

Bigfork Community Visioning Session Summary

January 12, 2011

Present: Catherine McLynn, Tim Johnson, Joel Karels, Ryan Aarestad, Bob Duda, Howard McKinney, Bob Zimmer, Roger Logdahl, Patricia Feld, Dean Springer, Karen Norley, Gene Madsen, Brian Rauzi, Carol VanNyhuis, Dan Heinecke, Krista Lane, Wayne Kruse, Matt Pellinen, Amy Pifher, Ellen Pillsbury, Andy Hubley

The Visioning session began at 6:00p.m. at the Bigfork City Hall with nineteen people in attendance. Ellen Pillsbury and Andy Hubley, ARDC began the meeting with a summary of comprehensive planning. Then attendees were split into three small groups to participate in a community visioning exercise which involved three steps: Community Assets, Threats and Issues, and Vision Statement Development.

Community Assets

The small groups identified and noted on a map the local existing assets then reported back to the whole group. Below are the identified assets:

- Airport
- Hospital
- Pharmacy
- School Complex
- Bergquist Co.
- Raja Mill
- Northern Itasca Electric Co-op Inc.
- Downtown business
- Customer services
- Golf Course
- Scenic State Park
- Scenic Byway Highway 38
- Good Roads
- Business growth (hospital/housing)
- Housing (Mobile Home Park, WilderNest, Condor Apts)
- Social organizations (Fraternal and Over 50 Club)
- Churches
- Military Memorial space
- Cemetery
- Outdoor Recreation Opportunities (snowmobile trails, beaches)
- Local artists
- The Edge Center
- Cable TV/High Speed Internet
- Lakes and rivers
- Local restaurants
- Water treatment facility
- Engaged volunteers and community spirit
- Cooperative Local Units of Government
- City Hall
- Clean air
- Legacy development
- JOBZ Park
- Kiosk
- Fire Hall and ambulance service
- Proximity/Location to cities
- Leadership

Community Threats and Issues

The small groups determined the threats and issues which could hinder the existing assets and reported back to the group. Below is the list of identified threats and issues.

- Aging population/no-growth/declining population
- Non-support of local businesses
- Lack of Affordable Housing
- Unemployment (downturn in logging)

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- Young-adult leaving
- Blight-(empty and dilapidated buildings)
- Citizens Against Virtually Everything (C.A.V.E.)
- Lack of Business opportunity
- Business on the brink
- Government negativity (stagnancy)
- Need for civility
- Decaying infrastructure
- Lack of WOW when entering the community
- Lack of transportation options
- Gas prices
- Illegal drug use
- Police protection/enforcement response time
- Middle of nowhere
- Entertainment opportunities for youth
- Funding availability
- Youth involvement
- Unpaved roads

Community Vision Statement Exercise

The final step for each small group was to brainstorm vision statement nuggets finishing the phrase: *In the future, Bigfork is...* The groups then drafted vision statements to share with the whole group.

In the future, the City of Bigfork is.....

1. A progressive, growing City that is a safe and friendly place to retire, vacation, and raise your family with economic stability/development an excellent school system and State-of –the-art health care facilities and services.
2. Bigfork, a vibrant community, is a family oriented, safe destination for shopping, recreation, working and living.
3. A high quality place to live and work as well as a valued destination because of its rich history, recreation, opportunities, quality healthcare, arts and education, thriving economy, and modern infrastructure while maintaining its small town quality of life and natural beauty.

Next Steps in the Planning Process

ARDC will develop a Visioning Session summary to be sent to all meeting participants and City stakeholders and linked to the Bigfork Comprehensive Plan website:
www.arrowheadplanning.org/bigfork

Anyone not able to attend is encouraged to fill out a public comment form located at Bigfork City Hall, on the Plan website or contact Ellen Pillsbury, ARDC #218-529-7554 or epillsbury@ardc.org with any comments or questions regarding the planning process.

The Bigfork Comprehensive planning committee will meet in February to review a draft Vision Statement and develop Plan section goal statements. The meeting date will be announced when set and confirmed.