

# Planning Group 1

Meeting Notes: Orientation and Organization Session  
Jan. 27, 2007

Planning Group 1 had volunteers for two important jobs, Citizen Idea Readers and Information Gatherers.

The Citizen Idea Readers committed to read all the ideas from the fall Vision Meetings that related to this group's work and act as spokespeople for the 1,000 citizens who offered ideas. The Information Gatherers offered to obtain factual information for the group to help with its work.

Readers:

- Arthur Senecal
- Mary Helen McGruder
- Patrick Gilligan

Information Gatherers:

- Nicole McCoy
- Sheri Gilligan

In beginning its work, the group agreed to the following ground rules:

- Everyone gets a fair hearing
- Seek first to understand, then be understood
- Share the "air time"
- It's OK to disagree – respectfully
- Speak for yourself, not for others
- One speaker at a time
- Personal stories stay here unless we agree otherwise
- We have a shared responsibility for a productive discussion
- Respect our time commitment

The group offered some general thoughts and posed some questions about proceeding:

- Who is missing from this group?
- What information do we need going forward?
  - Professional planner – should we bring one in to speak to our committee for background information?
- Remember, this is not a land-use process, it's a visioning process
- We should contact and learn lessons from other communities where this visioning process has worked.
  
- We need to obtain the tax rates in other communities. (How does Forsyth compare?) – Sheri will take this assignment
- How are impact fees used elsewhere?
- How are bond revenues used in other places?
  - Bottom line: How do other places pay for growth and quality of life improvements?

- What were other “visioning” communities willing to do to pay for things?
- Fort Collins, Colo., which was named by Money magazine as the best place to live in America, might be a good place to study, particularly since a delegation from the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce visited it last summer.
  - Idea: Bring a Chamber person to make a brief presentation on how Fort Collins resolves its growth/quality of life issues. (Nicole will ask James McCoy and Frank Norton Jr., for information/presentation.)
  - What are the differences between resources available for schools in Fort Collins, and other successful communities and Forsyth County?
  - Nicole will e-mail a report comparing Forsyth County to the rest of Georgia and country.
- In the Money magazine report on the best places to live in America:
  - What were the criteria the magazine used for judging quality of life? (Eric will report on this)
  - Are there other publications that do similar quality-of-life assessments? If so, what criteria do they use? (Sheri will research and report.)
- The group agreed it would be desirable, if possible, to get all members a copy of the recent Norton Report on Forsyth County. (Wayne will check on this.)
- Innovations in transportation:
  - Need to research this topic
  - Although, as John K. said, this may be too specific at this point
- Things to keep in mind going forward:
  - Stay broad in our thinking and work.
  - Remember: We have opportunities, not problems in Forsyth.

Process idea: Send an outline of the next meeting (work ideas, objectives, assignments, etc.) in advance.