

# Alex Area Stewards – Meeting Notes

December 13, 2010 – Douglas County Public Works

## Attendees:

Jason Murray, Corliss Stark, Julie Critz, Dave Johnson, Marty Schultz, Anthony Zimny, Nancy Klepetka, Greg Klepetka, Kris Willert, Rick Banke, Patrick Kalina, Jeff Restad, Sue Jung, Margaret Kalina, Marc Illies, Tom Wacholz, Ben Oleson, Brian Baustian, Todd Roth, Mark Grandgenett, Joani Nielson, Shari Laven, Virgil Batesole.

## Destiny Driver & Initiative Updates:

- Form a regional collaborative to create a culture of cooperation and communication. (Patrick Kalina)
  - o Small groups of Stewards met with business and community leaders from Glenwood, Brandon and Osakis (twice) during 2010. There was a strong desire for our communities to work together from all meetings.
- Increase volunteerism region-wide by 20%. (Corliss Stark)
  - o The United Way is working on a report on the increase in volunteerism that will be released at the next Stewards meeting.
- Address regional poverty by improving awareness and understanding, and by enhancing economic conditions.
  - o No report on this Driver. No champion.
- Enhance our existing Central Lakes Trail trailheads, in collaboration with key stakeholders, to better integrate the system as a feature of each of the connected communities. (Mark Grandgenett)
  - o A number of groups are working on this Driver and a wording change has taken place because each community has a trailhead, now the effort is more along the lines of improvement and information distribution. Mark and Tam are working with groups including Active Living and the Douglas County Trails Association on this effort.
  - o Options for some type of trail mapping system are being discussed along with funding options for improvement efforts.
- Support initiatives that provide access to regional out-of-school time programming for all children.
  - o No report on this Driver. No champion.
- Establish a day for annual neighborhood block parties for communities in our region. (Nancy Klepetka)
  - o Blockparties/gatherings took place in the summer of 2010, but there was very little information shared back from the requests of this group. Nancy met with the City of Alexandria's Cultural Inclusiveness Committee and they suggested that possibly a "Meet your neighbor day" would be more successful from an organizational standpoint.
- We will consistently stock up to 500,000+ walleye fingerlings in the regional lakes on an annual basis.
  - o Rick Paulsen was unable to attend with a report.

- The Alexandria area will establish a new industrial park by 2011. (Jason Murray)
  - o Progress is being made on this initiative but many details are still up in the air. Specific areas of work include public partnership options, current needs/value/cost assessments.
  
- Support the startup, expansion, and growth of businesses each year in the Alexandria region. (Jason Murray)
  - o The AAEDC is preparing to publish its Annual report which will highlight a number of projects that have taken place or are currently underway throughout the community along with details on other commercial building projects.
  - o A group discussion followed on commercial lending activities locally and financing programs that are available to help businesses.
  
- Build a new high school with a regional auditorium for Alexandria area students and communities by 2014. (Julie Critz)
  - o District 206 is moving forward with a number of information gathering processes to address the needs and possibilities for a new high school. Due to the early stage of information gathering and modeling, specific details on facility size and cost along with other details are unknown. The referendum vote is still being targeted for the fall of 2011 – the School Board will make the final decision on whether or not to move to the vote in May.
  - o A capital funds campaign is currently underway to raise \$12 million to reduce the overall cost of the project that will be brought to the referendum. This process is just beginning.
  - o Possible sale options (contingent upon the passage of the referendum) are currently being discussed for the Jefferson High School building and site.
  
- Regional manufacturers, economic development partners, higher education, and K-12 will create a model system for career pathways to develop, attract, and sustain a highly skilled workforce. (Brian Baustian)
  - o The October 30<sup>th</sup> Tour of Manufacturing event was a great success with over 2,200 people participating in tours of 8 manufacturing companies in Douglas and Pope Counties.
  - o The Packaging Machine Manufacturers Consortium (PMMC) is working to promote the region as the leading packaging machine manufacturing cluster and will have a website launched soon that highlights information on companies and career opportunities. Currently the group is focusing on partnerships with District 206 students/teacher/classes but will likely spill over into the surrounding districts in the future as successes are built.
  
- Douglas County Fairgrounds Taskforce (Anthony Zimny)
  - o A small group of Stewards met with the Douglas County Ag Association on the future of the fairgrounds location. The land lease with the City of Alexandria runs out in 2035. The group met with representatives of the County and City of Alex to discuss each entity's thoughts on the fair's location and reported their findings back to the Ag Association. No specific action has been taken by the Ag Association at this point.

- Affordable Housing Taskforce (Jeff Restad)
  - o A small group met on this topic Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup> to begin discussing ways to address affordable housing for the region. Because of the number of variables that come into play with affordable housing, the group will be doing some focused research to determine what types and quantities of affordable housing are currently available locally, what areas have the most need, and what areas can be best addressed in the short and medium term.

### **Movement or Project?**

- The question of whether the Alex Area Stewards is a movement or a project, and what the future is for the group was brought forward and discussed.
- After much positive feedback about the initiative, it was suggested that everyone give thought to the future of the Stewards program and the Drivers to discuss in greater detail at a future meeting.
- Stewards were encouraged to email their thoughts and feelings on the future of this group and its Drivers to Jason or Pat in the near future.

### **Other items:**

- Dave Johnson shared a brief overview on the upcoming CAPX2020 project that will build a new power line between St. Cloud and Fargo and will be significantly impacting our area.
- Corliss Stark shared information on the United Way Toys for Tots program and a significant donation that the United Way recently received to purchase presents for all families on this list that were not adopted for Christmas.

### **Next Meeting Date:**

Late January/Early February – Will be emailed out.