

**City of Union
City Commission Retreat
February 8, 2020**

Mayor Solomon called the meeting to order at 9:05. No pledge of allegiance was held.

Attending

Mayor Larry Solomon, Commissioner Eric Dulaney, Commissioner John Medford, Commissioner Jeremy Ramage, Commissioner Bryan Miller, City Manager David Plummer, City Attorney Greg D. Voss, and Communications and Operations Director Melissa Hinkle. Commissioner Mefford was absent.

The city commission met in a workshop setting with facilitators Tad Long and Bobbie Bryant, Community Development Services (CDS) consultants with the Kentucky League of Cities. Each commissioner had completed a preliminary survey in advance of the meeting to prepare for the retreat.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Solomon, and the facilitators led those attending through a brief exercise of introduction. A handout was provided to each participant providing a synopsis of their responses to the preliminary survey. One of the desired outcomes was the identification of shared values held by the commissioners. Survey responses revealed the following.

Community Values

- Family oriented
- Fiscally responsible
- Managed growth
- Citizen centric

Those attending agreed that these four summed up the values they felt best represented their thoughts. Working collaboratively, the following value statements were developed:

We value a city that is clean and safe, a unique place for **families** to come together and opportunities for all who desire a great quality of life.

We believe in being **fiscally responsible** of tax dollars by allocating our resources efficiently and effectively for the citizens of Union.

We are committed to **managing growth** that balances development and quality of life, making it a desirable place to live, work and raise a family.

We strive to put the interests of our **citizens first**, providing consistent, quality service in a timely and efficient manner.

Values Statement

As elected leaders of the City of Union, we strive to be fiscally responsible as we manage growth of the city. We put the best interest of our citizens first with the aim of providing a unique place to come together and for a great quality of life.

SWOT Analysis

Commissioners then turned their attention to a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis with the following outcomes.

Strengths

Union is unique – not Florence

Blank slate

We are quality of life

Bedroom community

Safe

Schools/education system

Highway

We can write our own story – we've got a blank slate

Not over-taxed

High growth

Per capita income – demographics

Middle ground – not urban, not rural

Sense of "refuge"

City has little debt

Neighborhoods want to be considered Union or identified as part of Union (but not be annexed)

There is land adjacent to the city for growth

Weaknesses

Marketing internal and external

Wayfinding signs/what is our image

Neighborhoods within the city

No landmarks
Growth is predictable
Under zoning regulations that are 20 years old
Representation on planning and zoning is by population which is now outdated
Have no history with incentives or financial tools such as TIF or IRBs
What is next in terms of service – nothing in place
We do not have next steps
Services – what we offer may not be attractive for annexation

Opportunities

Clean slate for image/identity
No constraints
No history to work from
To work with planning commission to update the plan
Representation on planning and zoning to be increased
Recraft our message about the Town Plan
Little debt – funds available for future
Potential investment/debt need a projected investment plan
Amazon – small office space could be developed
Mixed use density
Annexation – need to grow city with borders that make geographic sense
The need for restaurants and other amenities sought by residents

Threats

Only one chance to get it right
Do nothing
Amazon- trucks/traffic/talent/employment drain
Unincorporated county and neighboring cities

Goals

Based upon this input, the following goals were identified.

- City Commission to prepare for a conversation with the Boone County Planning and Zoning Commission.
- City Commission to articulate ideas that can be changed by the city and what is within the purview of the planning commission.
- KLC to act as a third party for mediation of the conversation between the city and the planning commission.
- Establish procedure for engaging the public and determine how much to engage them for future direction.

- Evaluate needs for future city services.
- Investigate potential incentives for the city to consider offering.
- Need to work towards image/identity – marketing plan.
- Specify what we want to accomplish. What are the little things that can be done now?
- Identify what city government assets we want – value function over appearance related to building/new construction.
- Where is the Town Center going to be located?

Potential Partners

- GSP - Outside Consultant Land Use
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- KLC – Strategy/Grants/Funding
- TRI-ED
- NKY Chamber of Commerce
- School District
- Home Builders/Developers
- Boone County Business Association
- UK Extension Office
- Legislators
- Boone County Parks
- EDC Incentives/Case Studies/Practical Applications

Next Steps

City commissioners will read the 2000 Union Town Plan and provide their list of ideas, concerns and changes to the city attorney and KLC. KLC CDS and KLC Legal Team will work with the city attorney in reviewing the plan to determine how to update/modify it as well as to sort out what modifications the city has the authority to make and what powers fall to the planning commission legally.

The City of Union and KLC will work together to develop an action plan to update the Town Plan with the Boone County Planning Commission. KLC CDS will facilitate a meeting between the city and the planning commission. KLC CDS will prepare a scope of work for accomplishing this work to the city commission.

KLC CDS will work with the city administrator to develop a proposal for public engagement information sessions to be submitted to the city for consideration. The purpose of these information sessions is to gather input on community values which will be used to create strategies for implementing an updated Town Plan.

Commissioner Ramage made motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Miller seconded.
Motion approved, 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 1:09 p.m.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Larry Solomon, Mayor

Christy Everman, City Clerk