

# **2045 Comprehensive Plan Update Work Session Notes**

February 2, 2023

County Commission Members: Steve Stolipher, President; Clare Ath, Vice President; Tricia Jackson, Jane Tabb, and Jennifer Krouse were present in person.

Planning Commission Members: Mike Shepp, President; Wade Louthan, Secretary; Steve Stolipher, County Commission Liaison; Donnie Fisher, and Jack Hefestay, were present in person.

Staff: Jennifer Brockman, Chief County Planner; Luke Seigfried, County Planner; Cindy Rezmer, Interim County Administrator; and Jessica James, Assistant Deputy County Administrator; were present in person.

## **Executive Summary**

On 2/2/23 the County Commission and Planning Commission held a joint work session to approve the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update Time Frame, reviewed the legal requirements for the update, and performed a SWOT exercise. The SWOT exercise highlighted several key factors specifically; the quality of life, Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) interests, and County infrastructure. The County Commission agreed to the proposed Time Frame and Scope of Work for the 2045 Comprehensive Plan. Both County and Planning Commissioners discussed how to proceed with the Comprehensive Plan and the public participation opportunities.

## **Notes from the County Commission/Planning Commission Work Session on 2/2/2023**

### **Agenda**

1. Introduce the Comprehensive Plan Process and Requirements (WV 8A)
  - a. The Comprehensive Planning Cycle
  - b. Plan Objectives
  - c. Plan Components
  - d. Public Participation
2. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Related Exercise
  - a. Individual Note Taking
  - b. Priority Voting
  - c. Discussion on Top Components
3. Approval of 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update Time Frame and Scope of Work
  - a. Review the Time Frame and Motion
  - b. Discussion of Scope of Work
4. Planning Commission Role and Responsibility Leading the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update

### **Item 1: Introduce the Comprehensive Plan Process and Requirements (WV 8A)**

Staff presented the State Code requirements for a Comprehensive Plan Update including objectives, components, and public participation. Public participation opportunities will include a County Fair booth, two public online surveys, two public hearings, and four public input

meetings. Commissioners and staff discussed how all of these opportunities can be advertised using social media. Planning Commission members also considered ways to develop the comprehensive plan while maintaining County Commission agreement throughout the process.

## **Item 2: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Related Exercise**

The SWOT Exercise had three parts where the both the Planning and County Commissioners made notes on factors that were the County's Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities. These factors were mounted on boards and all of the members then separately voted on the importance of each. After the top factors were isolated the Commissioners discussed these priorities. All of the suggestions loosely fit into five categories, Infrastructure, Regional Connections, Livability, Growth, and Government Policy. A later staff analysis showed that Regional Connections and Growth garnered the most conversation. The three factors with the most votes highlighted the importance of the lifestyle afforded by Jefferson County, the problems caused by NIMBY proponents, and the opportunities in expanding broadband infrastructure.

Discussion points are summarized below based on components of the SWOT exercise. It should be noted that this was a timed exercise meant to focus on a few critical components.

- Strengths
  - The low property tax relative to the region.
  - The lifestyle available in the county for various reasons including the balance of amenities and services, greenspace, hometown feel in spite of the growth, and the land available to live on.
  - Past removal of government regulation.
  - The historic landmarks throughout the county and an active community working to preserve them.
  - Higher population centers in the region allow county residents to enjoy different amenities they would not otherwise have such as shows and recreation while still living in Jefferson County.
- Weaknesses
  - Public schooling which was noted to be related to the large number of homeschooled and private school educations.
  - Road capacity as some areas are still operating with narrow roadways.
  - Commissioners noted the NIMBY movement has a large influence in the county and cited Rockwool as an example.
  - Poor truck access to Rockwool is a significant gap in road connections.
  - Limited or nonexistent access to natural gas prohibits certain businesses from locating in the county, even in areas targeted for such growth.
  - The lack of funding for the MARC train was discussed as a factor that limits certain jobs or workers from living in the county.
- Opportunities
  - The recent County Commission vote to expand broadband as part of the GigReady program. This will help develop more jobs reliant on quality internet connection and households that are underserved.

- The Commissioners discussed the difficulty in attracting chain restaurants who look for certain demographic indicators or looking for entrepreneurs who can flourish in the current county demographics.
- Potential in developing more businesses and activities for families inside the county.
- Several business were highlighted as preferences in future development including a movie theatre, butchering facility, retirement community or mental care facility, private indoor recreation facilities, and office spaces.
- An increase in professional office jobs were mentioned as a preference in growth.
- The Commissioners discussed solar and its current and future place in the county.
- Commissioners Stolipher, Ath, Krouse, and Jackson summarized their ideal goals of the Comprehensive Plan to be job focused, business friendly, with opportunities for home based business incubation. Commissioner Tabb summarized their ideal goals as balanced growth and a focus on quality of life.

### **Item 3: Approval of 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update Time Frame and Scope of Work**

County Commission unanimously approved the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update Time Frame.

### **Item 4: Planning Commission Role and Responsibility Leading the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update**

Staff presented WV State Code 8A-3-3 detailing Planning Commission's responsibility in preparing the Comprehensive Plan Update. The meeting concluded with County Commission agreeing to have the next update at the first meeting of the month in May.

These notes were prepared by Luke Seigfried.