

**MINUTES  
CITY COUNCIL VISIONING WORKSHOP  
CITY OF ARCADIA  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2012  
9:00 AM**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The workshop session was called to order at approximately 9:00 AM.

**Arcadia City Council**

Mayor Keith Keene

Deputy Mayor Alice Frierson

Councilman Robert Heine – Absent

Councilman Joseph E. Fink

Councilman Robert Allen

**Arcadia City Staff**

City Administrator Dr. Lawrence Miller

Asst. City Administrator Judi Jankosky

AJ Berndt, WTP Supervisor

City Recorder Virginia Haas

**CALL TO ORDER**

1. Introduction – Dr. Ted Land, Workshop Facilitator (5 minutes)

Dr. Ted Land introduced himself as former Reverend of the Arcadia First Presbyterian Church and that he recently moved to the County so he was no longer a resident of the City. Dr. Land gave the invocation. Dr. Land outlined the agenda and noted that each and every person would have the opportunity to address each question with a three minute time limit. Dr. Miller agreed to keep time of the speakers. Mr. Ernie Hewett agreed to be the scribe and write bullet notes for the meeting.

2. What is your vision for the City of Arcadia? (45 minutes)

Dr. Land chose Councilman Bob Allen to speak to his vision for the City of Arcadia. Councilman Allen recollected the City as beautiful and simple however the City has moved to bigger and greater things. He stated his concern regarding reducing the City's debt and noted that the new Water Treatment Plant would be an asset to the City's future. He stated priorities are streets, sidewalks, items people can see. He continued that the City can no longer operate on borrowed money and Citizens are looking towards us to do great things. (Items addressed: Infrastructure, debt free, streets, Water Plant).

Mayor Keene stated that he was passionate about Arcadia and quoted that he wants "Arcadia to be a great place to live, work and play". He stated the Gateway entrances to the City need enhancement, and infrastructure needs improvement. He continued that the Airport is vital to the City as well as the Golf Course and suggested a City Civic Center along with some future use of the old Live Stock Market. He suggested future workgroups could be formed using the FEMA Long Term Recovery Study and the Walkability Study. He stated that the City should team with Arcadia Main Street and the Chamber. He mentioned McSwain Park and utilizing Team Arcadia for improvements. (Items addressed: Gateway Beautification, Infrastructure, Airport, Golf Course, FEMA Study, Walkability Study)

Councilman Fink agreed with Mayor Keene, "Arcadia as a great place to live, work and raise families." He stated with confidence that Arcadia can be a great place to live again if we follow a solid

visioning plan.

Mr. Dennis Tyson, Mary Margaret's Tea Room, stated downtown revitalization is needed. He noted that people are seeing a difference in downtown and if we work together we can achieve change, we need a vision. He mentioned for example, the trash cans look in disrepair and need paint.

Ms. Ann Hilliard stated she lived here in the 1960's, left then visited in the 1970's and felt the area horrible but has improved some. She agreed that FEMA had wonderful plans however before we can improve we have to clean up the City just as the Beautification Board has been attempting to do.

Mrs. Judi Jankosky, Asst. City Administrator, stated that she would gladly link the FEMA studies and Walkability Plan to the City Web Site. She stressed the City needs economic development and a structured plan. (Economic Epicenter & Downtown)

Mr. Bruce Nuveau, Team Arcadia, suggested trying to encourage investment to promote companies to open businesses by making the City more presentable and as inviting as possible.

Dr. Lawrence Miller, City Administrator, echoed Mrs. Jankosky in that the City needs to create a long term plan, balanced budget, seek Federal Government Grants, improvements to the Airport and master plan. Dr. Miller thanked Mrs. Jankosky for applying and receiving grants for the Airport. He also mentioned needed improvements for the Mobile Home Park, Highway 70 entrances into Arcadia and the mall across from the Mobile Home Park. He noted improvements to McSwain Park and the downtown area and addressing the Community Development Plan.

Mrs. Francine DiFilippo, business and land owner, envisioned the City having "Civic Pride". She questioned what does the City have to be proud of - Rodeo, Bulldogs, McSwain Park. She would like to see more personal responsibility. She continued that Arcadia has a sense of low self esteem; she would like to see more action and less talk.

