

Legacy Lafayette

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Summary of Discussion

February 27, 2020

Attendees from City and consultant team: Paul Rayl (City), Jana Easley (City), Greg Thompson (City), Britt Palmberg (Rick Consulting), Brian Mooney (Rick Consulting), Katie Russell (Rick Consulting), Sarah Martin (Brendle Group)

CAC members in attendance: Karen Norback, Adam Gianola, Lynn Riedell, Guy Higgins, Anthony Viers, Frank Phillips, Richard Welty, Olivia Ameigh

Community Members in Attendance: Nancy Nixon, Vicky Uhland, Julie Marshall, Seth White, Doug Godfrey, Rob McClure, Roger Wilcox, Michelle Stephens, Peggy Kruger, Daru Thomas, Sandra Felte, Elizabeth and Greg (no last name provided), Matt Doubak

Discussion / Preview of Final Community Meeting on March 31st

The first community-wide meeting for Legacy Lafayette, the Launch Party, was held in conjunction with the weekly farmers market and resulting in a large turnout of over 300 people. The consultant team and city staff is considering marketing the final community meeting on March 31st as the “Spring Fling” party to continue with the theme of a community-wide celebration or party, at the final meeting, to generate greater turnout. The plan currently is to have kids’ activities and local food, in the spirit of the Launch Party. The City will mail out postcards for the final meeting next week (week of March 3rd). The final community meeting will be in the same space as tonight’s meeting, the cafetorium at Angevine Middle School.

Thoughts from the members of the CAC concerning the potential setup for the final community meeting:

- Having plenty of food at the meeting is a good idea
- The marketing for the final meeting should have the words “comprehensive plan” in the title
- The team should consider some fun ideas for kids, including dancing, perhaps
- The group liked the idea of the “spring fling” and the general idea of promoting the meeting as a community wide event

Discussion of Potential Briefing to the City Council on March 17th

Councilor Stephanie Walton, at the CAC meeting on January 30, had invited members of the CAC to make a presentation to the City Council to provide an update on the comprehensive plan process. Members of the CAC weighed in concerning the possibility of a few members from the CAC making a presentation to the Council. In discussions between Council and city staff, a date of March 17 has been identified for this potential presentation to Council.

Takeaways from conversations by the CAC:

- This CAC group was never set up to report back to City Council, as most boards and commissions in the City are organized.
- The views of the CAC members are highly diverse, and that is one of the benefits of how the CAC was formed and operates. It would be difficult for only a couple CAC members to adequately represent the various views. One possibility is to have staff prepare a presentation and have CAC members assist in the presentation, perhaps.
- It should be emphasized that the CAC is a wide ranging group of people and it would be good to emphasize this theme to the City Council.
- Some of the CAC members emphasized that a more important conversation with Council would involve hearing that the City Council is committed to carrying out this Comprehensive Plan, as opposed to just “checking a box” when reviewing ideas and actions that come forth in the future, as they relate to the Comprehensive Plan. CAC members would like to hear that the City Council is going to actually adopt the plan and will move forward. The people of Lafayette have invested their time in the comprehensive plan effort and are interested in its outcomes. The CAC would like to hear that the City Council feels the same and really cares about the effort.
- The CAC can provide insight to the process to the City Council, but not as a presentation. The meaningfulness of the comprehensive plan program is important to emphasize to the City Council.
- The overall consensus was that the CAC did not have a particular interest in making or leading a presentation to the City Council on March 17th.
- If a presentation is made to the City Council on March 17th (by staff or the consultant), the members of the CAC can by all means be at that meeting (and would be encouraged to do so), to share their opinions or thoughts with the group, in concert with a presentation by staff or consultant.

Discussion of components and structure to include in the Comprehensive Plan document (including Guiding Principles, Goals, etc.)

