



Albany, Indiana Town Visioning Session

On October 17, 2017, at 6:00 P.M., a Town Visioning Session was conducted at the Albany Integris Church.

Invitations were sent by Michele Dickey.

Facilitators of the session included:

William Hess, Pres. of the ECI Regional Planning District and Pres. of the Hartford City Council.

William Walters, Executive Director of the ECI Regional Planning District.

Bradley Bookout, Senior Project Manager, ECI Regional Planning District

Elected officials in attendance included:

Randy Dunnuck, Albany Town Board Member

Marcie Schlosser, Albany Clerk-Treasurer

Approximately thirty people attended the session. Session participants were led through an exercise to identify the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities (SWO) of the town.

Identified Strengths:

Physician

Veterinarian

Dentist

Ample Park System

Florist

Streets in fair condition

Great golf course

Several casual dining options

Great library

Multiple gas stations

Great hardware store

Liquor store

Large industrial employer

Nursing home

Post Office

Good municipal building

Auto Mechanic (Marathon Station and Wright Way Automotive)

Available buildings/properties

Lawn equipment (Padgett Sales)

Responsive police department

Convenience stores (Village Pantry and Pak A Sak)

Highway connector (Muncie-Portland-Dunkirk)

Ambulance service (volunteer)

Active Volunteer Fire Department

Strong overall volunteer mindset

Local IGA with full service meat department

Albany United Methodists Church Community Center

Identified Weaknesses:

No restrooms in the park
Park flooding
Need for trails
General upgrade of park facilities
Utility rates are high
Utility rates may deter families and businesses from moving to the community
Property values have been depreciating
Vacant and abandoned houses
General lack of pride with the ownership of houses
Lack of youth and teen activities in the town
Lack of parent leaders/volunteers for youth activities
Few town amenities
No public access to the river
River is not utilized as a community asset
Log jams in the river
Community is land-locked
Pedestrian bridge needed in the park
Lack of industry and good paying jobs
Lack of senior housing
Sidewalks in the downtown need improved
Streetscapes need improved
Downtown buildings are not utilized to their fullest capacity
Downtown building facades need improved
Road through town is too narrow
Overall town beautification is lacking
No public community building
Limited wi-fi access
No drug store
Lacking upscale dining

Opportunities Worthy of Further Consideration:

Establish a facade grant program
Identify senior housing development opportunities
Contact DNR relating to the log jam removal
Study ways for the community to access the river
Create a downtown beautification committee
Create a parks board to address park needs
Develop a youth programs committee
Support existing programs and businesses (Library, hardware store, restaurants, etc.)
Recruit more volunteer adult leaders
Explore establishing a Main Street USA program.
Seek engineering assistance to address flooding issues

At the end of the session, four overarching themes emerged as most critical:

Youth programs and services
Beautification of streetscapes
Park improvements
Address Flooding Issues

Conclusion:

It is recommended that the participants of the Albany Town Visioning Session reconvene for a second follow up meeting. All participants of the first meeting should invite other members of the

community in an effort to build enthusiasm. At the next meeting, the group should consider electing a chair, vice-chair and secretary. The leadership should draft agendas, keep meeting minutes, and strive to ensure that all follow up meetings stay on task. Teams or committees should be identified to work on each of the “opportunities worthy of further consideration.” Future meetings should not last more than one and a half hours. Subsequent monthly follow up meetings should be planned for each of the teams or committees to report their progress back to the group. After one year of sustained participation and evidence that the group is making progress on the opportunities, the leadership should consider drafting organizational bylaws and formally establishing the group as a 501c3 under the laws of the State of Indiana.