

## Albany, Indiana Town Visioning Session

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On **May 14, 2019, at 6:00 P.M.**, a Town Visioning Session was conducted at the Albany Integris Church.

The event was advertised via social media. In addition, members of the community helped to invite interested parties. Everyone was welcome to attend.

Facilitators of the session included:

- William Walters, Executive Director of the ECI Regional Planning District.
- Bradley Bookout, Senior Project Manager, ECI Regional Planning District

Elected officials in attendance included:

- Steve Hall, Albany Town Board Member
- Randy Dunnuck, Albany Town Board Member
- Marcie Schlosser, Albany Clerk-Treasurer

Approximately forty people attended the session. Session participants reviewed the previous Visioning Session documents from October 17, 2017 and identified additional strengths, weaknesses and opportunities (SWO). In addition, participants reported on items that had been accomplished to address the four overarching themes from the October 2017 session.

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### **Overarching themes emerged as most critical:**

#### **1. Youth programs and services**

##### Items accomplished or in process:

- Library programs in place
- New Activity Coordinator funded from the Town
- Vacation Bible school program open
- Splash pad conversation and research underway
- Music program in the park in place
- Kid Activities being developed
- 4th of July celebration in process
- Youth basketball program established
- Facebook posts of town events

##### Items being considered:

- Manly Monday video

## **2. Beautification of streetscapes**

### Items accomplished or in process:

- Flowers planted by the service organizations
- Veteran banners being installed
- Murals planned to be painted

### Items being considered:

- Social organizations coordinating work
- Tree replacement program
- Outstanding home or yard of the month
- Church helping homeowners with projects
- Active code enforcement officer

## **3. Park improvements**

### Items accomplished or in process:

- Pirate ship playground equipment installed
- Water fountain to be installed
- Pedestrian bridge plans underway

### Items being considered:

- Disc golf facility
- Tennis and basketball court refurbishment and seating
- Explore grant opportunities

## **4. Address Flooding Issues**

### Items accomplished or in process:

- Town working on project in the area around SR 67
- County contributed funds towards the work
- No immediate solution to park flooding

### Items being considered:

- Possible construction of a new park in a non-flood location

## **5. Additional Items**

- Need to continue to address increasing the tax base
- Need to promote job creation
- Need for coffee shop

## Identified Overall Strengths 10-17-17:

- 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
- 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
- Active Volunteer Fire Department
- Strong overall volunteer mindset
- Local IGA with full service meat department
- Albany United Methodists Church Community Center

## Added Strengths as of 5-14-19:

- Glass Museum
- All Seasons Banquet Hall
- Caring elected officials: Clerk/Treasurer and Town Board Members
- Community Comes together in time of need/Caring Community
- Active recovery program (Brianna's Hope)
- Strong Lion's Club, Tri-Kappa and other philanthropic organizations
- Farmer Market
- Fish Farm is back open
- Twenty new homes under construction
- Albany Christmas
- Good contacts and cooperation with County Government
- New pirate ship playground equipment
- Excellent elementary school
- Up scale dining
- Nursing home improvements being made
- Delts Sorority
- Blackburn Body Shop
- Wrightway Collision Center
- Have a bank in the town

## **Identified Overall Weaknesses 10-17-17:**

- 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

## **Added Weaknesses as of 5-14-19:**

- Lost a major industrial employer
- Lost Subway
- Lost First Merchants Bank Branch
- T & T Tool building is vacant
- Problem with people parking on the sidewalk
- Drug issue
- Trailer park needs repairs
- Lost the little league team due to lack of volunteers
- Railroad crossing is rough

## **Other Opportunities Worthy of Further Consideration:**

- Facade grant- business owners should check the options available within the Main Street USA 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
- Main Street USA - the town is already a part of the program. No active business owner participation that the town is aware of.

**Conclusion:**

It is recommended that the participants of the Albany Town Visioning Session reconvene for a third meeting. The event should again be advertised on all social media platforms and residents are all welcome to invite friends and neighbors. Enthusiasm for the event should be encouraged. At the next meeting, the group should consider electing a chair, vice-chair and secretary. The leadership should draft agendas, keep meeting minutes. Leadership shall 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.” These committees serve only in an advisory role for the overall board. The board shall report progress and items of interest to the Town Board on a monthly basis and work in cooperation with the Town’s elected officials. Future meetings should not last more than one and a half hours. Subsequent monthly follow up meetings should be planned for each of the committees to report their work 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. The group shall also consider becoming active participants in the Indiana Main Street Program.