

DeFuniak Springs City Council

Workshop

October 6, 2009

The DeFuniak Springs City Council met in Workshop Session at 5:30 PM with the following members present: Mayor C. Harold Carpenter; Mayor Pro-Tem James Huffman; City Council Members: James Coffield, Henry Ennis, Wayne Graham; City Manager Kim Kirby, and Deputy Clerk Vanessa Mitchell. City Council Member Don Harrison, City Attorney Clayton Adkinson, Finance Director Sara Bowers, and City Clerk Susie Campbell-Work were absent.

Mayor Carpenter called the meeting to order and announced the topic of discussion would be the SMART Growth grant.

Mr. Cliff Long, Emerald Coast Association of Realtors, made a presentation on smart, managed growth. Mr. Long said that DeFuniak is on the cusp of growth and the time was now to plan, what they needed was managed growth. He said he will create a working model that people like the planning department and City Manager can use for direction and growth of DeFuniak Springs. His slide show presented pictures of 'Any Street' in 'Any Town'. His message was that we didn't need to build a new DeFuniak Springs; we needed to manage what we have. He then discussed changes to the Community, updating his slideshow downtown with small gradual changes. As they went through the presentation, audience members participated in discovering what those changes were and then Mr. Long would discuss in more detail.

Mr. Long continued with his slide show presentation discussing the different pictorial changes. Mr. Long said, in discussing the downtown area, they have an opportunity to not only shape it, but the way people see it. Greg Scoville pointed out that the slide show changes depicted were more pedestrian geared and not for road traffic. Mr. Huffman also commented that the changes Mr. Long presented increased foot traffic. Mr. Long continued discussing the presentation.

Mr. Scoville commented on wheelchair accessibility on street corners. Mr. Huffman said that would be conducive to our Communities for a Lifetime effort. The presentation continued.

Mr. Huffman commented that we are the County Seat and we need to remember and accentuate that, sometimes we allow other portions of the County to take the meat from us and we got to get back out front. Mr. Kevin Chilcutt gave comments and suggestions on different businesses and building up different areas of the City. He then commented on the downtown businesses hours of operation.

Mr. Scoville suggested during this planning process, when they look at infrastructure that would be the time to look at fiber optics and offering WiFi capabilities to the downtown area. He said he had heard of a lot of cities making that investment in their downtown. Mr. Long asked Mr. Bill Arnett, when creating a community ready to do business, are those things Mr. Scoville discussed, attractive to companies, having the infrastructure in place. Mr. Arnett, Walton County Economic Development Alliance, said it's not only attractive; it's a necessity because almost every kind of business is going to want to have access to high speed connectivity. Mr. Huffman said there are a lot of areas in the County that kids don't have access to the internet. Discussion continued. Mr. Huffman commented that it was important to stick to a plan because as most of our kids leave here to find work what he would want is for when they come home to retire, that there is some semblance of their childhood. Mr. Arnett made comments about having that plan in place when businesses come and having your community be a place that businesses want to go.

Mr. Long asked for the audience to think about Generation Y, who will work from home, and plan for that. Ms. Barbara Chillcutt made comments about what she saw to create a calm and relaxing atmosphere.

Mr. Long discussed changing the tone of the road and stopping and slowing traffic. Mr. Chilcutt asked about how to get traffic off of Hwy 331 and to downtown. Mr. Long suggested Sign Ordinances, sidewalks, and marketing. Mr. Huffman discussed trees and

then discussed marketing. There were several comments about how to get people to the meetings and get their input into the planning. Mr. Huffman suggested taking the workshop to them. Discussion followed. Mr. Long said he does have a small fund for something like punch and cookies for the meeting.

Mr. Huffman asked what the next steps were in the process. Mr. Long said he would make a working model to be used as a marketing tool by the City so people can see what is going to happen.

Mr. Huffman asked about CRA (Community Redevelopment Agency) cities and did he know what the process was for setting one up. Mr. Long said he would be available to help with that. Ms. Kirby discussed how poised we are for this plan. Mr. Long said some questions for them in developing this plan would be what is the City's niche in Walton County, what differentiates and separates them.

Discussion followed on how to advertise for the next meeting to get more involvement. Ms. Kirby said she would check the availability of the Chautauqua Building, possibly the Chautauqua Theater.

There being no further business, Mayor C. Harold Carpenter adjourned the meeting.

ADOPTED this 12th day of October, 2009

C. Harold Carpenter

C. Harold Carpenter, Mayor

ATTEST:
Vanessa Mitchell

Vanessa Mitchell, Deputy Clerk