Mrs. Adrienne Daly stated that there are some who dislike Arcadia however the City needs to be cleaned/spruced up and stressed that Code Enforcement can help in this area. She concluded that people in Arcadia are outstanding and most will take personal responsibility such as painting their own garbage cans to enhance the area.

Mr. AJ Berndt, Water Treatment Plant Supervisor, stated his shock when he came to Arcadia that there were no activities for youth or after school functions. He stated the City needs businesses to come in that fulfill the needs of the children and families.

Mr. Bob Brown, resident 29 years stated there is much talk but no action. He added that the slum areas need addressing and that he is a member of the Beautification Board. He sees no cooperation with other groups. He finalized that there are no enforcement of the codes and nothing will change until enacting enforcement.

Ms. Jeannie Martin stated that entrances into the city need beautification; clean up trash and have an attractive focal point. The City should work toward beauty and stewardship and include beautification in the budget.

Mr. Tony Daniel, business owner, and Arcadian since the 1990's stated he prefers the quiet, small

town roots and moving forward at a smaller pace. He stated that speed limits within the City need enforcement which in turn would generate revenue for the City. He envisioned a safer, slower town.

Mr. Ernie Hewett expressed that he would like to see the City exist into the future and not be absorbed by the County.

Dr. Lorenzo Dixon, former Councilman, expressed many of the same visions and ideas already written down: Infrastructure, sidewalks, streets, entrances to the City. He stated he is a problem solver with solutions, ideas and action. The question is where the City will find the money.

Mr. Gary Frierson stated that the City needs a good, solid, "foundation"; streets, sidewalks, curbs, infrastructure that will foster growth of businesses. Establish a good, inviting environment for businesses and growth.

Ms. Adrienne Daly stated that she envisions a nice, clean route to the City Cemetery.

During the break Dr. Land asked each participant to place a star by those areas on the boards which they consider important visions for the City which they would evaluate once resuming the meeting.

(10 Minute Break)

TOP LIST OF PRIORITIES (not in particular order)

- AIRPORT (10)
- INFRASTRUCTURE (10)
- GATEWAYS TO CITY CLEANUP (8)
- PROMOTE INVESTMENTS AND GRANTS (5)
- LAW ENFORCEMENT (8)
- YOUTH ACTIVITIES (6)
- FINANCIAL PLAN (4)

3. What will it take to make our vision a reality? (50 minutes)

Mrs. Shirley Brown requested that City Council be more receptive to Citizens (Receptive Government).

Councilman Fink envisions encouraging businesses to the City and change will occur. We need structure not chaos. He suggested a Joint Planning Agreement with the County and building homes around the current Golf Course. He finalized that US 17 Gateway is not conducive to wanting to be in Arcadia.

Councilman Allen reaffirmed that the City is not a profit making mechanism and reminded that the Citizen's pay for all services. The City is currently in poor financial condition.

Mrs. Francine DiFilippo stated that the City has a poor mentality which does not help. She suggested smart allocation of scarce resources and the City has not spent money on long standing items only short term fixes. She suggested an action plan or study group for each initiative "Boot Strapping". She stated it is not impossible it just takes strong will.

Mayor Keene envisioned promoting investments through tax incentives which grows funding to complete other items. He encouraged Civic Pride through workgroups, collaborative efforts, Civic Groups, Churches, Chamber of Commerce, etc.

Mrs. Jankosky stated there are many projects the City can complete with grant monies and she is not sure whether the City should grant everything away in tax incentives.

Dr. Miller inputted that issues are being addressed in a financial manner and people are either going to work together for the future or stay in the past.

Dr. Dixon asked for priority lists and the Marshal is cutting spending and downsizing services. He encouraged ending duplications of services and taxation.

Mr. Tony Daniel encouraged the City to use its web site to get people involved in the information and visioning.

Mrs. DiFilippo stated that Team Arcadia would help and may make some of these initiatives happen. She continued if the clubs were asked such as the Beautification Committee, Kiwanis, Rotary Club that people will rise to the occasion with direction and a strategic plan. "Human Capital" needs to be reviewed and these are service organizations that can help the City.

Mr. Berndt stated he envisioned more "Quality" rather than "Quantity" and using City money wisely.

