

Coffee County Strategic Planning Committee

May 25th, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Claude Morse, Lynn Sebourn, Jimmy Hollandsworth, Ron Fuller, Robert Norfleet, Rick Soucy, Dennis Hunt

Members Absent: Brent Willis, David Young, Casey Rhoton

Chairman Sebourn called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

The agenda for this meeting was to start working on the Strategic Plan by conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis of the county.

Robert Norfleet proposed a litmus test for prioritizing items to be included in the strategic plan goals. There was agreement among the committee members that these questions would be a useful tool for preparing the strategic plan.

1. Is it meaningful?
2. Is it measurable?
3. Is it a reasonable measure of effort?
4. Is it within the control of the county government?

To facilitate the SWOT discussion, Committee member Ron Fuller prepared a draft SWOT analysis. The committee went through the draft analysis and added additional items and comments. A summary of the SWOT analysis is provided:

STRENGTHS :

- We are recognizing and addressing the challenges and opportunities
- Certain areas of the county have a sense of community
- A foundation of “salt of the earth” people.
- A good base of locally owned farms
- A good base of locally owned businesses and industries
- Arnold Engineering Development Center
- Coffee County is centrally located between Nashville, Huntsville, and Chattanooga
- Interstate access to the county through I-24.

WEAKNESSES:

- Retention of family farms and agriculture.
- Infrastructure to handle increased population
- Expansion of sewage treatment and solid waste disposal
- Positive communication between governments within the county.
- Lack of coordinated effort between cities and county.

- Need for increased human resource capabilities in county government
- Lack of defined pay scale system for county employees including method of linking pay to performance
- Need for expansion of school systems
- Need for a ready and willing workforce
- Lack of daycare centers for children
- Need for growth in medical centers
- Competitive pay and training for all First Responders
- Need for affordable housing
- Review of building codes to include newer building materials and methods
- Need a Land Use Plan
- High level of expense for county justice system.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- To meter growth while not hindering expansion and not stifling growth
- To broaden education for buildings and industrial trades
- To broaden education for the sciences
- Focus on language and reading skills
- Have schools teach practical understanding of economics (beyond family budgeting) and how it affects the students in life.
- Development of retail and entertainment venues.
- Industrial development with investment from existing local developers.
- Tourism
- A community service council (501(c) 3) involving all local non-profits and faith-based institutions to address the quality of life of citizens. The goal would be to facilitate communications between various agencies, not control them.
- Significant job growth is expected at AEDC over the next several years.

THREATS:

- Unmetered and unplanned growth
- Unreviewed or out-of-date zoning regulations
- Social instability which translates into additional financial responsibilities to public entities (law enforcement, education, recreation, healthcare, animal control, workforce, etc.)
- Increase in homelessness
- Growth for growth's sake
- Loss of Coffee County's personality and culture
- Not allowing growth
- Loss of agricultural land
- Lack of public availability of planning maps and data

After the completion of the SWOT exercise, the committee concluded that the next step is to identify specific goals and recommendations for the strategic plan and the meeting was adjourned.