- Brian Mooney explained the logic of the “sustainability wheel” as a structure for the comprehensive plan, including the four frameworks (Community Character, Connected Community, Strong Economy, and Environmental Stewardship).
- Brian Mooney explained the definitions for the terms “guiding principles”, “goals”, “strategies”, and “actions” as they relate to the structure of the document. The goals in a comprehensive plan typically outline the official policy of a City, and the strategies outline the tools used to implement a comprehensive plan. The action items outline, as the name would imply, the specific actions needed to achieve the goals and policies articulated in the comprehensive plan. An additional element of a comprehensive plan are “metrics” or “indicators”. Metrics or indicators provide a way for a community to measure whether it is achieving success over time with regard to the key elements of the comprehensive plan.
- The main chapters of the comprehensive plan include Community Character, Connected Community, Strong Economy, and Environmental Stewardship.
- The various elements, or topic areas, are nestled within the four chapters. Typical elements commonly seen in comprehensive plans including “housing”, “multi-modal transportation”, etc. are organized, in this comprehensive plan, within the umbrella of the four main chapters (as listed above).

- Guiding principles for each of the four chapters emphasize affirmative sentences that usually begin with the words “Lafayette will...”, to help guide decision making for the future
- Goals, for the comprehensive plan, should start with the word “to”. The articulation of goals leads to the articulation of policies.
- The Lafayette plan is set up to be a vision-based comprehensive plan that emphasizes the improvement of community character.

Comments / discussion with the CAC concerning the structure of the comprehensive plan as explained by the comprehensive plan (by Brian and Britt):

- This structure represents a reorganization of many of the same “elements” or topics as the last comprehensive plan
- The previous comprehensive plan document had a multitude of goals and policies, and this proposed plan for the comprehensive plan organizes around a more defined hierarchy of terms. The goal, as well, is to have a manageable number of action items stemming from the comprehensive plan
- The re-organization around the four themes is intended to improve the comprehension of the plan by the general public.
- The definitions of the terms articulated this evening are not unique to Lafayette, but the actual goals, metrics, and policies articulated in this plan will be unique and tailored to Lafayette.
- Question raised: What happens if an initiative or idea comes out of the City Council that is not an action or goal? Is there a guide for them to follow what the comprehensive plan says? Thought in response: The comprehensive plan should make it explicit that their actions should align with the Comprehensive Plan, and their actions do not align with the plan, then the Council should be able to explain their actions to the community and why they do not align with the plan. At the same time, everyone should understand that change happens in a community, so the actions of the City can and do change over time. The important thing is to ensure that the main goals of the comprehensive plan are still being addressed.
- It will be important to provide a sufficient body of goals and action items in the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that there are no holes and that the City Council has guidance on how to move forward.

Q&A from Audience concerning the structure of the comprehensive plan and related topics:

- Question from the audience: Has there been input from the economic development planning department of the City of Lafayette? Response from consultant team: The economic development position is currently vacant in the City of Lafayette, but the economic health of the City has been considered throughout the process, including in the Community Assessment. There were stakeholder meetings last summer dedicated to the economic development topic.
- Comment from audience: The topic of “economic subdiversification” is important to many people in the community. Lafayette needs more support for small business. The city should carefully consider how many dollars are needed to serve results, versus the number of people coming into town.
- The City Council would like to proceed with a full blown economic development plan for the city, after the completion of the comprehensive plan. This comprehensive plan will set the stage for the completion of this more detailed economic development plan.

- Comment from the audience: One of the people in the audience is representing kids with disabilities, and would like to see full inclusivity integrated into the comprehensive plan. It is important to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are integrated into the plan, and it seems that the needs for people with disabilities haven't been heard.
- Comment from the audience: How can we get more people involved in the process and communicate to a wider audience? Response: word of mouth would help. Bring all of your friends and co-workers to meetings. The project team will continue to work on getting the word out to more people.
- Comment from the audience: The rental population is growing in Lafayette, and often homeowners don't care about being involved in the community as much as homeowners do.
- Question / comment from the audience: On the graphics in the room, much of S Public Road is being converted to a "village mixed use" orientation. The area around 119th and Baseline is also changing. How much commercial are we eliminating to replace with mixed use? In Lafayette, the term "mixed use" is usually equated with residential development.
- Comment / question: What will happen with the existing goals and objectives from the current comprehensive plan? Response: The goal is to build upon what is already existing in the current comprehensive plan. The consultant team will coordinate with the city staff and CAC to make sure everything is included.
- Comment / question: The key is to promote small business and tie it to the character of the community.

Lafayette Vision Statement:

The consultant team reviewed the vision statement proposed for the comprehensive plan. It leverages the current vision statement for Lafayette, with a few adjustments.

