

Meeting Summary

Attending:

Village of South Amherst: Mayor Leshinski, Records Clerk Laurie Beran, Fiscal Officer Michelle Henke

Councilmember: Jeanne Maschari, Becky Siesky, Scott Jones

Residents: Paulette Gargasz, Janice Szmania, Larry Verga, Nicole Pantojas, Anneisa Truman, Mary K Kirsch,

Aislinn Consulting: Rita McMahon

Attendees were asked: Why do you want be on the committee:

- LV just had an interest because of my background in construction
- MKK great place to live transplant from Lorain, would like to see it grow but controlled and keep the charm
- NP have a lot of ideas to bring to the community especially with children
- SJ besides council would like a place for the kids to grow and have stuff to do
- JS want to see what everyone is talking about and be involved in what's going on
- JM love this town and care about the residents and want to see the growth in a controlled
- PG been a part of the community whole life, parents had a business and just love it
- BS like a small town, were close to
- AT grew up in cities, lived here for 6 years, use to nanny in town

The Committee answered the following questions.

What is unique about SA, what do you value

- Quarry's – the old school
- Churches and how they serve the community
- Fire and Police Departments
- small, safe & quiet
- trusting neighbors
- Heritage, Swiss, Hungarian

If one thing was taken away, it would have an impact on the community

- Baseball fields
- Hot Chocolate with Santa and parades
- Piggy's
- Old School
- The rural character
- trusting neighbors

What is a Steering Committee

Aislinn Consulting defined what is a steering committee....

- What are the possibilities, not too much of a stretch but what you want to reach for.
- It is not a how to = we just want to get the ideas
- It will help with capital improvement, zoning regulations

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- This is an advisory committee to develop a vision statement to send to the Vielle Council.

Demographics –

- Has lost 15% in the last 20 years, reducing household size same as national average
- Older population is largest segment of the community
- Unusual to have the largest age group at the 60-64, normally it would be in the 40, how do you encourage the younger age brackets
- 85% owner occupied housing which is great, its' a good sign because it shows that people have a stake
- 87% of the housing stock is over 60 years old
- What can the community do to help with reinvestment in properties

Survey Results

- 18% return of surveys
- 86% of survey from people over 50 only 47% of the population is over 50
- When looking at the data it is skewed towards the older population

Why live in South Amherst: Small town Charm, rural; and safe

Valued Characteristic: Small town, Schools, Sense of Community, Close to Amenities

Concerns for the Future: Protect the environment, Loss of the small-town atmosphere, Community appearance

What new development should be pursued: Open Space, Large lot residential, senior housing, small lots


- Have to be careful with how many senior developments you put in the community, what happens 20-25 years from now when there are no more seniors to fill those units.

What is important: Community appearance, Protecting the small-town atmosphere, managing future growth, Protecting the environment

What do residents want: Small independent businesses and restaurants and coffee shops

Where are you going to make your investments and improvements over the next several years?

- More favorable to keep village management for water service
 - People need more information in order to make a more informed decision
 - Most people agreed that they do not have a problem with their water service, only a problem in certain areas
 - If the village would get out of the water business, they would need to give the residents more information
- Septic
 - 81% no problem with their system
 - 54% agreed there should be a public system
 - 50% agreed that if their system would fail, they would like a public sewer system
 - If there is going to be a public system their needs to be more community discussion and info given
 - Split decision on who should run the system
- Stormwater
 - Not sure if people really understand what the storm system is
 - Need more information and education on this issue



There is some negativity within the village – see the list of one word to describe the Village

Where should the resources be focused on in the next 10 years

- Infrastructure: water, sewer, roads
- Community appearance
- Police
- Additional businesses
- Maintaining the community character

Discussion

Toughest questions on survey were the utility questions, residents need to be educated on the issue. The current water utility was briefly explained

- Village purchases water from LCRWA
- Village distributes the water and bills for water usage and the reselling of the water
- Village maintains the system: water tower, pipes, valves, does repairs

Most effective way to communicate with residents is grass roots – people need to get out there share the information.

