



Alex Area Stewards Meeting Minutes  
Friday, August 20, 2010  
Alexandria Technical & Community College – Room 2011 – 7am

**Attendees:**

Corliss Stark, Rick Paulsen, Dane Anderson, Patrick Kalina, Jason Murray, Todd Roth, Mark Grandgenett, Tam Bukowski, Dave Johnson, Sue Jung, Virgil Batesole, Tom Wacholz, Stan Finnestad, Shari Laven, Kris Willert, Cindy Bigger, Greg Klepetka, Nancy Klepetka, Rita Ellenberger.

**Review Destiny Driver Statement:**

- The group reviewed and approved the revised Destiny Statement.
- Jason Murray highlighted the changes to the four Destiny Drivers which were approved by the group. A small group of Stewards met a few weeks ago to address the challenges of the “Economic Development/Business Startup” driver and decided that it would be best to simply leave the Driver as is and remove the “12” number of businesses.
  - One raised concern about the changes to the Regional Poverty, Out-of-school Programming, and Business Growth Drivers was the potential difficulty in measuring levels of success for each.
  - A Measures Committee will be organized in the near future to address this concern and review measurement standards for a future progress publication.

**Additional Destiny Driver Discussion:**

- The group discussed adding a Destiny Driver focusing on Affordable Housing to the current list.
- Discussion highlights:
  - There are currently multiple groups and organizations looking at this issue and trying to meet the need for affordable housing throughout the region.
  - The challenge of identifying what qualifies as “affordable” and “quality” for both developers and purchasers may be very difficult to accomplish.
  - Dave Johnson discussed his connections and activities with the Freddie Mac program to fix up distressed homes regionally to turn into “affordable” housing.
  - There could be a potential connection to be made with Habitat for Humanity and regional construction groups to assist with coordination and financing.
  - Major challenges in creating affordable housing include limits on subsidy dollars and where funding can be utilized.
  - The potential to utilize municipal assistance for housing fix-up efforts.
- Following a long discussion, the group decided that the issue of affordable housing was significant to our region’s future success and that a Destiny Driver should be created to focus on this effort.

- Due to his past leadership within the Affordable Housing Committee earlier in the Stewardship process, the group felt that Reed Becker should be asked to spearhead this Driver and involve outside professionals/stakeholders.
- Stewards volunteers to assist with this Driver: Jessica Boyer, Dave Johnson, Virgil Batesole
- Other recommendations to involve: John Widmark.

Possible Affordable Housing Driver wording:

“Establish a consortium of key stakeholders to address affordable housing challenges within the region.”

### **Measures/Activity Report:**

- The Stewards discussed the need for a small group to look at updating measurements of our Destiny Drivers for a review-type publication to share throughout the region.
  - The group discussed the importance of sharing what is going on with the Stewards, what the group is doing at this point, what has been accomplished, and who else the group is working with on Drivers and other initiatives.
- The possibility of another community survey to utilize as a measurement for awareness and overall success was discussed. A Steward commented that it might be good to release the update/publication and a short time later release a survey so that the information will be active in people’s minds.
  - The group discussed the challenges and potential costs involved with undertaking another community survey.
- Measures Committee Volunteers: Cindy Bigger, Shari Laven, Dave Johnson, Patrick Kalina

### **Driver Updates:**

- Trailhead Destiny Driver (Tam Bukowski & Mark Grandgenett)
  - Much has already been done and accomplished on creating trailheads in each community along the Central Lakes Trail. A number of groups are currently working on improving the existing trailheads and making them more uniform. The MN DNR would like to utilize a standardized trailhead design for all trails and communities and has asked the Alexandria group to design three models (for large, medium, and small sized communities) to use throughout the state.
  - The group discussed the importance of looking to link the trail systems of Douglas and Pope Counties. Mark G. indicated that this is on the State’s radar.
  - Corliss Stark informed the group about a United Way program entitled “Born Living” where educational aspects for children can be incorporated into trail systems to increase use and awareness.
  - The potential to work more closely with the Alexandria Hotel & Hospitality group was discussed as a way to leverage local financial assistance.
  - Tam and Mark both suggested that it may be important for this Driver to have a refocused statement since nearly all communities along the Central Lakes Trail have an established trailhead.

Suggested rewording: **“Partner with communities and stakeholders to enhance our existing trailheads and better integrate the trail system into our communities.”**

- Walleye Stocking (Rick Paulsen)
  - A walleye stocking fundraiser lunch will be held at Douglas Machine on September 8<sup>th</sup> from 11:30-1pm. Cost is \$8 per person and proceeds will go to purchasing fingerlings to stock in area lakes.

- Douglas County Fairgrounds Group (Jason Murray)
  - The Stewards Fairgrounds Group have interviewed City, County, and Ag Association leaders to learn their thoughts for the future location of the Douglas County Fair and the current Fairgrounds property.
  - The group will be meeting again soon to work on putting together a list of recommendations based upon the interviews to share with the Ag Association.
- Industrial Park Committee (Jason Murray)
  - Two grant requests for industrial park infrastructure are moving forward with the hope of word on their approval arriving this fall.
  - Discussions are currently underway with elected officials and key stakeholders on this project.
- Increased Volunteerism (Corliss)
  - The United Way, Hospital, and other organizations are starting to compare measurements of volunteer hours from 2009 to 2010. Number of volunteered hours appear to have significantly increased in a year to year comparison. Firm numbers are still being calculated and will be shared at a later date.
- Neighborhood Block Party (Nancy Klepetka)
  - The City of Alexandria Cultural Inclusiveness Committee has volunteered to spearhead this and will be working to promote the effort more actively in the future.
- Regional Collaboration: (Nancy Klepetka)
  - Some of the recent Blandin Leadership graduates in local units of government are working on increasing coordination of funds and projects among entities for increased efficiencies.

#### **Upcoming Regional Events:**

- “Building Bridges out of Poverty” event – September 15<sup>th</sup> – Organized by the United Way. More information to be released soon.
- Stuff the Bus Campaign: The United Way needs assistance in raising funds for this year’s Stuff the Bus Campaign ending on August 26<sup>th</sup>. Any financial assistance given to this program will directly benefit school children in the form of school supplies throughout Douglas & Pope Counties.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15am.

**Next All-Stewards Meeting:** TBA