In order to achieve its Quality of Life goal, what actions should the City of Titusville undertake and fund in the next fiscal year (2017-18)? Identify the 3 most important issues under this goal.**

Group One

Safety:

- *Youth crime prevention
- *Incorporate Boys & Girls Clubs
- *Opportunities – Radio Control hobbies
Job search training

Group Two

- *Employment/Volunteer Activity
 - Disabled opportunities – awareness
 - Health/welfare services
 - Homeless solutions
- * Youth activities/awareness – business sponsorship with scholarship
 - Marine/Environmental Education Center
 - Mentor opportunities
 - Mental Health Awareness
 - Youth Advisory Council to the City Council
- * Environmental Programs/Education/Action
 - Education/communication of available services
 - Parks as destination
 - Adult activities
 - Lagoon
 - Restaurants/retail (goes with employment)

Group Three

- * Downtown redevelopment/more retail
- * Bicycle Safety/pedestrian safety
- * Youth center/juvenile crime
 - Boys & girls club/PAL Org
 - Indian River Lagoon/Storm water
 - Royal Oak Repurpose
 - Downtown hotel
 - Ecotourism/train depot
 - Redevelopment – strip malls, closed stores, etc.
 - Citywide beautification

Group Four

***Downtown**

Affordable housing – encourage, attract young families; zoning, council efforts

Improve coordination - GTR, DMA, Chamber, decrease duplication

Events – more variety, family-oriented

Lodging (Boutique)

Enhance existing downtown businesses

***Blight – clean it up; code enforcement efforts**

Junk cars

Royal Oak – improve/rejuvenate; city & community effort

Main corridors

Existing structures (especially large ones)

Facilitate citizen/organization efforts

*** Schools – better quality will attract/keep families**

VoTech school

Educational businesses

*** Transportation (public)**

Loop – Trolley?

Connect key areas - Downtown, T-landing, South End

Attract visitors/people to Titusville

Advertise/emphasize Titusville's good points

Facilitate/invest in developer efforts

Group Five

***Better look exiting interstate into Titusville**

Better sidewalks with landscaping/lighting

Code enforcement needs to be more aggressive

Old abandoned homes and businesses – litter

Landscaping plan for entire city and kept up

Group Six

***Blight, Safety, Sanitation**

Purchase Royal Oak Golf Course and develop public golf course homelessness

Lighting, homelessness

Furniture, trash, yard debris, littering

***Indian River Lagoon and infrastructure to keep clean**

***Youth activities**

Group Seven

City roads!

Young people not returning

Royal Oak Golf Course?

Maintenance of fire hydrants

Road signs

Improve aesthetics (greenspace – parks)

Building improvements (codes)

Group Eight

Beautification and maintenance

Inclusion of all citizens

Life style attractions for all ages (teens)

 Fitness centers closer to downtown

Safety issues – bike trails etc.

2. Please describe the type of Economic Development you think will be beneficial for the city to pursue. Identify the 3 most important issues under this goal.

Group One

*Garden Street & Cheney beautification

*Trash and debris pick-up and cleanup

*Empty buildings

 Internet hubs – free access

 Traffic light maintenance

 Home licensing/businesses

 Trail access and parks

Group Two

*ZONE

 City overlay plan for architecture/style demands – traffic flow complements,
 economic development

 safety/security @ parks

*GTR

*Redevelopment

 Address empty buildings for redevelopment (as opposed to spreading out)

 Build on current resources – Parks

 Redevelopment/repurpose vs. Build new (example: Sears Town Mall, MCM Mall)

 Current blight – environmental issue

 Façade improvement

 Smart Landscaping

 Recruit Diverse Businesses in addition to Aerospace

 Solar Industry/Solar innovation Parking lot, roofs, city buildings, etc.

 Remove con-artist road signs/address pan handlers

Group Three

*Work force training for future jobs

 Collaboration with School Board vocational training for students

*Redirect US1 in downtown

* Protecting current incentive system

 CRA/NBDEZ

Identifying specific business districts/clustering businesses

Incentivizing redevelopment
Diversify industry/clean energy, solar

Group Four

- *Civic center location – focal point for community events
 - Consider non-river front locations
 - Ideally near downtown or chain of lakes
 - * Bike trail – keep growing
 - Associated businesses
 - Outside dollars
 - Develop amenities to attract more people
 - * Broaden scope of development other than housing/retail
 - Royal Oak and housing center there – don't want/need retail
 - Need organized effort to develop small businesses
 - Zone and EDC – big businesses
 - ? – Small businesses
- Utilize existing facilities – repurpose
Nice/boutique lodging at downtown

Group Five

Developing, but lack parking – very limited downtown
Move US1 downtown area
Jobs – more professional jobs, not just retail
Prioritize opportunities and development

Group Six

- *Blight, safety, sanitation
 - ROCG - golf course jobs, tax revenue, tourism benefit
 - Business property owner wellbeing perception of safety
 - Homeless help resolve blight and increase public welfare
 - Sanitation – what is the code?
- *Indian River Lagoon
 - Health and welfare of wildlife
 - Tourism
- *Youth activities
 - Engage community
 - Outreach youth, empowerment
 - Reduce crime
 - Social media

Group Seven

Major hotel/conference center - work with Eastern Florida State College
Career growth
Eco-tourism
Work to keep grads – entrepreneurship