How do we go forward to get the community involvement in a positive way

Next meeting

November 1 – summaries will be sent out prior to the meeting



The Village of South Amherst needs your help to create a Community Vision. A community vision will set forth a picture of what we collectively want the community to look like in 10 to 15 years. It is the blueprint for the Village's future outlining what we want to do but not how to do it. It can be useful in applying for grants, guiding the development of regulations, capital improvements and future budgets. The process will be guided by a Steering Committee. If you are interested in being a member of the Steering Committee please contact Laurie Beran, at 440-986-1061 or email her at recordsclerk@southamherst.org.

Please complete this brief survey, and return by **September 22, 2023** via email, mail or delivering it to the Village offices at:
 Village of South Amherst, Community Survey, 103 West Main Street, South Amherst, OH 44001
 Email: Recordsclerk@southamherst.org

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Why did you decide to live in South Amherst? (Check all that apply)

- Small town charm 73
- Rural character 68
- Large lots 39
- Affordable housing 39
- Safe 49
- Close to employment 28
- Close to Family 48
- Schools 40
- Other 22

What characteristics do you value most about South Amherst? (Check up to three (3))

- Small town character 100
- Sense of community 42
- Close to amenities 39
- Historic nature 27
- Schools 42
- Local community activities 1
- Other 16

What are your concerns for the future of South Amherst? (Check up to three (3))

- Managing future growth 43
- Protecting the natural environment 45
- Community and property appearance 50
- Traffic 17
- Loss of small-town atmosphere 51
- Maintaining the residential nature of the community 44
- Promote the development and redevelopment of the Main Street commercial district 40
- Promote mixed use development 6
- Creating multiple commercial areas 13

What types of development do you think would entice high school graduates to stay or return to South Amherst? See attached

Which of the following types of development should the Village pursue? (Pick three (3))

- Large lot residential zoning (1 acre or more) 49
- Smaller lots for single family residential development (15,000 square feet or .3 acre) 28
- Preserve open space. 70
- Mixed use development (combinations of residential and commercial uses in a building) 24
- Townhouse developments 10
- Commercial development 16
- Industrial development 10
- Senior housing 39
- Multi-family developments 4
- Cluster development (a development option that permits the same amount of housing to be concentrated on a smaller area and preserving land as permanent open space. See the development examples to the right.) 22

Traditional



Cluster



If you were to establish goals for the future of South Amherst rank the following as important or not important?

GOAL	IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
Managing future growth	97	14
Protecting natural environment	94	19
Community and property appearance	104	8
Better management of traffic	33	65
Protecting the small-town atmosphere	97	12
Maintaining the residential nature of the community	89	18
Promote the development and redevelopment of the Main Street commercial district	63	41
Promote mixed use development	34	70
Create multiple commercial areas	19	86

What would you like to see more, less, or the same of each type of business listed below in South Amherst?

TYPE	MORE	LESS	SAME	DON'T KNOW
Large stores, (Target, Lowes, Costco, Best Buy, etc.)	6	73	31	7
Services, such as dry cleaners, hair salons, etc.	23	44	43	7
Small independent or specialty stores	75	15	26	2
Medical offices and other healthcare places, including doctor and dentist offices.	36	34	40	7
Hotels and resorts	6	64	31	13
Tourist attractions and activities	21	50	32	10
Restaurants/ coffee shops and food establishments	81	12	32	2
Community gathering facility	56	11	42	5

Please indicate if you Agree, Somewhat Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree or have no opinion with the following statements.

Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
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The Village Administration recognizes the issues with the aging water system. Please respond the following 2 options: 1. Have Rural Water maintain and operate system with all new infrastructure at a minimum cost of \$5,000 per address over a 5 year period with future rates controlled by Rural Water. 2. Continue to manage the system by the Village and replace and upgrade infrastructure as funds are available	19	13	5	17	13	16	10
I have had no problems with water delivery to my property.	61	14	6	11	13	10	0
The water system needs upgrades.	56	30	12	5		1	9
The Village should consider getting out of the water business.	19	14	10	18	13	9	28
I have no problem with my septic system.	68	12	13	6	3	4	9
If my septic system fails, I would prefer to connect to public sanitary sewers.	29	14	20	17	8	21	7
The Village should have a public sanitary sewer system to serve the community.	29	11	19	17	6	18	15
If the Village has a public sanitary sewer system it should be operated by the Village.	33	10	5	16	6	14	29
New development should be on public sanitary sewers.	29	12	14	18	4	10	22
There are no flooding issues in South Amherst.	10	14	7	21	17	22	23
The Village should continue with the County Stormwater system.	32	16	5	7	5	3	40
The Village needs additional revenue to fix storm drainage issues.	33	17	9	8	4	4	37
The Village should consider establishing its own fee for storm water.	10	11	1	23	10	19	33

Where do you think the Village should focus its resources for the next 10 years?

See Attached

How long have you lived or had a business in South Amherst?

- Less than 1 year 0
- 1-4 years 12
- 5-9 years 10
- 10-14 years 7
- 15-20 years 8
- 20 years or more 20
- Does not apply 1

As a resident of South Amherst which applies to you?

- Own my home 120
- Rent my home 3

Which age group applies to you?

- Under 18 0
- 18 to 30 3
- 30 to 40 8
- 40 to 50 4
- 50 to 60 19
- 60 to 70 43
- 70 plus 45

Residents, in 10 years where do you think you will be? (Choose one)

- In the same house I am in now 87
- In a larger house in South Amherst 6
- In a smaller house in South Amherst 6
- In a larger house outside of South Amherst 2
- In a smaller house outside of South Amherst 3
- In a senior living facility 9
- In an apartment
- Other (please specify) 8

Businesses, in 10 years where do you think your business will be? (Choose one)

- At the same location
- Moved to a different location in South Amherst
- Moved out of South Amherst
- Out of business

What one word describes the Village of South Amherst?

See Attached

Thank you for completing this survey. You may drop it off in the lobby of Village Hall, you can mail it to The Village of South Amherst 103 West Main Street, South Amherst, Ohio 44001 or email to Recordsclerk@southamherst.org.

If you are interested in being a member of the Steering Committee please contact Laurie Beran, at 440-986-1061 or email her at recordsclerk@southamherst.org.

Types of Development that would entice High School graduate to stay or return to South Amherst

24 Hour police and restaurant	more restaurant
affordability	new housing
affordable housing	nice apartments and jobs
career option, shops and restaurants	nice residential
clean up homes/sidewalks	nothing
community center	outdoor activities
community pride	pride in community
development	promote trades
employment, restaurant	recreational amenities
factory jobs	restaurants
family	safe and affordable
family, no sewers, no big business	safe small town
farming	sanitary sewers
good jobs	sewers
good paying jobs	sewers, water
high end residential	simple country
High Tech employment	small businesses
housing and appearance	small town
jobs	small town close to large town
jobs w/benefits	why would they want to return
keep it the same	
keep quaint	
larger schools, healthy food and workout places	
more local activities	

Where should the Village focus resources over the next 10 years?

24 hour Police	preserve historic nature
aging community high water rates	recognize retirees and cost of development
appearance & infrastructure	revitalize main street, park and trails
better water	road improvements
community development water	road upgrades
consolidate with Russia Twp	roads
Control growth, keep water and sewer	safe and business development
enforce residential clean up	safety infrastructure
financial concerns and appearance	sanitary sewers and water
fix storm healthy food	Sanitary Sewers
flooding	sanitary sewers and commercial businesses
full time police and supermarket	senior living, identity not Avon
grants and clean up town	sewer water
grow Main Street	sewers
housing, water roads	sewers community parks
infrastructure, no fire Dept	sewers get out of water
infrastructure	sewers roads water
infrastructure and parks	should have gotten out of water business
infrastructure small businesses	stay in home
infrastructure	taking care of its own business
keep cost down	traffic
keep farm land stop development	traffic full time police
keep free from embezzlement	water
keep services the same	water & roads
keep things the same	water, affordable housing, restaurants,
keep water	roads
let others handle water and sewer	water and sewer
library, community center. a laundromat	water and sewers
limit growth	water drainage
long term fixes	water and join Amherst police and fire
maintain rural character	water main breaks
maintenance	water, sewer, roads
maintenance and upgrades	water and sewers
more town hall meeting, leaf pick up	water, streets, community appearance
night police	water system and sanitary sewers
no development and use nature for tourism	
no sewers	

