

Eastridge Neighborhood Plan Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday, April 27th, 2021
Time: 5:30 – 6:45 P.M.
Location: Via Zoom

Committee	Timothy Ballejo	City of Amarillo:	Emily Koller
Attendees:	Tommie T Knox Jr		Annemarie Rossato
	Russell Pennington		
	Ryan Pennington	Potter County:	Commissioner Mercy Murguia
	Tyler Trinh		
	Emma Rohrs		

Agenda Items

- I. Welcome, Call to Order and Introductions.** Emily Koller, Economic Development and Neighborhood Revitalization Manager, City of Amarillo, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Emily then went over the main objectives for the evening which included: 1) small business and economic development outreach update, 2) focus areas activity, and 3) vision statement review. Emily also provided an update on the neighborhood surveys and how they are all completed, translated and analyzed.
- II. Small Business and Economic Development Outreach Update.** Neighborhood Planner Annemarie Rossato proceeded to give an update on the small business survey that was conducted within the Neighborhood boundary. Committee member Timothy Ballejo also shared his experience in sitting down and communicating with the business owners in the area. While only a few surveys were returned, several of them held information that will help future business owners when they want to start their own process. A suggestion made as result of the surveys included business workshops in different languages as well as different financial resources in their preferred language. Amarillo College, Squaremile, and Communities Unlimited are a few organizations that are highly interested in being a part of a business education programs to help Eastridge expand their economy. Emily asked the committee members thoughts on a mailing option catered to property owners who own several pieces of land to come together to solve housing conditions in the neighborhood. The committee liked the idea – Ryan Pennington mentioned that the mailing option will attract the right people who will want to come forward and help be a part of the change that will be happening in the neighborhood.
- III. Focus Areas Activity.** After Emily summarized the Focus Areas, she gave committee members a moment to approve it as the initial draft. Since it is an initial draft and some of the committee members were absent, Emily will hold off on final approval until all committee members had given their feedback. All present committee members approved the initial draft. After approval, Emily gave the committee an opportunity to share ideas, solutions, or projects for the focus areas. Russ Pennington mentioned that the heart of Eastridge is the park and the elementary school. However, the townhomes across the street are very rundown and need to be fixed. He suggested reaching

out to the property owners on tenants to work on a general clean up of that area in order to help build pride in the neighborhood. All committee members agreed that would be a great idea to help build a positive attitude toward change as well as reduce crime. Emily did mention that the Public Works department is working on reducing the amount of illegal dumping by asking residents to report it and the city will then do their part to remove the garbage. There will be further research over city internal tools that will help the beautification process. Tommie Knox mentioned the inevitable changes coming with the Amazon warehouse being built close to Eastridge and suggested preparing the neighborhood for the future developments that are coming. Dr. Ryan mentioned the importance of attracting more people to the restaurants and small businesses with marketing practices. He also suggested finding ways to help the neighborhood when inclement weather happens and making sure they receive proper road treatment. Emma Rohrs mentioned the importance of transportation for people to jobs and any workshops or events that may be taking place. Emily did remind them that since this is a brainstorm activity, it can be continued for next meeting so that they have more time to think of any other ideas or solutions for the plan.

- IV. Vision Statement Review.** The committee proceeded to review the first draft of the vision statement for the neighborhood. The committee liked the statement and only minor things will be changed for the next meeting to have the committee's final approval. The changes proposed included changing the word 'religiously' to 'spiritually', as suggested by Russ Pennington. Another proposed change would be to add a phrase along the lines of the celebration of the multiple cultures in the neighborhood; this was suggested by Ryan Pennington, Emma Rohrs and Tyler Trinh.
- V. Future Meeting Date and Other Announcements.** Emily asked the committee on their thoughts on future meeting dates and if they wanted to meet in person rather than Zoom. Majority of the committee present preferred to meet in person and decided on June 1st being the next meeting date. The meeting will be held at Simms Municipal Building. Emily then proceeded to go over the agenda for the next meeting which include community engagement brainstorming, looking over the demographics and discussing a panel of city departments to come to meetings to answer any questions the committee might be interested about. A couple questions that the committee was left to think over included how to get information back into the neighborhoods in order to prioritize projects. Would it include small group meetings or mailing out information? The next steps in forming the plan include one more committee meeting, community outreach, and then assembling the plan.
- VI. Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm.