

CITY OF KETTERING
CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL WORKSHOP MINUTES – STRATEGIC PLAN
February 14, 2023

The Council of the City of Kettering, Ohio, met in a workshop session on Tuesday, February 14, 2023, in the Deeds Conference Room, Kettering Government Center, 3600 Shroyer Road. The meeting came to order at 3:07 p.m.

Council Members present included Mayor Lehner, Vice Mayor Fisher, Ms. Duvall, Mr. Klepacz, Mr. Scott and Mrs. Hall. Mr. Duke had an excused absence.

Staff Members present included City Manager Matt Greeson, Assistant City Manager Steve Bergstresser, Law Director Ted Hamer, Volunteer Administrator Dawn Kirchner and Human Resources Manager Amanda Harold. Community Information Manager Mary Azbill and Economic Development Manager Amy Schrimpf attended via Zoom video call.

Mr. Jamie Greene from Planning NEXT was in attendance.

Mr. Greeson opened the meeting and introduced Mr. Greene from Planning NEXT. He identified the Strategic Planning Committee consisting of Ms. Kirchner, Ms. Harold, Tom Robillard, Mr. Greeson, Mr. Bergstresser and Ms. Azbill. The committee is a cross departmental work team. Mr. Greeson asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves.

Mr. Greeson described the strategic planning process as a purposeful effort where, together, the Council, community and employees think about the challenges and opportunities facing Kettering and build a shared concept of Kettering's preferred future. The process will shape a vision, articulate community values, identify areas of focus, and build goals and action steps to achieve.

Mr. Greeson explained that, as a newer City Council anticipating new administration, members made development of a new strategic plan a priority. Being the 13th largest city in Ohio, Kettering needs to re-establish its role as Ohio grows. Being an older community, it is important to position for success in the future offering a competitive environment with choices for businesses and residents.

Mayor Lehner added that staff was also interested in developing a new strategic plan.

Mr. Greeson went on to state that stakeholders need to be engaged in the process. Council and City employees carry out the plans for the community requiring broad engagement.

Mr. Scott stated that knowledgeable citizens and business owners want to know what the City has in mind.

Mr. Klepacz complimented Mr. Greeson on his description of the strategic plan and voiced his concern about staying on task and sticking with the timeframe of the plan.

Mr. Greene stated that frequently asked questions would be developed including what is and what is not a strategic plan. This gives community ideas of what the process includes and how it fits into the City's plans for the future.

Mr. Greene reviewed the scope of the strategic plan including: preparation--marketing materials; community engagement—involvement; ownership; contribution; plan development--orientation activities; review data and background information; create plan brand platform and visual identity; create branded project website; communications; outreach; engagement; steering committee; and conduct analysis.

Mr. Greene unveiled the "Spark Kettering" logo. He then discussed the project website where residents can opt into the things they want. The first touchpoint is developing the steering committee about which Mr. Greene reviewed important aspects and actions. People who choose to participate typically find out about the committee via word of mouth. Demographic information will be requested on the application. Meetings in a box will be taken to areas where desired demographics exist. Public engagement--steering committee is the first step with two rounds of public input. Staff engagement is also important--department directors, supervisors and support staff.

The communications strategy was explained including print collateral--post cards; print advertising in newspapers, email and social media to raise awareness.

An outreach strategy will be in place to target specific geographies, develop a civic infrastructure that maps the networks and identify potentially underrepresented demographic groups. Usually 70% of people respond. Civic organizations must be engaged, as well.

Staff engagement will consist of online surveys, one on one interview, a 2-hour retreat and regular meetings. Mid-level staff will complete the survey, participate in a retreat and take another survey towards end of the project. Support staff will be invited to a Citywide event, participate in meetings in a box at department meetings and will be encouraged to participation in public engagement.

Mr. Klepacz asked for clarification on levels. Mr. Greeson explained that professional staff includes 70 employees with directors. Mr. Greene stated the importance of proving to listen to participants' feedback.