Schools, cultural opportunities to attract families

Group Eight

- Civic center band shell
- Continued business incentives
- More restaurants and entertainment, home grown cottage businesses in downtown area (be more selective)
- Youth oriented businesses

3. In order to provide Efficient and Effective Services, the City of Titusville should: (select 3 priorities for this goal)

Group One

Stormwater Drainage

- *Update the system for adequate performance
- *Repairing streets
- *Indian River Lagoon

Group Two

- * Relationship building with Public Safety and community conversations to continue to Build neighborhoods – URGENT (fund activities)**Sewer system – pipe repair/replace
- *Sewer system – pipe repair/replace
- *Code enforcement addressing blight
 - Council directed
 - Incentivize existing businesses to add landscaping (Target Plaza vs. Lowes)
 - Citizen proactive – Education on Process
 - Storm water – maintenance of drains, new systems

Group Three

- *Customer service/training
- *Transparency/open communication
- * Expanded intervention program/youth
 - Support for social services
- Community dashboard

Group Four

- * Safety and security
 - Downtown and adjacent areas
 - Bike trail – crucial
 - Lighting, paths, policing
 - More police station presence in central areas
- *Coordination and communication of city and community
 - City staff and community working as team (Example: Royal Oak)
 - GTR, ED
- *Public works plus maintenance plus development

City to facilitate more
Attract developers with support in outer areas (water and services)
Official benchmarking studies with role model small cities

Group Five

Need to be more friendly to incoming businesses
Help with process of revamping used buildings
Supplement police/fire/code enforcement with reserve and volunteer programs
Expand water and sewerage to be more friendly
Spread stormwater cost over year rather all in one month

Group Six

*Blight, safety, sanitation
 ROGC - preserve open space and recreation; stormwater resource current and tourism; federal mandates to reduce phosphorus and other contaminants
 Safety - citizen patrol expansion; lighting corridor planning and implementation; engage homeless services and lead the way; services to solve prostitution and human trafficking
 Sanitation - Reach out to community youth and retirees to mentor keep Brevard Beautiful
*Indian River Lagoon
 Planning to meet Federal guidelines for removing contaminants
*Youth activities
 Parks and recreation
 Job shadow, internships
 Programs for at risk kids
 All age venue for performing arts

Group Seven

Infrastructure – roads and grounds
Safety – fire and police
Clean water – to match growth
Continue N.I.C.E.

Group Eight

405 clean up on a regular basis/schedule
Maintenance observation
 City sign damage
 Personal sign removal
 Improve city image
Youth activities and community service opportunities
City and school collaboration resulting in reduction of crime and drug use

4. **What is the most important issue the City of Titusville should address in the next year? Select the one thing the city should be sure to accomplish (several of the groups did not address this item).**

Group One

Group Two

Group Three

Address the blight/beautification riverfront
Job development for youth
 Youth center/job training
Safety (pedestrian/bike) crime reductions

Group Four

Group Five

*Curb appeal: cost awareness
 Improve or remove abandoned buildings
 Citywide landscaping plan - main corridors first – I-95 and 50, I-95 and Garden
 Reaction time on reviewing plans with city planning needs to be faster –
 computerize and modernize – zoning issues/restrictions
Public safety
 Better enforcement
 Code enforcement
 Traffic safety
Jobs = revenue
 Efficient review process, zoning site plans, etc.

Group Six

Big Idea:
 Transparent communications between city leaders and citizens
 Continue the conversation and education of what we want our city to become
 Citizens need to take ownership - city needs to invite them

Group Seven

Infrastructure and aesthetics (roads, abandoned structures)
Work with Eastern Florida State College to improve eco-tourism, and cultural,
conference center (utilize Royal Oak space); internships
Safety for citizens and visitors
 Police, water, youth mentorship

Group Eight

Conclusion

More than twice as many residents attended this year's Community Conversations workshop than last year. As in the recent past, the attendees were a diverse group that represented different segments of the community: long-time residents and newcomers; business owners and retirees; and neighborhood activists. However, they all shared a passion for the City of Titusville and a keen interest in making sure that the city continues to be a desirable place to live.

The small group discussions generated many ideas that should be of interest to the City Council and staff, however there seemed to be a great deal of consensus in the following areas.

- **Appearance** – Whether identified as beautification, removal of blight, enhanced code enforcement, landscaping, or entryways, most of the groups were concerned about this issue and would like it to be addressed in the next fiscal year.
- **Safety** – This issue was also listed by many of the groups as a major concern. Crime prevention, particularly for young people, was identified along with safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. Improved lighting, traffic control, and continued high levels of service by police and fire departments were suggested
- **Youth** – There was general agreement on the need for youth activities and job opportunities as both a crime prevention/reduction tool and to keep young people in the city or returning to the city after completing their education. The idea of partnering with existing organizations and using adult volunteers to mentor young people were suggested as potential solutions. Vocational training was seen as essential.
- **Development/Redevelopment** – As in the past, redevelopment of the downtown area is still a concern with interest in supporting small businesses, improving the appearance, and increasing mobility. The proposed Civic Center is seen as an economic driver as are the trails and eco-tourism that should increase.

A final theme that is a carryover from last year is the desire of the residents for ongoing, open, two-way communication between city government and the community. Appreciation was expressed for the opportunity the city provided by inviting residents to share their ideas and hopes for the future of Titusville. As one group shared, their Big Idea – “Continue the conversation and education of what we want our city to become”.