

On the Table 2017

Breakfast on Tuesday, May 16, 2017

Two years ago the library held our first On the Table event. Then we did an extensive interior re-model of our building. And of course it took longer than we had hoped but now it is done and the library looks beautiful so we are ready to tackle some new projects sparked from our last meeting. The focus of our first meeting was highlighting all the positive things happening in our Village. We also came up with some new ideas and suggestions on some old favorites we would like to return.

The following things have come to fruition since we met two years ago; expanded use of the Ford Hangar (Fetching Market), Development of Fox Pointe (that is happening) too. We stated we would like to see the Economic Development Committee return (our new Mayor Patty Eidam says it will very shortly) and the Back to School Bash was resurrected last year by the Police Department with assists from many other groups.

The purpose of this year's event was to gather together a broad range of people who live and or work in Lansing. We had elected officials from the Village and the library, folks who volunteer for non-profits, those who work in town, local business owners, the Fire Department, the Chamber, school officials, a church representative, library staff and citizens to share their vision of What's Next for Lansing. We collected positive observations, ideas for new projects and requests for assistance.

The following is the list of positive things and ideas generated at the breakfast. Our hope is that this list will inspire people to get involved and help make Lansing the best it can be and possibly generate some new events as well.

Big ?, How do we reach those folks we know we are not reaching through the usual channels?

We all need to talk to our neighbors, celebrate our difference and embrace common ground!

It was noted by many that there are many Social Media sites about Lansing but perhaps a new one needs to be created that focuses on positive ideas and criticism concerning the future of Lansing. It would have to be curated and monitored by more than one person to make sure it stayed true to its purpose. We need to do better with Social Media presence.

Nextdoor.com might be something to investigate they did a mass mailing a few weeks ago inviting people in town to join. I just signed up because I figured that was the best way to see how it works.

Diversity Dinners (meals of any type) at various locations around town to enable community conversation. On a wide range of topics, include all ages, target certain groups or just invite everyone to discuss community concerns.

Perhaps have a Community Wide Block Party Day where parties are going on the same day in many neighborhoods. This actually might be a police nightmare might want to do Parties in the Parks! We cannot close every street. Event to explain How to Have a Block Party.

Create a Human Relations Commission. Can always reach out to others through the children.

Possibly expand the Intergovernmental group that meets quarterly to share information currently the Village, Park District, Public Schools, Chamber, Pastors Group and Library.

Just an FYI the Volunteer Recognition Dinner will be back in 2018. As will Lansing Autumn Fest canceled because of construction at Fox Pointe this year.

Is it possible to expand the Ministerial Association Group to include other denominations? Please note certain denominations self-exclude themselves.

Our schools are in excellent shape. We were zeroed in on TF South because they seem to catch a lot of negativity. It is an excellent school with 98% attendance every day. They have state of the art amenities and equipment and technology for all students to use. How do we get the word out to the community? Perhaps have Community Open House, might be in conjunction with one of the many Pancake Breakfasts that are held at the high school. That draws many folks from the community to the building and they could be offered a tour after breakfast.

We need more minorities and young people in leadership roles.

Folks respond to a personal invitation. Old fashioned written ones or make a personal call invitation instead of a flyer or social media blurb to ask people to events. Perhaps some events could be done by personal invitation and then ask that person to bring someone. Might be good idea to do both types of invites as different generations prefer different things.

All agreed we need to do more than one day Clean Up Lansing Day. It should be all year long. Perhaps can be tied into those groups or individuals who need to do volunteer hours for school graduation etc. Apparently, Munster has some kind of organization that is a clearinghouse for volunteers. We might want to investigate and follow that example not just for cleaning up the town but other things too. Just putting more garbage cans around town would help. Do we need an ordinance requiring businesses to have an outdoor garbage can? Is it possible to get organizations or individuals to sponsor an area to keep it clean, like the clean highway projects? Can we have Green Saturdays once a month where folks clean up designated areas of town?

Perhaps LNN could do a PSA announcement reminding people to clean up around them. A few more ideas for LNN; little short spots honoring folks who do something special for the Village. Might be nice for LNN to do short 30 second 'commercials' to highlight local businesses.

It was noted we often do not know what the Townships, County and the Village does or has available as a resource. A central place for all volunteer groups, what they do and who the contact person is would be great. Those folks would need to be vetted.

It was suggested that the Village might want to designate someone as a Senior Citizen Ambassador. Someone they could call to get answers to their questions and needs.