Mr. Greene explained that plan development includes the framework with an action agenda and implementation strategy.

Mayor Lehner asked if staff members who live in Kettering could be sorted versus those who do not. Mr. Greene stated they could make it a question. Mr. Greene recommended questions, such as “What do we need to do?” or “What are the outcomes you’d like to see?”

Vice Mayor Fisher asked for professional clarification. Ms. Harold explained that professional series includes salaried employees.

Mr. Greene reviewed the timeline for the process. The steering committee will be established in March. The two rounds of public engagement will happen in June and October. The final document will be done in December.

Mr. Greene explained the key participants in the strategic planning process. The steering committee provides process guidance and feedback. The public will provide input and feedback. Staff will provide local knowledge and City organization input. Elected officials will review, monitor and adapt. The final plan will be formally adopted by the City Council. Consultants will provide process leadership and expertise.

Mr. Greeson added that Council is committing to a community-based process and embracing the idea that they will be relinquishing some control over the process.

Mrs. Hall stated the community of Kettering has two different opinions. It’s not uncommon for people to think differently. Mr. Greene addressed her concern saying that the tone set will be kindness. Mrs. Hall continued by saying her concern is that the lower-income half of Kettering is not seen or represented. Mr. Greene stated it will be available for everyone. He shared examples about another city paying people to participate on the steering committee and it disturbs the process of volunteerism. Mrs. Hall stated that Kettering is not going to be the city everyone wants it to be. Mr. Klepacz stated that the process needs to get new people involved.

Mr. Greene stated that the steering committee will be inclusive; representative of networks and larger community; open minded; helpful in execution; and hopeful about the future. Mr. Scott stated that business owners should be involved and that Council members are also citizens with ideas and voices to be heard. Mr. Greene stated that everything that happens in public meetings will be captured on the website.

Mr. Klepacz stated that the steering committee seems to be reactive rather than proactive. To get lower income people involved, leadership from the Backpack Program and the like should be contacted and asked to provide names of people to reach. Mr. Greene suggested that applications be delivered to specific places of interest. Ms. Duvall recommended Greenmont Village.

Mr. Greene stated that what makes a successful strategic plan is that it is broadly owned and accepted; meaningful and impactful engagement, solid technical analysis, user friendly, accessible, implemented, results are obvious, strengthens planning culture, fosters partnerships, improves operational efficiency, and emulated for others.

Mr. Greeson stated that potential steering committee members will be identified and applications will be accepted. A resolution will be brought before Council for approval.

Mr. Greene stated planning NEXT will give staff their recommendations and that the application will accompany a job description.

Mr. Greene asked the group their view on Kettering’s potential. Mr. Scott stated the city is landlocked, and the potential is to maintain what it currently has. Mr. Greene said the challenge is how to become attractive. Mr. Scott said the city is competing with other communities. Mr. Klepacz added that the city’s potential is defined by a growing population. We have to maintain our infrastructure for an attractive community, perhaps a walking community. Mayor Lehner stated property maintenance is important.

Mr. Greene asked what issue the plan needs to address. Vice Mayor Fisher stated the city needs to prioritize and use its resources wisely with a timeline. Mr. Scott added job retention as an important issue. Mayor Lehner stated the importance of children in the community, mental health, childcare issues. Mr. Klepacz stated the importance of public safety.

Mr. Greene the city will know the plan was a success when it becomes a catalyst in the community and spawn new development. Mr. Greeson stated that milestones will be hit along the way and the steering committee will continue to give feedback.

Mr. Greene outlined next steps: launch steering committee application campaign; review applications from members; send notifications to selected members; conduct first steering committee meeting at the end of March.

Mayor Lehner asked when the resolution will be approved. Mr. Greeson stated it would be approved in mid-March. The application process will be launched this week.

The City Council Special Workshop Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

PEGGY LEHNER
MAYOR

LASHAUNAH D. KACZYNSKI

Clerk of Council