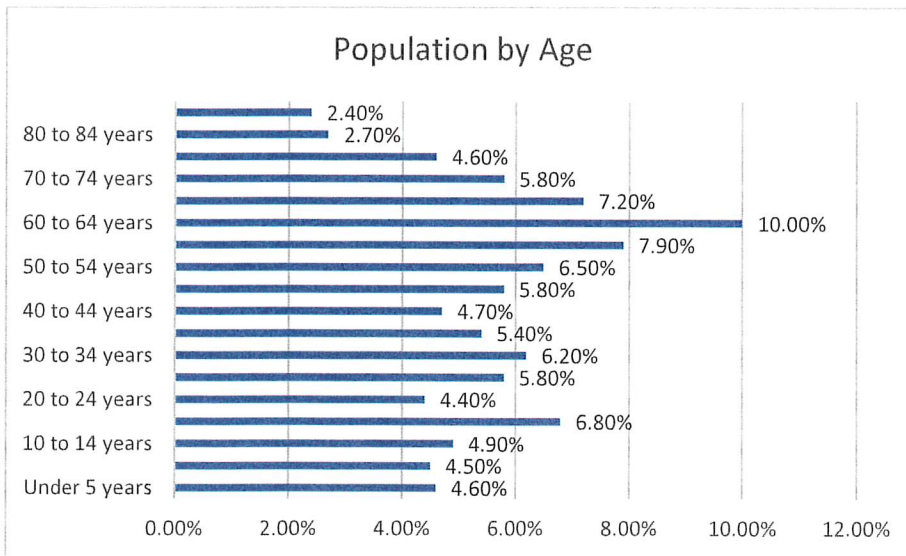
**POSITIVE OR NEUTRAL
WORDS**

changed	1	relaxing	1
charming	3	rural	1
comfortable	3	simple	1
community	1	small	5
country	1	wonderful, paradise	1
decent	1		
friendly	1		
great	2		
historic	1		
home	6		
hometown	2		
homey	1		
Improvement	1		
Mayberry	2		
neat	1		
neutral	1		
nice village	1		
Ok	1		
peaceful	6		
possibilities	1		
potential	1		
quaint	13		
quiet	3		
Quiet safe	1		

NEGATIVE WORDS

ageing	1
antiquated	3
asleep	1
behind	1
broke	1
clean it up	1
cliques	1
decent	1
disillusioned	1
exploited	1
failing	1
frozen	1
gossipy	1
mediocre	1
mismanaged	1
need help	1
old	2
poorly managed	1
run down	1
sad	1
sad water leaks	1
sleepy	1
slow	1
tickets	1
troubled	1

