



City of Northfield

City Hall
801 Washington Street
Northfield, MN 55057
ci.northfield.mn.us

Meeting Minutes - Final City Council

Tuesday, April 11, 2017

6:00 PM

Northfield Police Department - Training Room

Joint Work Session with EDA and Planning Commission

6:00 PM - REGULAR AGENDA CALL TO ORDER

1. [17-756](#) Strategic Planning Session - City Council, Planning Commission, EDA

City Council Members present: Mayor Rhonda Pownell, Greg Colby, David DeLong, Brad Ness, Suzie Nakasian, Jessica Peterson White, Erica Zweifel

Planning Commission Members present: Joe Gasior, Russ Halvorson, Jay Jasnoch, Richard Schulte, Will Schroeer, Kate Stuart, Youth Representative Paul Wehling

Economic Development Authority Members present: Brit Ackerman, Todd Bornhauser, Andrew Ehrman, Fred Rogers, Mike Strobel

Mayor Pownell called the meeting to order at 6:16 PM

Strategic Planning Consultant Craig Rapp conducted a joint session with the City Council, Economic Development Authority, and Planning Commission as part of the City's Strategic Planning process. The session was on growth and development. Participants responded to the following questions:

What one word comes to mind when you think of Northfield?

- Home
- Quaint
- Special
- Creative
- Unique
- Healthy
- Because
- Colleges
- Considered
- Engaged
- Inclusive
- Amazing
- Community
- Works
- Fresh
- Friendly
- Difficult
- Alive

How would you describe Northfield to a stranger or someone who doesn't live or work here?

- *Quintessential Midwestern college town with agriculture, broad economic base, great downtown*
- *Quality of life, can have free-range kids, safe*
- *Parks, recreation, wild places*
- *Know neighbors*
- *Good education*
- *River, mill history, natural areas*
- *Small town with a big town feel*
- *Close to large metro without being a suburb*
- *Large percent of professionals*
- *Healthy land/farmland*
- *Engaged citizens in 2 camps, with 3rd camp of “happily unengaged”*
- *Can be all things to all people*
- *Well-storied history*
- *CSA’s –business model*

If you left Northfield and did not see or encounter anyone from the City for 20 years, what do you think you’ll see?

- *Substantial population and business growth*
- *Slow population and business growth*
- *Tightly developed riverfront*
- *Commercial district*
- *Biomedical*
- *Same/similar downtown look*
- *Both colleges still in existence, but possibly larger, park still in downtown*
- *New businesses that employ grads and keep them here*
- *More creative class folks*
- *More diverse population*
- *Still a good family place*
- *More renewable energy*
- *Completed mill towns trail*
- *Bus and high speed rail transit to metro*
- *Much of the same*
- *Older population*
- *Warmer weather*
- *Possible vulnerability unchanged, guarded against*
- *Edge/car-oriented residential development*
- *Change in agriculture’s role*
- *Closer farm to eaters relationship with more jobs*
- *Sustained commitment to agriculture in surrounding townships*
- *Creative solutions to growth (not old annexation model)*
- *Residential and commercial development will be a result of larger entities – change type of growth*
- *Water runoff and access will be big issues*

And what do you hope you’ll see when you return?

- *Community College next to High School*
- *Successfully transitioned to 100% carbon free economy*
- *Integrated community*
- *Genuine 8/80 community*
- *Infrastructure that will support ease of movement without cars*
- *Thriving downtown*
- *Take care of river*

- *Growth in C/I tax base*
- *Development of Highway 19 corridor- expanded to 4 lanes to I35*
- *More people pf color*
- *Wealth and power equally distributed*
- *Next incubated business that grows big*
- *Strong, sustained business growth downtown and near hospital*
- *Good interconnection*
- *Resilient*
- *Land access if you want to farm- supporting food infrastructure*
- *Strong support of business growth, make it easier*
- *See 5,000 students*
- *Strong regional planning*
- *Connection – link – Rochester*
- *Ancillary markets*

What are the strengths/greatest assets of Northfield?

