

Dennis Murray **called the meeting to order** at 5 p.m., held at the Central Fire Station, 600 West Market Street, Sandusky.

The following Commissioners were in attendance: Julie Farrar, Dick Brady, Wesley Poole, Dennis Murray, Scott Schell and Naomi Twine.

**City staff present:** Dave Degnan – Fire Chief, John Orzech – Police Chief, Aaron Klein – Public Works Director, Angela Byington – Director of Neighborhood Development & Planning, Casey Sparks – Assistant Planner, Brad Link – Public Services Director, Trevor Hayberger – Assistant Law Director, Hank Solowiej – Finance Director, Eric Wobser – City Manager, McKenzie Spriggs – Administrative Assistant and Kelly Kresser – Commission Clerk.

Dennis Murray welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided a **brief introduction of the Strategic Planning process** and what has occurred to date. Dennis Murray then turned the meeting over to Mike Graham of Strategy Design Partners.

**Mike Graham, Strategy Design Partners**, said throughout the Strategic Planning process, he and the consultants have heard from members of the public as well as from the City Commissioners individually, and tonight is an opportunity for the Commissioners to act as a group to determine a future vision for the City of Sandusky. As a starting point, Mike asked each of the commissioners to think about the year 2020 and share what headlines they would envision in the local newspaper:

- D. Murray: “Younger People Flock Back to Sandusky”
- J. Farrar: “Sandusky’s Population Exceeds 30,000”
- W. Poole: “Sandusky’s Population Exceeds 28,000”
- S. Schell: “Sandusky Rated Top Five in the State for New Business Development”
- N. Twine: “Sandusky Thrives/Population Increasing/Young Persons Returning to Area/Economic Growth is on the Rise” for an all-encompassing article
- D. Brady: “Market Rate Jobs Plentiful in Sandusky”

Mike Graham said the city hosted several opportunities for public engagement and outreach including meetings of the Executive Committee, Steering Committee, a boat tour on Lake Erie, several neighborhood tours, a meeting with various downtown stakeholders, one-on-one interviews and focus groups, and a public address given by the Sandusky City Manager at a meeting of the Sandusky Rotary Club. A community survey was also made available either written or via the Internet. Through these meetings, 2,010 persons were engaged face-to-face, while 4,658 were reached through the video or internet for a total of 6,668 opportunities to reach citizens about this process.

Mike Graham asked the commissioners to focus on the **strategic areas** identified, and then state their overall ideas for them to be successful.

#### **Quality of Life**

D. Murray: Increased Code Enforcement – tripling citations; less EMS and Police calls; the city’s density is important to our value and what we have; sports facilities being made accessible to the public after hours; we have under-used greenspace and need to make investments in them; there is an old rail bed which can be connected with the waterfront

S. Schell: Safety – making residents feel they live in a safe community; prioritize each zone to identify needs; recognize a strong school system equals a strong city

W. Poole: Safety is tied to the services we provide; increase and better our recreation programs; experience represents perceptions and ask what we can do differently to change these experiences (i.e. shootings); increase crime prevention programs; recognize there are numerous established neighborhoods; post crime activity on the website

N. Twine: Safety should be high on the list as people want to live where they feel safe; better training to be able to communicate with citizens; there is a perception Sandusky is not a safe place, but there are only pockets or small areas which are unsafe; understanding numbers and data as they relate to crime and safety

J. Farrar: Create targeted zones for rehabilitation and continue to tear down homes and businesses identified through the Land Bank program; continue with Mow-To-Own

D. Brady: addition of another Community Impact Officer

### **Economic Development**

- Having a stable, open government and participating with the local schools to provide relevant training and opportunities for higher education
- A supportive business environment should be created to build trust and use more of a “team” approach
- The Erie County Economic Development Corporation should be used to help the city produce wins
- Need to have discussion about a ferry service and/or bike path linking the downtown area to Cedar Point – visitors need to be diverted to what is in our downtown and along the Rt. 6 corridor
- The city needs to better market itself and its assets
- The East end should be connected for tourists including the extension of the bike path to Erie MetroParks bike path
- Need to continue improving our infrastructure and public transportation so ridership can be increased and routes expanded; additional funding is also needed for the Sandusky Transit System through state and federal outlets as well as neighboring townships, cities and private entities
- Walkability needs to be improved for our beautiful neighborhoods and to show off our Sandusky Bay Pathway and beautiful trees (we have much more than simply concrete)
- Need to continue the wayfinding signage project and increase pedestrian connectivity on the West side of town
- City needs to address alleys and how they impact the quality of life and our neighborhoods

### **Positioning Sandusky for the Future**

- Create a small town, fun and friendly atmosphere for the millions of visitors placed at our doorstep each year
- Embrace tourism and its related activities
- Better the appearance of our housing stock, especially properties which are historic
- Potentially look at offering tax abatements for residential purposes so residents are enticed to make improvements to their properties
- Connect the entire Bayfront Corridor from Battery Park Marina to the very West end of the city limits
- Recognize the city has more public ownership of its waterfront and thus the ability to do things to improve it

### **Delivering Quality Municipal Services**

- We currently have, and are spending, monies available to improve our infrastructure
- Need to support our Fire Department and Police Department and recognize all of the positives they create for the city
- Consider how what we are doing impacts our goals and what we are trying to change

**Open Discussion**

Mark Norman, 1016 Third Street, said it is good to see the direction the city is taking.

Lance Warner, 1421 Columbus Avenue, said as the city assumes properties through its Land Bank program, there is a hidden cost for their maintenance. The city has set the stage for development with proper zoning and infrastructure legislation. We should consider good lighting connecting all areas of the city to help with the perception of Sandusky being a safe place.

Sharon Johnson, 1139 Fifth Street, said she is glad to hear discussion about the city questioning its relationship with the Erie County Economic Development Corporation as we have already lost too many jobs. Sharon Johnson said she is disappointed to hear, again, the idea of moving the police station or City Hall and Dennis Murray said he has never wavered in his opinion about this.

At 7:04 p.m., the President announced adjournment of the Special Session.

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Kelly L. Kresser, CMC  
Clerk of the City Commission

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Dennis E. Murray, Jr.  
President of the City Commission