

OCL Community Image Steering Committee meeting Nov. 16, 2010

Attending: Kate Auwaerter, Chris Capella-Peters, Gene Cilento, George Curry, Nell Donaldson, Bart Feinberg, Lynnore Fetjko, Karen Hanford, Joe Hucko, Tony Malavenda (co-chair), Andy Maxwell, Sarah McIlvain, Maude Morse, Aaron McKeon, Matt Potteiger, Clyde Ohl, Sheena Solomon, Merike Treier (co-chair) Rachel Pollack, Sandra Barrett

Agenda

Presentation of Draft Mission Statement

If you are asked “What is the study on which you are working?” the mission statement should be able to serve as the answer to that question.

This week committee members reworked a draft mission statement to fine tune study goals and scope. Mission statement language was clarified, several points were redefined and subcommittees were established to begin research into a variety of topics. Members who wish to sign up for the subcommittees listed below may now do so. Subgroups will research presentations to the committee as well as possible presentations to the public.

OCL Community Image Study Committee

Second Draft Mission Statement:

The study will investigate what our public and private spaces say about our community and what impact perception of place has on community pride, quality of life, and economic development. The study will examine how we as a community can direct our collective (energies or) strengths, vision and resources to improve community image, increase community pride, and foster ownership.

The statement was rewritten to specify that in the use of “we/us” we are referencing the community at large and not just the OCL community. It was also made more concise in addressing the study goal.

The Study will:

1. Assess the current state of our gateways and key public spaces;
2. Assess the impact of appearance on community pride, quality of life, and economic development/tourism;
3. Explore what other metropolitan areas are doing;
4. Focus on public spaces and gateway routes;
5. Explore low cost, high impact beautification strategies.

6. Explore how private property owners (buildings, houses, yards, businesses, neighborhood associations) and public entities can be encouraged to take ownership of this issue;
7. Identify replicable "best practices", and any programs or funds available to help with these types of improvement efforts;
8. Suggest a structure moving forward, including steps we can put into place to lead to lasting results.
9. Consider how physical design impacts community image;
10. Examine public policy issues that help or hinder community image efforts.

The following Subgroups will help to address the key issues:

1. Economic Development Impact
2. Case Studies
3. Public Participation (includes surveys)
4. Public Policy
5. Physical Environment

Also to be included are Category Recommendations, for the above topics:

- (A) Plantings and Nature
- (B) Maintenance and Litter
- (C) Public Art
- (D) Capital Projects and Aesthetics Budget
- (E) Planning, Design and Historic Preservation

Discussion which led to revisions:

The question was asked, "Where is the mention of the word 'design' in the original draft statement?" This comment led to a reworking of the statement to include new language. The challenge was seen as including the concept of design without imposing value judgment. Is there a way to quantify good design? The concept to include in the statement was framed as "How do you define urban spaces, whether it is in a town, village or city?" and this has to do with use of space and materials. There are ways to quantify what good design means. There are studies that show that people may not be able to define "good design," but that they know and like it when they see it.

Is a visual preference survey a possible part of this study? Local images/examples could be included by using local web-based survey tools. The survey is a possibility for down the road.

Investing in appearance means "design" not be so far down the list of priorities that we can knock it off the list; that (in terms of projects) aesthetics are just as important as, for instance,

durability of the asphalt. Question “What does ‘investment’ really mean?” was eliminated, is included in other study objectives.

Are there public policy issues that prevent things from happening or might help to get things done? For instance there is an issue with the city using endowment funds for public spaces. How does this affect funding options? Decision was made to include (10) based on this.

Regarding (8) and the idea of structures: Should we include step-by-step information about how individuals/groups in community can accomplish projects in the community? This might be addressed through best practices.

An example of a structure (8) might be that an Office of Community Image was established in Dade County to look at image issues and set aside funds for aesthetic items. (Members of different departments put in place as advisory board.) This is an example of a structure established in Florida.

Is public policy stronger than “what we see”? When we look at mistakes are we looking at today’s mistakes or are we looking at past mistakes?

Marcellus is a case where we are looking at past mistakes. The community has put in place policy regarding everything from storefronts to curb cuts but we still see a great deal of past mistakes; things done before the policies were put in place. What is the general overriding policy in the county? Is there one?

We need to include “History and Historic Preservation.” It is an important topic in the community and region. Where should historic preservation go? Decision was made to include under community planning and design.

Subcommittees will make recommendations for public presentations. We may also want a “big picture” public presentation explaining why community image is important.

You can almost see a matrix in the crossover between category recommendations and the ten points of the study. For each of those 10 things, the A-E Category recommendations provide a structure for assessment.

Case Studies group will help provide case studies for all of the other subgroups, which may focus on ‘best practices’ in their particular subject areas.

Maybe we should be assessing our community right now, for instance, looking at current environment, asking ourselves “Where are our gateways, public spaces? Let’s start laying ourselves out. Are there official gateways? We need to think about when the entry to various

communities actual occurs, at what particular point, or series of conceptual points. We may need to consider mapping, traffic counts etc.

Karen said she had been in contact with Coyne Laundries, regarding the green space they installed and maintain on South Salina Street. They could talk to us about it: What got them to do it? How much did it cost them to do it? That is something that is going on here right now and has nothing to do with Onondaga County.

If there are other people you feel should be involved in study, let's get them involved through the subgroups.

In two weeks, Ben Walsh, former of MDA, will talk about what the Ford Foundation 'Creative Communities' grant and in insights that might help us. Also, there is a class of ESF landscape architecture students assigned to come up with design solutions for the Adams and Almond Street intersection. They are going to come up with some designs by the middle of December. May be of interest to the committee.

Next meeting: We will develop a suggested time frame. We will talk about how we sequence the panel discussions.

Next Meeting—Tuesday, 11/30, 307 UC, 12-1:30