

## Meeting Minutes

Comprehensive Plan Community Committee  
September 24, 2020, 3:00 p.m., Zoom Video Conference

**Attendees:** David Cary, Paul Barnes, Andrew Thierolf, Kellee Van Bruggen, Stacey Hageman, Allan Zafft and Teresa McKinstry of the Planning Dept.; Tracy Corr, Deane Finnegan, Tracy Edgerton, Cindy Ryman Yost and Tom Beckius, Planning Commissioners; Bryan Seck, Christina Oldfather, Marilyn McNabb, Stephanie Fisher, DaNay Kalkowski, Grant Daily, and Meghan Sittler.

David Cary thanked everyone for their time and commitment to serving on this committee. There are two presenters today who will give us some good information about the work that is going on in our community. We don't have a lot of information on workforce development in the current plan. Staff feels that this is important information to add to the plan. The Equity Subcommittee has their first meeting tomorrow. He reviewed the topics that this group has talked about to date. The goal during summer and fall of 2020 has been to get information about topics that that this committee can make informed policy recommendations. Winter of 2020/2021 will be detailed discussions about specific goals and policies to be included in the 2050 Comprehensive Plan. By next summer, staff plans to be developing the draft plan. There will be public outreach. Staff will continue to have some more of these meetings. We will discuss placemaking, energy and utilities, and transportation. There will be interactive discussions about specific goals and policies that will begin in December 2020 and continue into January 2021. The LRTP (Long Range Transportation Plan) will have a virtual public event that is available through October 19, 2020. There will be a Comprehensive Plan virtual public event at the end of October. He opened the meeting for comments and questions. There were none. He noted that staff is always available if anything arises. He thanked Bryan Seck and Christina Oldfather for their participation today.

Bryan Seck works with Christina Oldfather at Workforce Development. They try to bring together all the different agencies for people who try to start careers. Pre-Covid is that we are moving people from part time jobs to full time careers. People who are low income do not consider themselves poor. They consider themselves working. Restaurant workers are being sent home early because there are no patrons in the business. His job is to find people jobs where they can thrive and not be subject to income volatility. He used to be the LPS (Lincoln Public Schools) Homeless Outreach Specialist. He showed the budget for a mother of three who makes \$1,600.00 a month. She works but doesn't have the ability to save. With Covid, things went sideways. Every week, about 100 people apply for unemployment. We are still at four times normal, 400 people a week. Most of those are small businesses. With the extra \$600.00 a week, she was doing okay. Since this has ended, her unemployment income doesn't begin to cover her expenses. How can Plan Forward help? We need to place services where the people are. We need to help people get to work and school with public transportation. We collaborate with business development. Remote work will grow. This is the new normal. We want to be creative with new careers when the old career might not be available.

Christina Oldfather is the Director of Entrepreneurship and Innovation for Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development. An entrepreneurial ecosystem has a lot of things that need to be taken into consideration. When you look at the ecosystem as a whole, you need people, you need talent, people with knowledge and resources, and champions and conveners. These people show from an outside perspective that there is opportunity. In addition to people, there are onramps and intersections. You have to get people into the pipeline. The intersections are also known as collisions. There are places to work in the West Haymarket, along with coffee shops and places to shop. Finally, the culture and diversity. Those are important in every aspect of entrepreneurship. This brings people to the table to share ideas and innovation. As an organization, they have worked to do infrastructure creation and support, along with partnering. One of those is Startup LNK. This is a great place to find people, events and spaces. A weekly newsletter is put out to keep people informed. They have a website as well: [www.startuplnk.com](http://www.startuplnk.com), along with social media presence. They have several aspects of community organizing. They are doing 1 Million Cups. This is for the community to listen and find out how to help an entrepreneur. Startup Week is coming up October 5, 2020. This will be virtual this year at <https://lincoln.startupweek.co/>. The other side is direct startup support. What a founder needs the most is usually funding. They have the Founder's Fund which grants up to \$2,000.00 to help a startup move forward. The big program is LaunchLNK. This grants up to \$25,000.00 to early stage startups. There is virtual accelerator and coaching. Free services are available from partners at Cline Williams, HBE, Suiter Swantz, and Eakes. There are connections to corporations and mentors. We can leverage additional capital. There is also NMotion. She is on the board of directors. There is a venture residency program, along with an accelerator studio. The Refinery works out of Turbine Flats and helps immigrant women. There is a new program called The Recipe Box which has a shared kitchen space. It can be expensive to start a kitchen. Places like FUSE Coworking, Turbine Flats and The Foundry create spaces for people to work and gives them access to the community. We want to give people more opportunities.

Tom Beckius questioned if Oldfather has seen anything in terms of placemaking or ideas from other cities that she feels might work in Lincoln. Oldfather thinks one aspect is other communities, you see things they have done and the top of her mind is St. Louis. They provide low cost office space and coworking space for entrepreneurs. The economic development organization purchased a building. They have a lot of service providers in one space and made the space ridiculously cheap. She likes that idea. There are a lot of different models. She is very proud of the Launch LNK program. She would like to continue to be at the forefront of some of this.