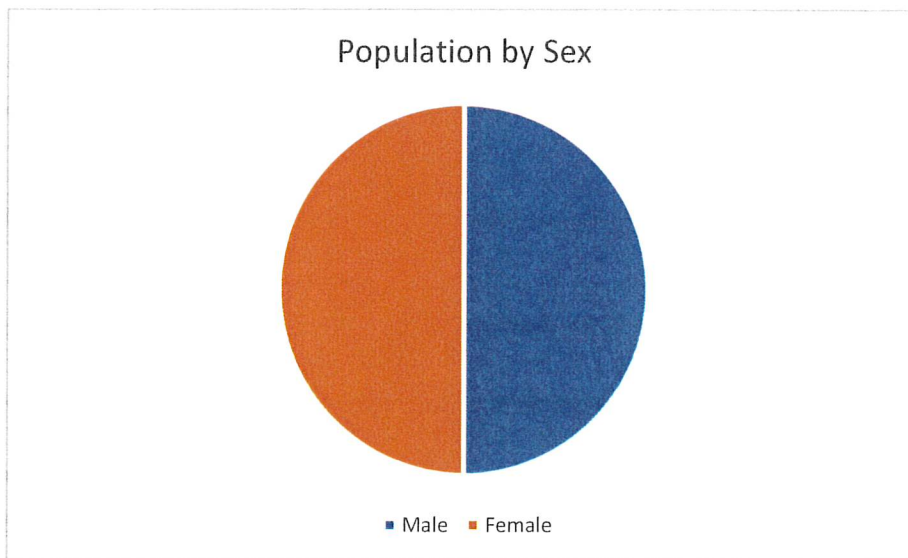
South Amherst Demographics



46.7% of population is between 20 and 60 years old

32% of population over 60

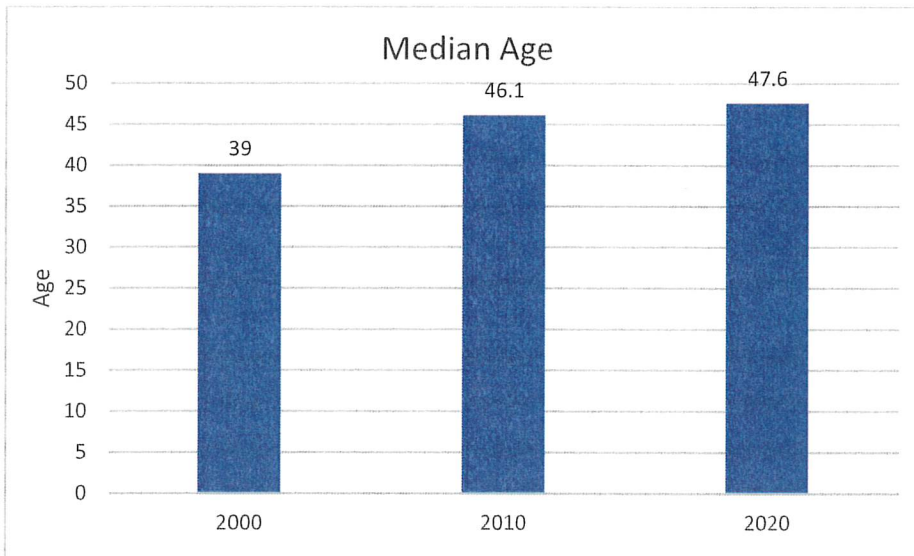
9.7% of population is over 75



Male Population 792

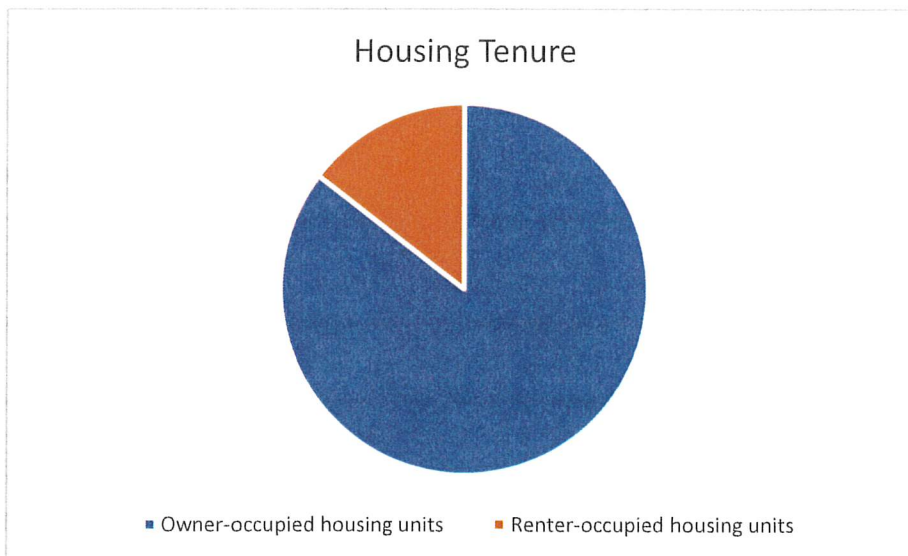
Female Population 789

South Amherst Demographics



Lorain County is 47.1 years

Ohio is 39.8 years

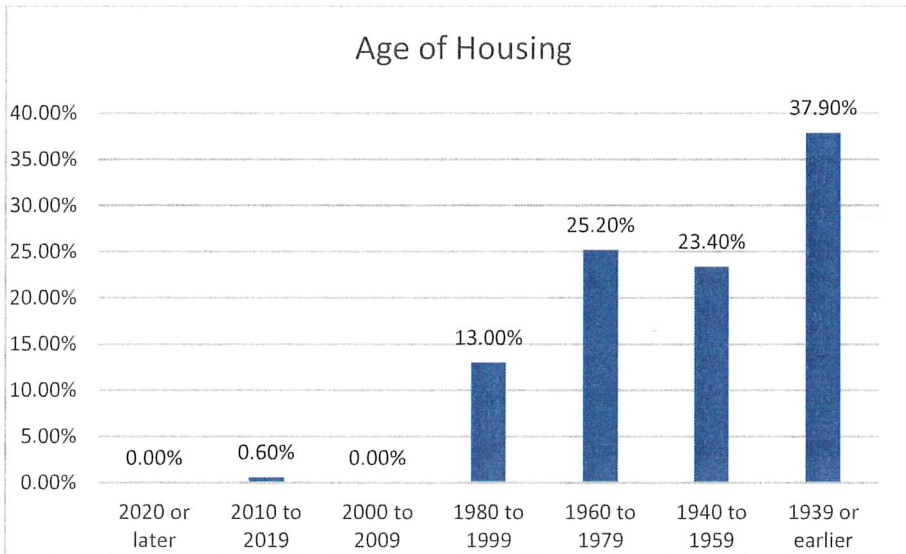


