



Minutes from July 7, 2016 Quality of Place (QOP) Meeting at SCEDF

Larry Wickert welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Everyone introduced themselves.

Larry asked the questions . . . “What are other small communities doing?”

- Larry shared that North Judson is working on a community center
- Jim Jessup said that it starts with talking, like we’re doing tonight. He calls QOP “place based community development.” Jim suggested starting the conversation with asking the question . . . “If I lived 30 miles away, had a family of 4 and \$50 to spend, why would I come to Starke County?”
- Ted Hayes mentioned Starke County’s drive in theatre, which is the only one in the area.
- Jim recommended that events be packaged. For example, come to the drive in, get a discount at a local restaurant and walk the trails. You have to stand out and be unique. He shared the story of Rapid City, where they have statues on the street corners of the presidents. People come there to take their pictures with the presidents. Winslow, AZ also does some unique things.

We broke out into our three groups and then reconvened to share what was discussed.

Bass Lake / Trails

- Bruce is investigating creating a “trail head” at Bailey’s with possible bike rental
- Investigating potential of marking a trail route from the west side of Bass Lake south along CR S 450 E to CR E 800 S then west along CR E 800 S to get to the existing trail
- Investigating potential funding to extend the paved trail east across Hwy 35 to CR S 600 E
- Rick Anderson will contact Corey Bennett, President of the Railroad Museum, to inquire about details related to the use of their right of way
- Debbie has talked to the commissioners and they are in line with adding trail signs on the county roads; no final answer until a more formal proposal is presented
- ***Diane will contact Jerry White to see if he can come to one of our next meetings to talk about possible trail grants.***

Young People’s Group

- This group changed their focus this meeting from events to programs.
- They have chosen the existing youth group program to get involved with. Why is there a waiting list? What is the criteria for volunteers? How do they obtain their funding? Possible

scholarships? Can the QOL help promote this youth group to the businesses and community members?

- ***They will get a hold of Irene to work with her group.***
- Discussion about Woodstarke included holding a “fun run”; ***Jake will ask someone to seek assistance from Moving Starke County Forward organize and run this on Sept 10***
- Holding a possible bike ride during the Bass Lake Fest was also discussed.
- The group suggested that a formal “Festival Committee” be formed consisting of representatives from all the festivals so they could coordinate and cross promote.
- A geocoding puzzle was also discussed for future investigation.

Promotion

This group identified a list of action items to begin working on:

- Portable billboards to place at the Knox Chamber parking lot and at the community park in North Judson; ***Jake will contact TCS to see if they can help***
- Drive in ads prior to the movies; ***Jerry will contact them***
- Hospital digital board; ***Ted will check with Craig***
- Community calendar; ***Diane will work with SCEDF to get a letter sent to all local organizations***
- Reminders via e-mail, Facebook and Twitter of upcoming QOP meeting; post meeting minutes on the SCEDF website so interested people can refer to them; ***Diane will work with Lisa Dan to get these items started***
- Promote events on Facebook; ***Diane will work with Lisa to get this started***
- Write an article about the Starke County QOL initiative for NIPSCO’s EDNews; ***Diane will get this started***
- Investigate if the REMC has a newsletter that could also do an article on the QOL initiative; ***Ted will check with them***
- Investigate the use of bank signs to promote upcoming county events; ***Larry will check with First Farmers, 1st Source and DeMotte Bank***
- Use the free “letter to the editor” columns in surrounding newspapers to promote Starke County events; ***Diane will draft for approval by the committee***
- Check with Mark Bailey to understand how he promotes his business; ***Larry will talk with Mark***
- Investigate the bar signs from Timeless Advertising to see if they could be used to promote events; ***Diane will call***
- Work closely with the Young People’s Group to help them start forming a more formal group
- Future consideration of “pisser ads”, table top tents and placemats

Larry Wickert wrapped up the meeting. We set **our next meeting date for Thursday, July 21 at 6:00 pm (Central) at the Starke County Economic Development Foundation (SCEDF) office.** Everyone is encouraged to continue to bring along new people to get involved.