Thierolf stated that everyone will break up into discussion groups. The following are the discussion questions and responses from all groups.

**How do we help working people see opportunities to move into stable careers?**

- Many families become homeless while working.
- Most people we consider to be low income are busy.

**How long will Covid-19 impact the work that LPED is doing? When will things get back to normal?**

- We've had 31,000 people make initial unemployment claims.
- There are about 8,000 people remaining.

- We currently have 9,000 open jobs. Why aren't they being filled? We have people in our workforce who may have health concerns. Many parents are now dealing with kids at home doing virtual school. For getting back to normal, what will be important is a vaccine.
- We have seen other industries recruiting people who used to work in the food service industry. Tabitha is an example. The construction industry has also been successful recruiting people.

**What are the long-term, 30-year workforce development strategies and ways to adapt.**

- The growth in short-term certifications for skills. Example of getting a 6-week training certificate from SCC. Adult learners will need to be more nimble as in-demand skills change rapidly.
- We are seeing the automation of jobs that a lot of people depend on. Example of automation in fast food.
- In Lincoln we have a manufacturing class. 2 hours a day for 6 weeks to give people skills in manufacturing. So we have success stories.

**With folks placed in careers, what has the retention rate been?**

- A big part of retention is child care. People will always choose kid over job. How can we place services around people to help support working parents?
- From a planning perspective, a mixed use neighborhood is helpful. Making the short connection between work, childcare, home. It can be a big challenge for people if these things are spread out. Mixed use neighborhoods and good transit.

**How best can we continue to assist low income individuals?**

- From a planning perspective, equity is a huge part of that. Mixed use, affordable neighborhoods.
- People in all neighborhoods having the opportunity to succeed and not have to worry about how to get from place to place.

Homelessness has been reduced in Lincoln by 53 percent. This has been achieved through a coalition of community organizations and affordable housing agencies.

**How are these services funded?**

LaunchLNK, etc. funded through LPED budget/opportunity fund. Can provide relocation or expansion or startup funding. LPED created by partnership b/wn City of Lincoln and Chamber of Commerce.

Spaces for people to convene is very important but challenging. Long-term viability of these spaces is difficult. This is a difficult financial model but essential.

**Does LPED partner with LPS, SCC and others?**

Traditionally this has not been occurring. The young entrepreneurs could be good to engage. SCC is somewhat plugged in. LPED looks at high growth businesses vs. small businesses. There are opportunities to connect more with them. Consider engaging with teachers or youth leadership groups.

**How about outreach to women or minority groups?**

It's challenging to figure out how to do this and what the message is. Have partnered with Accelerator to increase confidence with these groups. Have worked with immigrant groups as well, but could do more of this. For example, Open Coffee is mostly men.

**How do you envision neighborhood services and design addressing the daily needs of the working population?**

Think about benefits of the collisions for entrepreneurs – create more proximity for these opportunities.

Meeting in person at this time is difficult, but we should use technology or social distancing. We should think about this post-pandemic. Zoom is nice, but random in person contact is important.

Meadowlark Coffee Shop – lots of interactions. Reach out to people like Matt Wagner to create collisions. Coffee shops serve as natural gathering places. The Mill in Haymarket for example.

We should consider being 'neighborhood based' with the new plan. Job opportunities can be proximate to our homes, schools, etc. Don't need to drive everywhere.

\* Breakout groups ended

Thierolf stated that this is a piece that there is not much discussion in the Comprehensive Plan today. We want to keep discussing these topics.

Kellee Van Bruggen stated that the Equity Subcommittee starts tomorrow. Numerous organizations have committed representatives to be involved. We have talked about having discussions, focus groups or one on one with those organizations that didn't have the time to commit to this. We will be connecting with them over this fall/winter. The first meeting will be heavily focused on reviewing policies through an equity lens. One of the things we will be working on is defining equity. Sometimes, it seems like a term that no one knows how to pinpoint. We are defining it through our Comprehensive Plan process. We are also looking at hosting facilitated discussions from October through January. Those will be a little more involved. Staff will be going through the existing policies and strategies and putting together some data. We are looking at inviting a facilitator to lead those discussions. All of the policies will be reviewed through an equity lens.

Thierolf noted that the next step is the LRTP Virtual Public Event which is available now at <https://lrtpincolnmpo.com/>. The next committee meeting is October 8 and the topic will be placemaking.

Cary stated that he is very appreciative of everyone giving their time. We will try to mix up the meeting format moving forward. We want to be engaging and get input in an active way.

Tracy Edgerton would like to know more about the Equity Subcommittee. She wanted examples of policies that will be part of that review. Van Bruggen doesn't anticipate the committee reviewing all the strategies. We are talking about reviewing those things that staff has noted that need more discussion. Public health was an example of one that needed to be reviewed to make sure that public health facilities are available for those who are in the core. Paul Barnes added that the equity toolkit should direct staff to those policies that need review. Staff will do a lot of the work behind the scenes. The subcommittee will review those that need further analysis and work.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.