- *Colleges*
- *Opportunities*
- *Educated workforce*
- *Story/history*
- *Ability to do/try anything*
- *Farmland*
- *Movie set downtown*
- *Schools*
- *Charming neighborhoods*
- *Family atmosphere*
- *Socio-economic makeup*
- *Involved parents*
- *Metro priority*
- *Hospitals/clinics*
- *Safe*
- *Green space – close to nature*
- *Arts*
- *River*
- *Drinkable aquifer*
- *Organized to care for disadvantaged*
- *Volunteerism*
- *Good place for 8/80*
- *Good place for business*
- *Good regional location*
- *Cool factor*
- *Stable economic climate*
- *Engaged*
- *Civic organizations*
- *Public works*
- *Fire, police*
- *History reinvestment*

*What areas or (non-growth/development) issues need attention or improvement?
Related to that, what are the weaknesses/greatest needs in Northfield? Challenges?*

- *Meaningful inclusion*
- *Lack of diversity*
- *Not enough jobs*
- *Mass transit*

- *Non-motorized transportation infrastructure*
- *Property tax revenue*
- *Complacency*
- *Lack of affordable housing*
- *Wastewater treatment plant capacity*
- *Can't swim in cannon river*
- *Lack of communication between advisory boards*
- *Land for development*
- *Workforce for existing businesses*
- *Retain youth*
- *Absence of neighborhood feeling in some areas*
- *Resources that support families*
- *Off-putting sense of superiority*
- *People living in poverty*

With respect to growth and development, what are the City's greatest assets?

- *People want to be here – they care*
- *Build on existing business – help thrive*
- *Great rail spur/system/connection*
- *Educated workforce*
- *Amenities*
- *Location*
- *Colleges*
- *Healthcare*
- *Farmland/ag*
- *Good services*
- *Service clubs*
- *Great plans/guides*

What are its greatest challenges?

- *Skilled trade workforce*
- *Affordable housing*
- *Affordable childcare*
- *Reputation*
- *High real estate taxes – not equitable distribution*
- *Allow others to tell our story*
- *Don't celebrate success*
- *Culture of critique*
- *2 business communities: downtown – supported, west – not well supported*
- *Retaining staff long term*

Do the City Council, EDA and Planning Commission have a common vision for growth and development? If yes, what is it? If no, why not?

- *Good plans – maybe no agreement*
- *Been a while since economic development community discussion*
- *"Culture of critique" – inhibits, limits*
- *Vision/Plan/Principals*

Do you see any changes or shifts in the local, regional or national environment in the next 5-7 years that the City should plan for? (e.g., economy, technology or demographics?) If yes, what should the City do?

- *Increased diverse demographic – how do we welcome/embrace?*

- *Aging workforce, population – skills shifts*
- *Increase interest rates – community investment*
- *Economic downtown*
- *Unstable national systems*
- *Change how kids are educated beyond high school*
- *Retiree impact*
- *Income inequality*
- *Reduction in outside funding*
- *Clash between needs and wants – what can we afford?*
- *Conglomerates impact*
- *Quality preservation – draw/keep business*
- *Increase of destabilization of immigrant communities*

What are/should be the top priorities for the City over the next 3-5 years?

- *P.R. –Communication/tell story*
- *Housing*
- *Transportation – multi-model*
- *Build for next generation*
- *Prioritize needs and wants*
- *Support minority-owned start-ups*
- *Support diversified workforce*
- *Adjust to new reality of climate change impacts*
- *Protect Northfield's "soul"/brand – sense of peace*
- *Affordable housing*
- *Controlling taxes*
- *Data-backed decisions*
- *Keep things compact*
- *Determine focus for economic development money*
- *Get land into developers hands*
- *Regional planning for sustainable expansion boundary*
- *Determine rationale for level of taxation*
- *College growth/boundary decisions*
- *Community engagement*

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM

ADJOURN