85% owner occupied

15% rental

Source: U.S. Census

South Amherst Demographics



61% of housing is 80+ years old

87% is 60+ years old

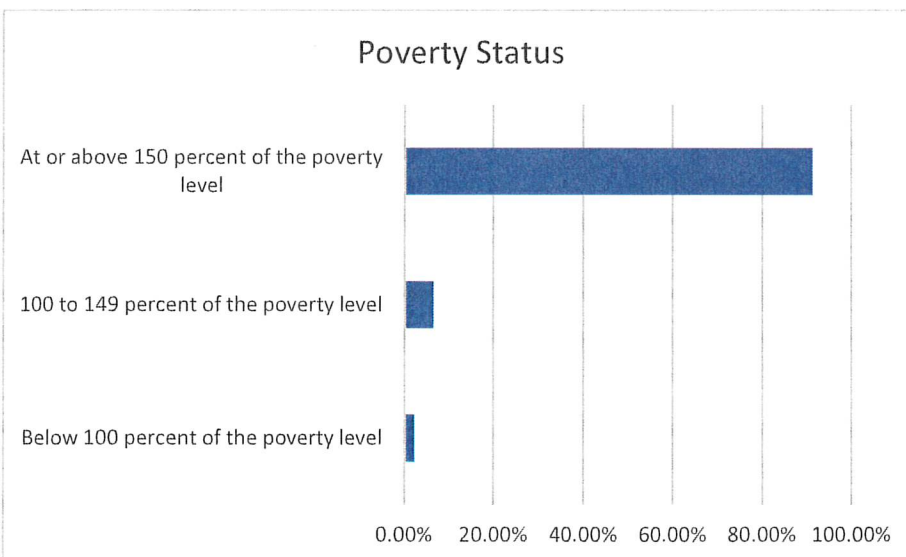
Mobility

93.5% have been in the same house for over a year

5.5% moved into S. Amherst in last year from other places in the County

.6% moved into S. Amherst from a different County in the State

.4% moved into S. Amherst from out of State



Source: U.S. Census