



City of Porterdale Steering Committee Meeting #2

09-01-2020

Attendees: Jon McBrayer, Mark Beatty, Josephine Kelly, Mayor Arline Chapman, Adrienne Moore, Carlos Jones, Michael Patterson, Mark-Anthony Williams, Lowell Chambers, Phil Bone.

Meeting Began at: 9:04 a.m.

Overview of Items from 2015 SWOT Analysis:

Strengths:

- Very strong business alliance. Has an active marketing strategy for open spaces (active members list)
- Friends of Porterdale organization is still active, hosts annual fund raising event that has been effected this year. Do an annual gathering for past residents (hasn't happened in the last 3 years).

Weaknesses:

- Local government transparency is being addressed actively (Mayor Chapman). City Council meeting minutes to be shared/included in City of Porterdale Newsletter in addition to city website.
- Sidewalks/Pedestrian Friendliness:
 - (Mayor Chapman) Porterdale has improved greatly over recent years in terms of crime/safety for residents, improving the environment for pedestrians. The Mill Loft development marked a significant turning point for the community.
 - (Lowell Chambers) Sidewalks are covered up, people walk in the middle of the street. People ignore the sidewalks for a combination of reasons including (1) the sidewalks are too narrow and/or in poor condition and (2) there are not enough sidewalks and there is an issue with connectivity of sidewalks. In addition, sidewalks are not ADA accessible.
 - (Mark-Anthony) improvements to the current conditions could include an increase in illumination via street lights, repaving poor condition sections of sidewalk, or blue emergency boxes in place.
 - (Josephine) People don't yield to pedestrians and crosswalks on Hwy-81.
 - (Adrienne) Crosswalk from Crowell Road to the Family Dollar. It is common for children to cross here. It is very dangerous and pedestrian infrastructure would greatly help.
- No significant code updates other than the City has the ability to advise the quality of construction, need initiated from the White Horse development proposal.
 - Josephine to check dates of when the most recent zoning ordinance regarding new developments was passed.
 - (Lowell) City would benefit from adding/moving the current ordinance from the "Miscellaneous" section of the zoning ordinance to the development code.

Opportunities:

- Regarding access to public transit, Newton County does not have a service currently. However, the upcoming county TSLOST includes a line item to fund a county-wide transportation system. Outcome is to be determined.
 - Reword the opportunity for the 2021 updated comprehensive plan.
- New Leaf Visions is no longer an active project in the City of Porterdale and will not be included in the updated comprehensive plan.

Threats:

- Potential location of landfill (2015) – The landfill development was never implemented and is no longer an active threat to the community.

Current Community Vision 2015 CP:

- Porterdale is a historic mill town with a small town sense of togetherness and great pride in our past. Our connection to the Yellow River and village character makes Porterdale a great community for the friendly and talented people who live here. We want to protect our history and restore our town to its former vibrancy by focusing on our strengths as a late 1800s mill town on the Yellow River. Our vision of the future includes the following goals:
 - Enhancing and expanding recreational activities for people of all ages to enjoy the river and the outdoors (Recreation);
 - Continuing to preserve the historic structures that can be restored, removing irreparable and dilapidated structures, and **developing infill guidelines** that ensure that new development fits the historic style and character of Porterdale (Built Environment);
 - Fostering an environment that promotes independently-owned businesses that respond to the needs of the community (Business and Economic Development);
 - Restoring and promoting the use of public spaces and buildings as places for the community to gather and participate in activities (Public Spaces);
 - Creating an environment where people can comfortably walk or bike, and where the option to take public transportation is available, and (Transportation);
 - Cleaning, repairing and maintaining the streets, sidewalks, yards, houses, storefronts and river so that people can walk around town and enjoy Porterdale’s history and natural resources (Beautification).

Additions to Community Vision

- (Mayor Chapman) With new renovations/modern communities, the city needs to keep its historic atmosphere and preserve the old areas of Porterdale. Attention needs to be dedicated to ensuring that the new developments (e.g. White Horse) are well connected to the historic center without degrading the existing sense of place.
- (Adrienne) Some consistency in landscaping and/or preservation to the existing tree canopy and historic trees throughout the city in order to highlight/embrace the city’s status as a “Tree City USA” designee.
- (Mayor Chapman) City has a strong historic significance with trees. Including several that were transplanted by the historic mill owners.

- (Mark B.) Methods to protect the existing canopy can range from having a tree ordinance that prevents removing trees of a certain diameter to installing requirements for canopy cover in new developments – refer to Athens-Clarke as an example. Also, the city can have an in-house policy that requires all city-owned developments meet the same requirements for planting and hardscape design so that all city-owned public spaces are easily recognizable and consistent.

Needs and Opportunities

Stand-out Needs:

- (Mayor Chapman) Always looking for ideas in the Parks. There is a potential for a new skate park in the Yellow River Park. Any ideas from residents are welcomed by City Council.
- (Josephine) Master Plan for Yellow River Park is still in draft form.
- Master plan could be revisited to update or provide insight for new projects that could take place.
 - (Mayor Chapman) Yellow River water group provides great recreational opportunities and kayakers can be seen utilizing the boat launch frequently on weekends.
- Porterdale is in a food desert. Multiple residents have highlighted that the city is lacking access to food that could be addressed via a grocery store or farmers market.
- Survey highlighted lack of medical services/clinic in Porterdale.
 - Meeting attendees stated there has never been a local medical facility since the original Newton County hospital was located in Porterdale. A new urgent clinic within the center city would be very beneficial to residents due to its walkable nature. Potential locations were identified such as (1) in the White Horse development, (2) at the intersection of Hwy-81 and Crowell Road, or (3) in the historic mill village.

Stand-Out Opportunities:

- Enhancing and expanding recreational activities for people of all ages to enjoy the river and the outdoors (Recreation);
- Continuing to preserve the historic structures that can be restored, removing irreparable and dilapidated structures, and developing infill guidelines that ensure that new development fits the historic style and character of Porterdale (Built Environment);
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Community Needs & Opportunities Categories:

- (Mark B.) Recommended to keep same categories as 2015 comprehensive plan, and to add a Financial Management section.
 - Meeting participants agreed
 - (Michael P.) This would be beneficial to help settle the minds of the people in the community at the moment. People need to feel comfortable with the financial management of the city, and this would also demonstrates accountability.

Community Policies

- (Mark B.) Recommended to restructure the chapter to reflect the Needs & Opportunities categories. This will make the section easier to interpret.
 - Meeting attendees accept change recommendation.

Comments

- All steering committee members to fill out survey and return to Mark and Josephine.
- Spread the word to all Porterdale residents to complete the online survey and participate in the photo contest. Information for both is to be advertised on the City's social media account and website.
- Next meeting is September 22nd at 9:00am on GoToMeeting. A meeting link will be forward to all steering committee members the week before and the day before the meeting.
- September 22nd topics will include Broadband, Transportation, and Land-Use.

Meeting Adjourned at: 10:25 a.m.