Dr. Ted Land summarized the second part of the session:

- MONEY
- MANPOWER
- COOPERATION

(10 Minute Break)

4. How are we going to accomplish those tasks? Who does what? How are we going to pay for it? (60 minutes)

Dr. Ted Land asked the participants why the Airport was one of the top priorities.

Councilman Fink replied that in the past the Arcadia Airport was thriving with flight training lessons and business here is extremely low in comparison to the Wauchula Airport.

Dr. Dixon inputted that it is statistically proven that Cities with Airports generate revenue and it is a needed service for the City. He added that Golf Courses tend to prove an expense.

Mayor Keene believes that the Airport could help solve some money issues, bring jobs and economic opportunities. He suggested partnering with others to bring utilities like water and sewer from the County to the Airport and provide other services like restaurants and transportation to the downtown area. The Airport could become a "Gem" that attracts people and businesses.

Mr. Frierson noted that he receives flight instructions at the Airport and there is much room for growth. He stated that the price of fuel continues to rise and business has slowed down however the hangers do produce money and much improvement at the Airport is supported by Government Grants. He finalized the Airport can grow and will generate revenue.

Mrs. Jankosky explained that the City will receive from DOT and FAA grants in excess of 1.5 million at no cost to the City. The Airport is an economic "Gem".

Mr. Ernie Hewett explained that the Airport has a history going back 27 years which plays a part in where the Airport is now. He noted that the Airport has a good future and vision.

Dr. Land moved the discussion to enhancement of the Gateway entrances to the City. He explained coming from the North into the city there is a beautiful sign "Welcome to Arcadia" landscaped with flowers. He thanked Mr. Bob and Shirley Brown who have volunteered time and resources to make this entrance beautiful. He indicated that the other three Gateways of the City are lacking.

Dr. Miller stated that working with other groups, landscape designers and civic groups who will volunteer SR 70 on the West side of the City can be beautified. With the help of other groups like Rotary and Kiwanis and a bit of money the other areas could be addressed as well.

Mrs. Shirley Brown noted that they also beautified McSwain Park however there was no working sprinkler system.

Dr. Land turned focus to Infrastructure. He asked how we will pay for the improvements required for highways, streets, sidewalks, stormwater, public buildings, lights, water, sewer and any other utilities.

Dr. Dixon suggested review of the Charter regarding the elected Marshal and asked whether the Police Department was worth the taxpayer's money. He recommended downsizing or cutting all unnecessary spending or possible consolidation with the Sheriff's Department due to the size of the City.

Dr. Land asked Mr. Berndt to further explain his ideas regarding youth activities in the City. Mr. Berndt explained currently the City only has Church activities, DCYA, 4-H Club and softball however no after school or weekend activities for children. There are no theme parks, no goofy golf, roller rinks or bowling centers. He stated that the Youth are the backbone of our City and Churches. The children will be the City's future.

Dr. Land asked about the City's Financial Plan.

Councilman Fink responded that the City should focus on Code Enforcement and he hoped that the Marshal was in attendance. He noted that the Council was powerless in this area. He asked that the City reconsider placing Code Enforcement under the authority of the City Administrator. He explained that at least 75% of calls he receives are Code Enforcement related.

Dr. Dixon responded that traffic and citation falls under Police Department and if Code Enforcement did their job the City would look better, and Code Enforcement is a civil matter.

Dr. Land asked who is responsible for the Financial Plan of the City. Dr. Miller responded that would include the City Administrator, Department Heads and City Council.

Dr. Land stated that in order to pay for these visions the City can: 1) Increase revenues (City Code Violations), 2) Cut expenses 3) Utilize Grants 4) Utilize service organizations, civic clubs, volunteers for beautification projects.

Mrs. Jankosky stated that in addition the City needs a 5/10 year plan and this is only a 1 year plan. The City needs a long term priority list of improvements established.

Mr. Frierson agreed with the need for a priority list. He stated that the Department Heads were breaking down the budget line items and including descriptions of expenses. He noted that City Council Business cards cost \$300 plus per box however this expense can be decreased by creating them in house or with low cost printing from another vendor. Dr. Land mentioned Vista Print. Mr. Frierson stated recently the City donated \$5,000 to the Homeless Coalition which he noted that if the City had extra money that should be used to improve city needs.

