STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT

CITY OF LAKE HELEN

February 3, 2017

Facilitated by Marilyn Crotty

UCF - Institute of Government

INTRODUCTION

The City of Lake Helen City Commission held a Strategic Planning Workshop on February 3, 2017. Marilyn Crotty, director of the Florida Institute of Government at the University of Central Florida facilitated the session.

The Mayor, Commissioners, and senior staff participated in the day-long workshop that was held at Hopkins Hall. Ms. Crotty asked the elected officials to speak about their visions for the future of the city in 2027. After conducting an environmental scan, the participants assessed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the City of Lake Helen.

The Commission then identified strategic issues that should be addressed in the next few years. The list of issues was incorporated into seven goals for the city and objectives under each goal were specified. The final activity of the workshop was the selection of priority objectives for implementation. The objectives receiving support from at least three of the elected officials were identified as priority objectives. All of the rest of the objectives were listed as Other Objectives.

This report is a summary of the discussions and conclusions of the workshop.

VISION – CITY OF LAKE HELEN, 2017

The Mayor and Commissioners were asked to describe their visions for the future of the city ten years from now. The following comments were shared:

Vibrant downtown commercial district—some growth

Neighborhoods protected

Quality of life high

Parks – filled with kids

Build on/enhance history and culture

Gateway employment area

Tell story of "boom years

City that makes things – food, crafts

Multi-use trail – cross Volusia

Way-finding/information kiosks – downtown

Small businesses downtown

Employ local population

Clean up main street corridor

Tree canopy – preserved

Work with Team Volusia

Increased tax base

Parks and recreation – improvements

City square, events (planner)

Dog Park

Public art

Work with TPO and ECFRPC

Increase equestrian focus

Lodging available

City staff – training, career development

Land Development Regulations

Improved communication

Citizens

Other governments

Infrastructure – funding

Comprehensive plan, regulations, all working in harmony

Managed sewer system downtown

Building and permit "ambassador"

Promote city – assist with process

Incubator for Farm to Table (market) use excess funds to develop

Follow up on Strategic Plan (measure)

City that young people want to stay/return to

Improvements to the Lake (Helen)

Recreational component

Water level

Community involvement encouraged

More use of under used facilities

Spring-shed that could be developed - Natural resource

EXTERNAL ISSUES & TRENDS

The group discussed trends and issues that are occurring in the international, national, and state environment that may have an impact on the city in the near future. The following external forces were identified as significant for the City of Lake Helen:

Partisan political environment - filtering down to communities, families

Bias

Division

Annexation by surrounding cities – not compatible vision

External regulations and funding

Blue Spring watershed

Water quality and quantity

Disregard by some jurisdiction for limiting use

Technology might solve problem

Reclaimed water use will increase

War and rumors of war

Terrorism

Economy – potential downturn

Increased use of technology

Broad band access – communication

State legislature

Preempt authority

Unfunded mandates

Less local control to manage growth

Policing

Use of force

Community relations

Crime rates down

Media – perception rather than reality

Competition for economic development

Increased commercial traffic

Panama Canal – seaports

Limited tax structure – Florida

Affects local government, tax base

Increased costs for fire service

Florida will continue to grow

New residential properties

All ages

Mass transit

SunRail?

Shared economy

Uber

Homelessness

Pharmaceutical Industry

Big Pharma

Poisoning environment

Technology – impacting young people

Changing Values

Social Media

Fake News

Hacking – Cyber security

Educational system

Different mindset

Global environment

INTERNAL ISSUES & TRENDS

The group analyzed internal trends and issues that may have an impact on the city. The following items were identified:

Employee relations - competition

Benefit

Salaries

Job descriptions – salaries in-line

Recruitment and retention

Quality commercial development

Need sewer service

Potential funding (State) for sewer and water projects

Community involvement – needs to increase

Improved communication

City charter – needs revising

Not competing with neighboring jurisdictions - destination city

Niche community

Need to manage advantage

Equestrian center

Cassadega

Infrastructure

Maintenance

Future needs

Buildings, roads

Under-used buildings

Illegal dumping

The Commission and staff then identified what they perceive as strengths and weaknesses of the city and its government. They also identified opportunities and threats that the city faces. The following chart is a compilation of these ideas. The number in parentheses () next to each

