

## **Redevelopment of the Northeast Neighborhood**

Notetaker: Leanna Smithberger

### Opportunities:

- Free Wi-Fi in the northeast neighborhood; possibly run out of the Simms Center
- Better signage around neighborhood to encourage visitors
- Beautiful community — like how it used to be
  - Spotlight program – local government can step in to seize property that isn't maintained at a certain standard
    - Takes too long, not effective enough
    - Taking care of vacant lots will improve the neighborhood, but need a more efficient way to solve this problem
    - Question of priorities? Is this a low priority for the city?
  - Beautify the water tower
  - Fix sidewalks
  - Community garden
    - Landscapers to help accomplish this?
  - De-paving the Rose's parking lot
    - Potential sight for a community pool/park
- Historical site at Newtown
  - Want joint help from JMU, EMU, and Harrisonburg
  - Historical marker at Newtown Cemetery (currently in progress)
  - Have a "history walk" to share the history of Newtown — tie in with tourism
- Public apology from the City of Harrisonburg
- Need to bring together stakeholders (Churches, Community members, Businesses, etc.)
  - Draw upon existing resources
  - Use redevelopment as job creation — businesses need to hire from the community
- Getting info out to build excitement
- Need to "renew people's minds" — no existing program to help rehabilitate prisoners
  - Job creation as a component
  - Partnership with AKA
  - Poetry collective in/out of prison to help heal

### Actions:

- Northeast Neighborhood Association will pursue getting a public apology from Harrisonburg
- Partnership between NENA and AKA for rehabilitation program
  - Potentially including the poetry project
- Continue to pursue historical marker at Newtown Cemetery
- Find out who organizes the "town walk"
- Promote historic work in Newtown — get Ms. Tolliver's books in tourism office, etc.

## Issues of Transportation and Parking

Notetaker: Alison Steed

- One group member parks at Municipal lot and walks; Mason street is a nicer walk than alternative routes
- What is the justification for restricting parking in neighborhoods near campus to people in the area? → it seems there are many open spaces on the street going unused
  - They can't park in front of their own home if too many others park there
  - There is a tension evident between Harrisonburg community and JMU during this discussion
- The idea of a traffic "diet" → restricting turning lanes to help with traffic problems
- Chicago precedent: roundabout on Port Republic
  - Discussion of stop signs vs. stop lights
  - A roundabout costs less to put in than a 4-way intersection
  - What about trucks?
    - It is important to make the radius big enough, but a roundabout would work for trucks too
  - Similar precedent in Italy: roundabouts everywhere and work well
  - In the Netherlands, bike lanes are included as well
  - Roundabouts present a cultural issue
    - Must give people time to get used to them
- The need to incorporate trucks in any issues of transportations
  - Need to differentiate between thru-traffic and people that actually need to stop; causes congestion
- Overlay districts vs. full zoning ordinance
  - Is it the same process? Full zoning takes longer but much of the same steps are taken
- Parking exists but it is always reserved for something else, yet spaces are empty
  - Maybe we can have specific times that a lot is reserved for a given business
    - Example: coffee shop or church in the morning, something else at night
  - Change ratio of parking spaces
    - Difficult details involved; businesses change (come and go) and property owners might not want this
- Burden of proof on new parking added
  - Maybe the city should have to justify that they need the spaces before they get them
  - Restrict to the city's project use, not necessarily for businesses
- The idea of a parking deck downtown (a private deck)
- Other solutions that aren't driving cars are important as well
  - Encourage other types of transportation
    - Better lighting will help
  - More bike lanes

## Political Processes – Community Involvement

Notetaker: Tim Ruebke

- 1) First Round – Reason for sitting at this group?
  - a) Drawn in by failure of trust in the City building project
  - b) How to be more engaged in community
  - c) Don't live where there are a lot of garage doors and no sidewalks
  - d) How do we get those involved that do not normally get involved?
  - e) People are affected, but they may not know how to get involved or too busy (work and children) to get involved
- 2) Yes, can say we want to hear from people, but they don't believe anyone wants to hear
  - a) ...more than just hear from you
  - b) ...KNOCK ON DOORS. GET OUT!
- 3) Impressed with good people that are elected.
  - a) The decision-making process though isn't always transparent.
  - b) More needs to be done.
    - i) What are the active steps?
    - ii) What can we do?
- 4) How we hold public discussions?
  - a) Usually just ONE event.
  - b) What about multiple sites?
  - c) ...and providing CHILDCARE?
- 5) The choice of most cost effective may leave too many people out...
  - a) May actually *cost more* NOT to have people engaged...
  - b) Need to get diverse/different people involved from the beginning.
- 6) Process is extremely important.
  - a) The opportunity and ability to express, to be heard/listened to... helps people let go of their tightly held ideas and consider others
  - b) At the latest meeting, several people came to the microphone and said, "Well, I know you're not going to listen to me..." a lot of work to overcome that history and sentimentality
- 7) City Council needs to meet one time in one of the churches in the Northeast Community
  - a) ...snow removal in this community is slow
  - b) ...important to find the right place for people to feel comfortable attending.
- 8) Problems at the school with reaching people who need the information.
- 9) At a recent event, Russian translation equipment and interpreter were provided; however, no native Russian speakers attended as wrong date was chosen as a result of limited communication and lack of understanding for that culture .