Many echoed the need for a strong, aggressive Economic Development person to replace Travis Bandstra. Update the Comprehensive Plan for business development.

Can we please get a brewery in the old DeYoung building. It is the perfect location and with so many micro-breweries in the area a good fit. You could stop after leaving One Trick Pony on your way to Three Floyd's in Munster or the three micro brews in Griffith IN. Share the wealth.

Perhaps we could get a developer interested in building an Outlet Mall in the Landings. There is one in Michigan City IN and then the rest are on the north side. Great location right off I-80 easy on and off. Would drive more business our way.

If an Outlet Mall will not work perhaps something else can come into the Landings area. Also have the land on the west side of the street that could use new tenants or development. Maybe consider the East River Oaks area as well and working with Calumet City.

We need to spruce up Torrence Avenue it is the gateway to our town.

Get the Santa House up and running this year. Ice Hockey Rink.

Suggested perhaps Ford would like to join the many car dealers we have on Torrence Avenue. They bring in a lot of tax dollars and again great proximity to I-80 and other dealers. Pioneer Motel land is prime real estate for development. Doing something at I-80 interchange to welcome/draw people to Lansing.

We kept coming back to inclusion, how do we include the many diverse groups in our Village.

Do something with Entrepreneurs in town. Start a group, have a place where they can have office space available, computers and equipment for them to work on develop their ideas. An incubator space. Possible classes available for them. Could they use some empty store fronts or other Village owned property? Could there be a collaboration with the library, Chamber and or other groups to realize some of these big ideas? Have an Entrepreneur Showcase Day.

Possibility of Pop-Up shops in empty storefronts.

Do we still maintain a list of Vacant Homes in town? What is done with that information?

Everyone said we need to have more Community Events large and small.

One group promoted the idea of Social Saturdays in town with all kinds of events.

Interesting idea for a park in town--- "Harmony in the Park" check out www.freenotesharmoniypark.com a park in Durango CO awesome! Lots of pictures, where to purchase equipment made in the USA and a Ted talk and a whole lot more information. I will share this with the Park District.

Job Board for Youth- how to write a resume, how to fill out an application, interview, etc – would need an administrator. Would probably be helpful for adults too.

Revive the Welcome Wagon, bring the nice bag of information back and expand to a group of folks who would visit new residents.

Maybe expand neighborhood watch to have a Block Captain for every street in the Village.

Would be great if we could figure out how to have ESL classes in our Village.

We need the building department to be strong in enforcing our ordinances that help keep Lansing looking nice. Home owners and renters need to take care of their properties.

Crime Free Housing or Rental Housing we need a name that states what it means and a clear message to owners that they need to take care of properties.

Folks rethinking uses for old buildings in town. Idea for the old Village Hall/ old library wouldn't it make an awesome Art Gallery?

Outreach to adults and couples – social events at various venues in town.

Example was given of a Ford dealer that donated \$20 to local schools for each person in town who took a test drive in a car.

Could we afford a van to transport kids to the Youth Center and the Seniors to various place?

Might the downtown development in Homewood be a model for us to look at?

Good Neighbor Day Roots Barb Dust told us back in 1954 Lansing's Centennial Year every Wednesday neighbors would ask each other to go to lunch, whether at their homes or in the park. The businesses actual closed from 12-1pm every Wednesday! Wow, the good old days! But we can make the future even better!

From our discussion at the last On the Table event in 2015 the library is going to host a How to Festival on Saturday, August 19th from 10am to 3pm. Next April we will also host a Volunteer Opportunity Day highlighting various groups in town who are looking for more members and various volunteer possibilities. Details to follow.

LANSING - BE LOUD, POSITIVE AND PROUD! BE LOUDER THAN THE NEGATIVITY!

I hope I did not miss anything, apologies if I did, but this is a wonderful list of ideas. Now we need to build on what is already happening. When we look back a year from now I hope some of the new ideas have been brought to fruition. I hope that some of the ideas and thoughts spark some new projects. Please share this experience with other folks in town you never know where the next great idea will come from. Let me know if you start something new or form a new partnership because of our discussion. I am excited for Lansing's future with so many dedicated people (regardless of your role) out there doing their best to make Lansing the best it can be!

"Coming together is a beginning: keeping together is progress: working together is success."

Henry Ford

Please feel free to share this information with anyone you think may be interested. Let's work together during the following year to make our community the very best it can be! Join us at our Annual Block Party Friday, June 2nd from 6-8:30pm music, games, and activities for all!

Debbie Albrecht Director, the Library Board and Staff at your Library!