

Community: Colfax

Minutes by Trees Forever Field Coordinator: Leslie Berckes

Date and Time: February 16, 2016; 6:30pm

Meeting Length: 1.5 hrs

Location: United Methodist Church
Bioregional and TAB Planning Meeting

Number of community members in attendance: 7

Visioning Committee Members Attending: Don Edwards, Jeff Davidson, Linda Darrock, Doug Garrett, Dave Mast, Kim Seebeck, Connor Jones
Leslie Berkces (Trees Forever)

Summary:

The Colfax Community Visioning Steering Committee meeting began with a brainstorming session of potential projects for the community. This list is to get a better sense of the community needs prior to going into the community assessment process. The ideas generated will be compared to the feedback received during the Transportation Assets and Barriers process and reviewed at the Goal Setting meeting with the landscape architects. Potential project ideas include:

- Highway 117 Beautification
 - Complete streets, safety, beauty, better access
- Redevelopment of the Monroe Table property
- Develop the entryways into town to make them inviting – something that signals your coming into Colfax.
- More lighting particularly at the entrance of 117 off Hwy 80.
- Improve the pedestrian bridge across the river
- Turn Hwy 117 into three lanes with a turn lane in the middle
- Address sidewalk issues throughout town
- Safe routes to school
- Create recreational routes throughout town
- Curb and gutter
- Improved road conditions
 - Some of the roads have the old brick under the roadway – could this be exposed?

The committee also discussed the Iowa Initiative Sustainable Communities program offered through the University of Iowa. Colfax (along with other Jasper County towns) applied and in Colfax, the focus would be on development of Hwy 117. The program would tap into student research provided by U of I students and would not focus much on the design aspect of Hwy 117 and the program would not start until Community Visioning is over. Leslie was checking-in on the Iowa Initiative Sustainable Communities program because it seems somewhat similar to Community Visioning and wanted to ensure that the programs would complement each other.

Leslie provided an update on the Transportation Survey to the steering committee. Over 100 surveys have been mailed back to Iowa State and with this number, Colfax has reached the minimum that is needed. People in the community who received the survey should still be encouraged to complete the survey and mail. Leslie

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also gave the committee some additional background on the survey, how it is done, why it is done, and what the committee will learn. The informational sheet about the survey will be mailed to the committee.

Next, the committee reviewed the Transportation Assets and Barriers meeting set for April 16. Leslie provided a short presentation on why TAB is important in the Visioning process, what community groups will be involved, and a snapshot of what community members will experience the day of the workshop.

The goal of this phase of Community Visioning is to get a broad representation of community members to better understand their needs in the community. This will be accomplished by inviting people who represent different demographics: seniors, active adult recreation users, and parents and children. Members of the steering committee will also participate in the process. To begin, each group will start indoors at Colfax-Mingo High School. This will serve as a time for the participants to point out specific assets and barriers in the community related to transportation. The individual will then go outside with a camera enabled with GPS to take pictures of the areas they talked about during the indoor session. The breakdown of day is as follows; a steering committee member will be in attendance at each session to welcome the participants.

Group 1: Seniors, 9-11am

Group 2: Parents and children, 10am-12pm

Group 3: Active Rec Users, 11:00-1:00pm

Group 4: Steering Committee, 12:30-2:30pm

The steering committee was provided a recruitment sheet to start the recruitment process. At the next meeting in March, the committee will confirm who they have contacted already and make plans for reaching a broader audience. The committee should send names of those who have committed to Doug. Dave will work to get an announcement about the Transportation Assets and Barriers workshop into the March 1 community newsletter.

Next, the group reviewed the Bioregional maps that were produced by Iowa State for Colfax. Leslie gave a brief introduction to the process and how bioregional patterns effected settlement and how it continues to effect development. The maps were grouped together at three different stations. The steering committee spent time looking at the maps and answering the questions that were at each station. The maps that were produced include the following along with the questions asked.

- Historic Vegetation
- Present Day Land Cover
- Settlement Patterns
 - What natural/environmental features affected the settlement of the community?
 - Are there family names on the map that are interesting to you? Why?
 - Are there examples of historic vegetation still existing in town?
 - Have other plants been introduced that negatively affect the native species? Are there native remnant areas, or places that have been planted with natives?
 - How and where has the river changed course over time- from 1875 to present?
 - What do you notice?
- Tree Inventory
 - Does Colfax have a diverse urban forest? About what percentage of maples makes up Colfax's public trees? Why does this matter? How does this information affect future tree planting?

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- Where are a majority of the trees in the community planted?
- Are there current efforts to plant trees in the urban forest?
- After looking at the other bioregional maps, do you think there are certain things to keep in mind when planting trees in Colfax?
- What do you notice?
- Watershed
- Depth to Ground Water
- Elevation
 - What watershed do you live in?
 - Where are areas that puddle during a rain event?
 - Where does the rainwater flow (To storm sewers? To streams?)
 - What activities are having an impact on water quality?
 - Are there areas with a high water table or low water table that surprise you? Why?
 - What do you notice?

The next meeting will be held on March 15 at the United Methodist Church where the committee will discuss recruitment for the Transportation Assets and Barriers workshop.