Dr. Miller stated a financial and strategic plan needs to be in place and explained the City's short/ long term goals and the City needs to know where it is financially. Dr. Land added that strategic plans and goals could be addressed in future workshops.

Mr. Tony Daniel questioned the expensive equipment used to mow City right of ways. Mr. Berndt assured this was County equipment that Mr. Daniel may have seen.

Dr. Dixon requested cutting all unnecessary spending and agreed with Mr. Frierson regarding the purchase of the business cards, as he bought his own cards when he was sitting on the Council as well as returning his pay check to the City to offset expenses. He questioned use of the laptops and cell phones.

Deputy Mayor Alice Frierson explained that the City Budget is in trouble and believes that the present Council has not spent time analyzing the budget and may be in over their heads.

Dr. Land asked that the City had youth activities in the past and how could we make that part of the City now or in the future.

Dr. Miller explained that establishing youth activities could be accomplished through a Public/Private partnership. Dr. Miller confirmed the City has available land and businesses such as this would generate taxes and revenue. Dr. Miller gave examples of Tremron and tax incentives and possibilities of having private businesses build a skate park.

Dr. Land explained a past project when they did a survey of where people went for medical services and why. He stated that there was no particular reason but the attitude was "it's always better somewhere else". He asked how can Arcadia be that place where outside communities want to come for services.

Mr. Ernie Hewitt stated Code Enforcement needs to remain with the Police Department due to political issues; however the Police Department can scale down but not removed entirely from the City.

Dr. Dixon responded that according to F.S. the Sheriff is mandated to protect and serve the citizens. He stated that 1.7 million could be saved by leaving the protection to the Sheriff.

Mrs. Jankosky inputted that she spoke with Code Enforcement and one person cannot address the entire City and perhaps more staff is needed. Dr. Land responded that every sworn Officer can perform Code Enforcement duties.

Mrs. Adrienne Daly inquired about a truck route around the City using Highway 31 as a bypass. Dr. Land responded that issue was proposed and would be a Department of Transportation decision.

Mr. Frierson stated that the City needs to maximize its assets and get all you can out of all that you have.

Dr. Land reviewed that beautification of the City's Gateways could be accomplished by utilizing the various clubs such as the Garden Club, Arcadia Village and Rotary Club may assist in beautifying the entrances.

Dr. Miller reported that Lake Katherine has seen some improvements through various projects. He stated that the City could implement "Adopt a Gateway", "Adopt a Road", "Adopt a Park" programs.

Dr. Land interjected that Beautification Grants are available and use of zeriscape plants could solve the need for water sprinkling systems. He reviewed various points: 1) Community Pride 2) Code Enforcement 3) South entrance to City – Mobile Home Park 4) Utilizing 4 H-Club, local nurseries, schools, volunteers, Sunbolt, Tremron, Community groups.

Dr. Dixon requested pro-active Code Enforcement.

Dr. Land reviewed infrastructure and noted that the lighting around Arcadia Housing Authority is in need of repair and sidewalks are needed in the City possibly through state funding.

Dr. Miller responded that the previous City Council set aside funding for underground utilities, sidewalks and street repairs. He added that the City recently filed a Request for Proposal for repair to utilities and streets through USDA grant funding.

Dr. Miller responded to Mr. Daniel that the City and County do work together on infrastructure projects. (Example repaving of Nursing Home Drive)

Dr. Dixon reported in speaking with Senator Bennett that the City should work together with the County on Infrastructure Grants that the City would otherwise not be entitled to.

Councilman Fink reported that North Port was LAP certified which allows the City to conduct their own engineering and are eligible for many grants and offered that maybe the City could partner with other LAP certified entities.

Mrs. Jankosky noted that she previously worked with a LAP certified City and the City could look at the County and timing of projects and piggy back on their projects.

7930

Councilman Fink inquired as to an MPO and Joint Planning Agreement with the County.

Dr. Miller confirmed that the City can use assistance from other Counties due to the number of population needed or could join with other existing MPOs.

Dr. Dixon gave the closing invocation.

**ADJOURN**

Having no further business, the workshop was adjourned at 12:30 PM.

APPROVED THIS 21<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF FEB., 2012

By:

  
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Keith Keene, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Virginia S. Haas, CMC  
City Recorder