comment indicates how many participants made this comment.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
History (4) – history of City; home tour and historic Board wants to advertise history (markers), upkeep of culture; 100 historic structures in town	Communication (3) – lack of events including communication; event signs at entryway, few electronic marquees, send (by mail) newsletters quarterly	Annexation (4) – of Cassadega; good candidates for annexation; through inter-service boundary agreement with County	Tax base (3) – the greater communities around us are expanding their tax base, and we run the risk of being bypassed; lack of commercial tax base
Community (4) – atmosphere; strong sense of community; passion and history; diverse skills	Tax base (3) – lack of tax base (growth); low	Cassadega (2) – proximity to	Annexations (2) - Becoming land locked by annexation around us; by other cities
Location (3) – good along I- 4 interchange; strategically located	Growth (3) – too many restrictions for growth; resistance to for fear of losing the ambiance of the City; city ordinances that encumber growth	Undeveloped land that can be leveraged into a destination component of the City	Swallowed up by surrounding cities
Equestrian Center (2) – City owned event center	Infrastructure (2) - aging	Room for commercial growth	Resistance to change
Ivy Hawn (2) – population of school – parents want to live here, dine here, etc.	Very small City Staff	Options to partner with other cities, e.g. health insurance	Blue Spring regulations
Staff (3) committed to carry out policy;	Underutilized resources (2) Lots of building space under City control	Equestrian lifestyle – trails, center (equestrian), allowable in all land uses	Regulatory agencies that permit programs that cause Lake Helen to suffer the unintended consequences i.e. Lake Helen
Volunteer resources (2) – dedicated volunteers	We have no advocate for Lake Helen	Grant acquisition plan/strategy	Water
Good area for commercial development	Limited resources to meet financial needs	Historic home tour; historic town tour?	Salaries
City parks Potential for growth	2-year Terms Lack of businesses downtown	Close to I-4 vacant land Capture the seekers that are looking for the qualities that Lake Helen possess	
Internal system of government that focuses on the quality of life in the city	Conflict – Comp plan; LDRs - Gateway	Mitchell Brothers Sports Complex – underutilized, events/tournaments	
Historic grid roadway network	Limited job opportunities	Events – advertising, communication, more use of existing facilities	
Quaint residential city	Lack of mass transit (2) - Votran Bus Service	How to use the utility proceeds that meets voter approval?	
Dedicated elected officials	Lack of true City Manager form of government	Increased population moving to Florida	

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Framework i.e. Gateway	Community involvement	Update land development	
ordinances, comp plan, sign	(2) Lack of personalized	codes ordinances in	
ordinance, land use	contact with the	2017/2018	
regulations;	community; staff to be		
	more engaging		
Encouragement to co-exist,	Salary (2) and benefits for	Stetson	
work within existing	employees to attract better		
residences that help identify	quality; manpower pay		
those areas that make Lake			
Helen unique			

STRATEGIC ISSUES

The Commission and staff identified strategic issues and organized them into like categories:

Fiscal

Increase revenues

Cooperative purchasing

Economic Growth

Inter service boundary agreement with County

Rewrite of LDRs

Management of advantage

Capitalize on Cassadega

Historic preservation

Plan for development

Asset Management - Facilities, Infrastrucure

Use of City facilities – (redevelopment) shuffleboard

Parks Master Plan

Relocation of Public Works

Paving Management – streets, sidewalks

Facility improvement for emergencies – PD, generator

Emergency Management Plan

Promotion of Downtown

Development

Incentives

Public/private

Parking

Incubator

Citizen Engagement

Improved communication with citizens – text alerts

Event Management

Administrative

Employee support - retention

Environmental Sustainability

Restoration of Lake Helen

The Commission confirmed that the seven strategic issues listed above were appropriate goals for the city. The Commission identified objectives under each goal. They then selected priorities. Any objective that received support from three or more Commissioners (identified by number in front of each objective) is considered a priority. The rest of the objectives are listed as Other. There is no significance to the order in which the goals and objectives are listed.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL - FISCAL

Priority Objective

(4) Identify, diversify, and acquire sources of raising revenues

Other Objectives

- (0) Revise CIP to reflect true costs
- (0) Explore potential for cooperative purchasing with other jurisdictions
- (0) Review and revise fiscal policies as needed
- (0) Identify areas for cost savings through technology

GOAL - ECONOMIC GROWTH

Priority Objective

(3) Rewrite Land Development Regulations (downtown)

Other Objectives

- (2) Negotiate inter-service boundary agreement with County
- (0) Develop/create and promote historic nature, assets, qualities of Lake Helen image and brand
- (0) Promote development of Gateway Employment District

GOAL - ASSET MANAGEMENT/INFRASTRUCTURE

Other Objectives

- (2) Improve utilization of city facilities
- (2) Develop Master Plan for paving roads, sidewalks
- (1) Relocation of Public Works building
- (1) Pursue acquisition of strategic properties (maintain property, etc.)
- (1) Develop Parks Master Plan

GOAL - DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF DOWNTOWN

Priority Objective

(4) Develop vision for downtown citizens, business community, and other models

Other Objectives

- (0) Explore provision of central sewer in downtown
- (0) Create way finding program, information kiosks

GOAL - CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Priority Objective

(3) Identify a variety of methodologies for communicating with citizens – 2 way

Other Objectives

- (1) Create a volunteer appreciation program
- (0) Develop, promote and execute community events personnel, partnerships

GOAL – ADMINISTRATIVE

Priority Objective

(5) Create an environment that supports recruitment and retention of employees including benefits, salaries, appreciation, training, morale, tuition assistance, etc.

GOAL - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Priority Objective

(4) Create a plan for the restoration of <u>Lake</u> Helen

Other Objectives

- (1) Develop a program for maintenance of tree canopy
- (0) Monitor legislation regarding the Blue Spring water shed (regulations, funding, etc.)

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

- (5) Create an environment that supports recruitment and retention of employees including benefits, salaries, appreciation, training, morale, tuition assistance, etc.
- (4) Identify, diversify, and acquire sources of raising revenues
- (4) Develop vision for downtown citizens, business community, and other models
- (4) Create a plan for the restoration of <u>Lake</u> Helen
- (3) Rewrite Land Development Regulations (downtown)
- (3) Identify a variety of methodologies for communicating with