Comments from the CAC with regard to the Vision Statement:

- One member of the CAC indicated that he did not see enough of a mention of the environmental themes in the vision statement. This community really emphasizes environmental themes. There is concern that the panoramic view of Lafayette is being degraded by all of the construction.
- One member of the CAC thought that the vision statement should be short and concise.
- There was agreement to include something about "environmental values" in the vision statement.

Discussion of the Guiding Principles Associated with the four main frameworks (Connected Community, Community Character, Strong Economy, Environmental Stewardship):

- No comments on the guiding principle for Community Character
- Environmental Stewardship:
 - Guiding principle is too wordy as currently written. It makes it sound like Lafayette is a huge carbon producer, but in fact this isn't true. It is too laser focused on the details of environmental stewardship. Need to have it be not quite so detailed, but still maintain the progressive environmental vibe of the community. It is going in the right direction but it is too detailed. Make the guiding principle have more of a broader focus. It should focus on waste reduction and sustainability. The guiding principle should focus on

aspects that the city can directly impact. The guiding principle is currently very specific but the goals do not reflect the same level of specificity.

- Connected Community
 - Need to add more wording speaking to accessibility and providing more inclusivity for individuals with special needs
 - A CAC member indicated that he preferred the term “cultural diversity” to the existing term used of “multiculturalism”. The phrase “celebrating diverse community” would be more inclusive.
 - Perhaps change the wording to read “Lafayette has a culturally diverse community”
 - Perhaps “valuing diverse community” or “celebrate diverse community”
 - Need to reword the sentence on diversity
 - The key aspect is that diversity is not just about “who we are” but also about how we celebrate it.
 - Should we discuss diversity in other aspects besides cultural? Economic, religious, etc.
 - Comment from an audience member that the word “inclusive” should be included in the sentence. We should emphasize socio-economic diversity. It is not a “problem that we are trying to solve” but instead an aspect of Lafayette that we are trying to celebrate. The goals of the comprehensive plan should be geared to emphasize ‘inclusivity’.
 - A CAC member noted that it is often a struggle to enable and motivate this inclusivity. How do we get people to show up?
 - A member of the audience noted that we should leave the word “cultural” out or potentially break it in to more goals.
 - A CAC member noted that ‘cultural diversity’ shows up in all of us, regardless of how many generations our families have been here. We need to think critically about what we mean by the term ‘cultural’.
 - Question from the audience about what is meant by the term ‘green corridor’. The consultant team responded that the term ‘green corridor’ was meant to emphasize an overall green emphasis for connections, not just vehicular but for all modes of travel.
 - The dots on the graphics pertaining to vegetation are potentially confusing. The team should consider a different symbol.
 - Comment from the audience: How do we keep the city from being cheapened by people who want to come in and just buy stuff up? How can we use this diversity and push back against ‘big money’ to maintain the small town vibe? The person in the audience thought that big money interests have been pushing up against what is in the comprehensive plan, and we should think about how to prevent that in the future.
 - Comment from an audience member: We should be careful when we discuss what it means to be a diverse community. We need to be clearer in our definitions of the word ‘diverse’. How intentional is the city and the community in diversity? How do we represent what the diverse community looks like? Who is being shown on signs and billboards around town, for example? We need to go beyond just the overall statement of having a ‘diverse community’.
 - Comment from the audience: There is concern about labeling particular groups of people. There is concern that the autistic community may get isolated as the city moves forward. How can Lafayette help to empower each individual?
 - The current language is missing the word “social diversity”. We need to talk more about places that help foster and support community events and bring people together.