- 10) We underestimate the effort it takes to get people involved. NEED TO VALUE the expertise and mechanisms for engagement. How?
- 11) Thesis on how to have effective communication – Rick Castaneda
- 12) How do we get more diversity when green, open, and public space is so culturally important for most immigrant populations... but they don't come now?
- 13) Citizenship classes: 15-16 hour days of work with children creating a million meetings; so how?
  - a) Kids come from somewhere, working with them in a vacuum leaves parents out
  - b) Best way is to work with parents- Engage parents
  - c) Invite to come with us to the market
  - d) There is an information and relationship gap...we have to take individual responsibility to take someone to the market, etc.
- 14) School based opportunity – Getting input into new school is the next opportunity
- 15) Go into the communities, how can we involve you more?
  - a) What can we do to help you?
  - b) Take standard meetings to the parents
  - c) Text parents
  - d) Alternate meeting times (more than one date for the same materials)
- 16) Prioritization of values...Language
- 17) YES, New middle school is a real opportunity
  - a) Some kind of process by January - useful to have as many people involved as possible
  - b) Multi-tiered approach, not a one-time deal
  - c) Rick, please document what you do/did and share with city
  - d) Show the value of engaging people
  - e) Kisner is approachable
- 18) Two hour meeting to decide on 1 of 6 possibilities announced on website
  - a) 5:30-7:30 sign in
  - b) Give comments that day
- 19) How to talk and listen with people with whom we disagree
  - a) Rick Castaneda. Help people learn how to listen
  - b) Also, the focus on "it's heritage not hate"
  - c) Effective communication across groups

## Harrisonburg & JMU Places and Spaces

Notetaker: Lauren Holder

- Harrisonburg & Students → some students have never been downtown
- Alger → great job at trying to integrate school with downtown
- How do we “force” people to go off campus → making it valuable from the students’ perspective
- JMU reinforces bubble, using Aramark and campus spaces at JMU vs. Downtown
- Students in apartments, need invitation
- Buses don’t circle downtown
  - Buses don’t go to the “true” downtown
- Atmosphere downtown is “21+,” not as welcoming for underage students
- Advertising downtown art walks → First Friday of every month
- Gay community at JMU & Minority groups worry about safety downtown
- Sexual assault on campus is a hot topic
- International students have a big fear of violence, because “guns widely available”
- Aspen Heights & Springfest increased negative relations between JMU and community
- There are kids museums and places to drink, but not much in between
- Priorities → We (grad students and upperclassmen) want to live w/ people that have the same priorities, does that alienate the younger students?
- In the 1960s: VA theater, lines of JMU students, they’d do their shopping downtown
- Ice House- JMU Downtown presence in court square → backlash from the community. The purpose was to have a positive PR presence downtown
- Farmer’s Market comes to JMU- can we branch out in the same way?
- Things are expensive downtown, why don’t we have discounts for JMU students in local businesses, they need incentive
- Nonprofit gallery space? Happens in other cities and could pull in the art students. Lots of art majors and minors-pretty large groups

## Space & Forum Downtown

Notetaker: Kaitlyn Shields

### *Step1:*

Historical preservation- structure no longer being used, replace, use missing physical history

- Action: Get Nationally Recognized and Register for Buildings

Value: Public Rights and Private Rights

Places of Good Use

- Farmers' Market
- Massanutten Library
  - Serving every age group ethnic, social group
  - Outreach services, children, book by mail
  - Entertainment and services(Need to recognize this area in the community)

Use library as a connector between JMU and the Harrisonburg Community. Massanutten Library already does this!

Parking Spots by Roses

- Turn into a diversity area for events

JMU becoming public space

- (Make ) Campus a destination for community
- Action: Need more flow between community and JMU

Values: Culture & Ethnic

- Action: Need places for the sharing of culture
  - Example: cuisine, Rocktown Bites, El Sol
- Problem: Rent is too expensive for Downtown for minorities
- Action: Using citizen's business who are not using and venues
  - Parks & Rec
  - Clementines
  - Keezel Building
  - Lucy Sims
  - Outside Massanutten Library
- Action: Day of the Dead, Community Alter to put pictures of people who have passed away to honor them and honor a culture

Public Space

- Court Square Theatre
- Jess's Quick Lunch

*Step 2:*

- Action: Who Owns Rose's Parking Lots
  - Contact HDR
- Space: More availability for places later at night
  - Court Square theatre used for more non-profits
- Bringing Live concerts to Court Square electronically
  
- Action: Runs on campus from JMU to Downtown
  - Connecting with JMU organizations and Downtown for a 5K
  
- Action: Business promoting
  
- A place students could intersect with Harrisonburg community
  - Massanutten Library volunteer, history projects on community buildings and sites
  
- Problem: Need more walking
  
- Action: Need to promote International Festival more!
  - City fundraising for Part time director
  
- Action: FLASH mob for International Festival

Who to reach

- Upper level JMU officials like JMU commerce
- President of the Board: Andy
- City JMU Council: Charlie King
  - Example: Orientation of JMU students, 4<sup>th</sup> July 5K

Broaden Public Policy

- Addresses the social media, stream online