

## DOWNTOWN VISIONING MEETING – 7/31/18

### RESULTS & COMMENTS

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Prior to the start of the visioning session there were over 30 quotations posted around the room and those in attendance were asked to go around and read the quotes, pick their favorite, write it down, and submit it to the presenter. Listed below are the quotes that were chosen. (For whatever reason, not everyone in attendance submitted one as their choice.)

#### ATTENDEES CHOSEN QUOTATIONS:

- Your downtown is the heart of your community no matter where you live
- Do not talk about doubt. Refuse to be intimidated by current circumstances, restoration is possible
- Old ways won't open new doors (chosen three times)
- Always involve yourself with something that's bigger than you are... every great success seems impossible at the beginning (chosen twice)
- Failure is not fun, it can be awful, but living so cautiously that you never fail is worse
- It's better to fail at doing something than to succeed at doing nothing (chosen twice)
- Vision without action is a daydream
- I would just like to say that there is quite a bit of negativity on what has happened in the past. Not one bit of that matters now. It's time to get over the past, put on your positive pants and get to work putting all your efforts in to the future
- There are those that: 1) Make things happen 2) Watch things happen 3) Wonder what happened Which one are you?
- Every day is your chance to make this city a little bit better! (chosen twice)
- What would your community be like if you had the power to make it any way you wanted?
- Why spend the money to keep things the same instead of to make things better?
- Like it or not, Sleepy Eye is going to change. If you sit back and do nothing it is still going to change. You can decide how it is to change! (chosen twice)
- The beauty of downtown investors: they are willing to accept the ROI (return on investment) as the quality of life, which is much better than any dollar can give them
- Quit talking and begin doing!!!
- The two basics for downtown success: 1) A vision- a mental sight, dream, or revelation 2) A commitment to the vision Without these two – nothing will happen

Those in attendance were asked to sit at a table with a total of 6 people per table. There were eight tables that were occupied around the room. Each table had the following five topics that the participants were to discuss and the submit their thoughts/responses/suggestions on related to the downtown:

**(1) physical appearance (2) retail (3) activities/uses (4) traffic/parking (5) other**

The responses are listed as follows:

### **Physical Appearance Responses:**

- renovate scary buildings while preserving history
- large crossing areas for street
- restore outer façade & signage
- blight downtown buildings
- historic building district ways to get funds to improve –building rules in a historic district
- unoccupied apartments – fill & review
- accessible entrances
- enforce existing codes and regulations
- adding benches on Main Street
- unoccupied storefronts and window upkeep – set standard expectations
- historic districts (funding) Preservation Alliance – Minnesota Main Street
- shade/greenery necessities
- landscape around the Sleepy Eye stone entrance signs with shrubs and perennials – they are of no use if they are not attractive – first impressions
- unoccupied apartments in several buildings
- paint
- no broken windows
- First impressions matter – landscape - make attractive so people want to see

### **Retail Responses:**

- quilt shop (four times)
- fabric store
- boutique – clothing
- boutique - antiques
- bookstore (new/used) (four times)
- themed stores (niche)
- sit down food (draw people in)
- coffee shop (three times)
- Mexican restaurant
- Sunday breakfasts or brunches
- lakeside restaurant/bar with deck
- bakery
- combine bakery/bookstore/coffee shop
- restaurant – family (no alcohol) bar serves food or restaurant that serves alcohol
- restaurant – congregating place
- Chinese restaurant
- upscale type restaurant
- ice cream shop
- five & dime variety store
- businesses need encouragement and support – support/input/funding

### **Activities/Uses Responses:**

- farmers market
- festivals
- outdoor music events
- music and/or art downtown
- car show - car roll in
- tractor roll in
- food trucks
- multicultural activities – Hispanic & Native American
- kids activities
- art/street fair
- outdoor music – music in the park, school bands, concertina club
- little free libraries –need to get more around town & in parks –people could make- donate
- popcorn wagon
- pedestrians/bicycles
- a place to rent kayaks/frisbees for frisbee golf etc. at park paddleboards/canoes
- find ways to get people to spend the whole day in our town, on foot. Make it a destination – cater to different groups at different times
- movies in Veteran’s Park

### **Traffic/Parking Responses:**

- visible parking signs so you know where parking is available besides on Main Street
- plastic people signs
- municipal parking lot
- limited parking time so there are available spaces
- directional
- encourage education of public on state laws regarding pedestrian crossing
- off street parking
- no parking on Main Street
- not pedestrian friendly
- 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue removal of signals (dangerous)
- traffic control – signs for pedestrians
- trolley around town and lake
- if we want retail we need to: make our streets safer, slow vehicles down, through traffic is a problem getting them to stop for people in the crosswalks

### **Other Responses:**

- Co-working spaces – mixed use offices
- Safety – fire – vermin – building structure
- living downtown
- hog/pig days with Schwartz Farms & Christensen Farms – rural celebration for farmers
- low retail rent- so small business can turn a profit
- create spaces for specific demographics (moms, retirees, families, singles, newlyweds, etc.)

### **Other Responses (con't):**

- water mains on Main Street – the present main is not large enough for all buildings to have sprinkler systems
- sprinkler concerns scare people
- educate people about when/where sprinklers are needed
- what is the median price of all buildings on Main Street
- Sleepy Eye needs to believe we can start doing something about it

This visioning meeting was a result of two previous meetings that were held to present information from the Ron Drake consultations on Downtown/Main Street that took place in April. At the first meeting Ron Drake gave his community presentation summarizing his three-day visit and consultations here in Sleepy Eye. A few weeks later his Gap Analysis Report was presented.

This Visioning Meeting was to look at the input and information from the report and previous meetings and give the community a chance to give more input in specific areas related to the Downtown District and Main Street.

The results from this meeting will be discussed and used by the EDA Board as they continue their work on a plan to address the issues concerning the downtown district. They are also looking to the city council to approve additional funding to be used to address these issues, concerns, and needs, for improving our downtown. It is the hope of the EDA Board, and many other community members, that the city council will indeed approve additional funding in the upcoming budget meetings, so that additional resources are available to address this ever-growing need in the community. Some of the specifics from this visioning meeting, the EDA Board has already been addressing, like looking at investments in buildings to be used as incubators, combined building use, and additional incentives for rehab work, and adding more businesses and activities to the Downtown and along Main Street.