- It is important that events that are held are inclusive. There should be policies in place to enable citizens to create their own events in the community. It shouldn't just be up to the city to put on events. Increasingly, city staff is reducing the number of hours they devote to participating and helping to run events. The City should foster the events and maybe not put them on as the City, but figure out a way for various organizations to support these events.
- As an overall comment, the Connected Community theme is very important to the community.
- Strong Economy
 - The current guiding principle is too simple. Who are we growing economic opportunities for?
 - Raising the minimum wage may not go over well in a smaller community like this that is trying to support small businesses.
 - Need to finesse the sentence "in support of these other principles"
 - The current statement is missing direction and is too vague. Need to have it more tailored for Lafayette. Need to add something about having more diverse businesses. Need to value different types of businesses that meet the needs of the city, so that citizens don't have to travel outside Lafayette to purchase what they need. The issue of tax leakage is pretty important. What businesses do we not currently have that the community needs, in order to keep more of this spending in the community?
 - Need to fill in the voids in the sentence. How do you make investment happen? Through incentives?
 - Would like to avoid seeing the duplication of stores, for example, tire stores.
 - A key goal would be for the city to be proactive and actually go out and find diverse businesses.
 - Having a strong economy means that the community can weather economic downturns. It will be very important for the City to court particular stores and to help shape the diversity of businesses in town.
 - Resiliency could be a bridging principle, between the environmental stewardship portion of the 'wheel' and the strong economy portion of the wheel.
 - It would be important to mention the importance of telecommuting and internet access for the economy section. Need more of an action item related to providing for internet resources for the community.
 - What does the phrase 'high quality services' mean? It sounds empty. Is it equitable? Is providing the service about improving the lives of people in the community?
 - Comment from the audience: There needs to be more buffers for big box stores, tire places, etc.
 - Comment from an audience member: The city won't be able to accomplish much without a tax base. It is important to emphasize the aspect of "working toward becoming self-reliant or self sustaining". It is also valuable to emphasize having 'strong destination businesses' and 'small business incubators', creating an environment that supports small businesses that will come and go (for example, pop up retail). It is ok to start a small business here and then eventually leave.

Discussion of Graphics

Draft Framework Plan:

- A key element of the plan is open space and providing for greenway connections. This is not a zoning map. We are, importantly, looking at various open space areas and connecting them.
- Question from the CAC: Is the framework plan shown the preferred alternative from the three previous concepts, A, B, and C? The consultant team indicated that, yes, what is being shown is the preferred direction, drawing from input from the community and the concepts A, B, and C.
- The framework plan is not an official land use map.
- Need to simplify the verbiage for village mixed use for the public meeting.
- The term ‘commercial mixed use’ provides for flexibility, but the specifics of what can go in each area can be decided by the planning commission.
- The key, for various areas in Lafayette, is to use various buildings as opposed to simply tearing them down.
- As an overall comment, the framework plan looks pretty heavy on residential.

- Focus Area Diagrams:

The consultant explained that many of the areas shown on the focus area maps could be purchased by the city for open space. What is shown on the maps represents what could be potentially developed, if the various privately held properties in each area were to be developed eventually.

- It is important to maintain the integrity of open spaces and not fragment these areas with multiple trails and street crossings. All of the green dots showing trails compromises the quality of these open space areas. We need to build out of the principle of reducing fragmentation and we shouldn’t have so many trail connections or green connections. There is a homestead on Waneka Farm to potentially add to the diagram, and the farmstead could evolve to serve as a neighborhood destination. We need to show the pond in the area as well. The feed and grain / old grain elevator is an important location. The community went to bat for the grain silos and these amenities are really important to the community.
- The diagrams should represent a vision of what could be built IF developed. There is a community commitment to open space and does this desire come through strongly enough in the focus area maps? The graphics and the description should really show the emphasis on open space. It may not always be possible to preserve open space, but if it is possible, then open space should be preserved.
- There are some diametrical oppositional statements in comments received from the community in the last survey. For example, how can we preserve the land while allowing for development as well?
- Will the framework mention the PROS plan and other contextual documents that outline what the city wants? Answer: Yes.
- Comment from the audience: Too much mixed use on the plan. There is a big concern that mixed use will mainly represent residential development. No desire for high density residential. If we have too much housing, then there is a drain on city services. We need more sales tax.
- The term “mixed use” needs to be re-thought and we need to think about better examples to show how it would look. Need GOOD mixed use.

- The term “mixed use” is a zoning word. This is not a zoning document. Maybe come up with a different word?
- We aren’t addressing the topic of traffic in the framework plan. There is no mention of traffic and this will only get worse, especially the east-west traffic. How will the comp plan incorporate a traffic master plan?
- We need the transportation corridors that pass through Lafayette to connect with other corridors in the area.
- The eastern gateway has way too much residential. If mixed use can be residential, then the whole area could become residential.
- Co housing could be really helpful for people who have disabilities.

END OF NOTES / SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION