

Board of Township Trustees of Anderson Township

March 11, 2025

Trustees Present: Lexi Lausten, Dee Stone

Committee Members Present: Peg Fenner, Brian Gay, Lindsey Griffis, John Halpin, Jay Lewis, Elizabeth Maier, Karen Schwamberger, Karl Sieber, Cynthia Sieber, Susan Wheatley, Jim Willis

Others Present: Steve Sievers (Asst. Township Administrator for Operations), Paul Drury (Director of Planning & Zoning), Eli Davies (Planner I), Logan Vaughn (UC Co-op), Mary Ellen Knaebel (Director of Health Promotion and Education, HCPH), Bruce Berno (Tree Committee Member)

Members Absent: Viki Beck, Katie Buchmann, Matt Chaffin, Kevin Comerford, Duane Donohoo, Steve Feagins, Andrea Granieri, Joe Hice, Nicole Hunter, Philip Kiley, Anne Miller, Dan O'Rourke, Zach Peterson, Paul Sheckels, Paul Sian

Call to Order – 4:32 P.M.

Motion to Adopt Agenda

Mrs. Lausten moved to adopt the agenda. Mrs. Stone seconded the motion. Vote: Mrs. Lausten, yes; Mrs. Stone, yes; Mr. Gerth, absent.

Anderson Township Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee

Meeting Outline

4:30 Welcome & Introductions – *Trustees and Paul Drury*

- Mr. Drury welcomed the committee members to the March meeting and sent his appreciation for the work that the groups have done since the December meeting, explaining how all the programs overlap with the Townships' goals in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Mr. Drury acknowledged that this was an official public meeting.

4:35 Meeting Summary & Report Back

2.3.1 (Maintain, monitor and plan for Township streets and overall road network (including sidewalks, trails and bike lanes)

- Sidewalk Assessment

- Mr. Gay stated that there are subgroups within the transportation subgroup, and he, along with Mrs. Schwamberger, are focusing on the Township's sidewalk assessment process. He also remarked that a shared assessment policy, where costs would be shared between residents and the township for a resident-initiated project had been drafted as part of the 2023 Trails Plan but was never adopted.

- Trails Plan Implementation

- Mr. Sievers stated that most of the members of the Trails Plan Implementation group were not present but noted that staff prepared a summary or snapshot of the status of all of the Trails Plan projects between 2023, 2024, and 2025. Mr. Sievers commended staff for all the work on these projects and the Board of Trustees for their support and efforts that allowed for tremendous push in the project.
- Mr. Gay commented that committee members had asked for an update on the construction projects happening.
 - Mr. Sievers responded that there was a summary included in the email sent by Mr. Davies to committee members before the meeting. He added that this document had information like what was formerly shared at transportation, economic development and WeThrive! meetings in the past.
- Mrs. Lausten discussed how the Trustees' arrangement of alternating meeting attendance with the committee can cause them to lose traction on projects. She added that the meeting summaries were very helpful in bridging the gaps and knowing the movement that has been made.

- Coordination with METRO

- Mr. Sieber discussed the existing 5 bus routes in Anderson Township and the Eastgate area, and METRO's openness to having the Eastgate route stop in Anderson. There was discussion on where these routes go, including METRO looking into creating a stop and turnaround in the Target area along Beechmont.
 - Committee members asked how METRO tracks interest in new routes and surveys riders at different stops.
 - Mr. Gay explained that METRO is looking at the Committee as being an opportunity to promote the services that are available, and helping to gauge the interest in a route from Eastgate that would connect to Anderson.
- Mr. Drury stated that Emi Randall from METRO was looking at ridership and bus frequency. METRO noticed a trend of people going to work earlier and coming home earlier and are looking into adjusting the express routes to start earlier. He also mentioned that Ms. Randall had shown a map of the density around the routes and previously noticed a decrease, but they are now seeing an increase.

- Mr. Sieber stated that the new METRO Now service is currently only available along Colerain Ave. and in Springdale/Sharonville.
- Mr. Davies stated that there is a great opportunity with the larger group to provide great feedback for METRO on related transit topics by using their network to gauge resident support.
- Mr. Halpin added that businesses are starting to recognize that people don't want to come back and enjoy working hybrid or remote after COVID, which is hurting METRO's ridership. He mentioned that METRO Access is also available, which is an on-demand service that links to transporting people with disabilities.
- Mrs. Lausten asked how the township could reach out to residents to help invest in METRO's routes, possibly looking to do digital surveys as METRO did with the streetcar project.
 - Mr. Lewis noted METRO also had discussions prior to seeking a tax levy in 2020.

3.2.5 (Promote and support the development of a skilled workforce within the community)

- Business survey

- Mr. Drury stated that members from this group were not present but plan on using the 2020 Business Survey, updating it, and releasing it to the businesses. Ms. Donovan is working with this group and hopes to get the survey released in early April with a May deadline. With previous surveys, staff and committee members can then identify trends and individual businesses that may have questions or concerns.
- Mr. Sievers stated an example from the 2022 survey is workforce hiring and was a huge issue, so they did a targeted outreach to 20 different businesses, ranging from daycare facilities to veterinary clinics, just to see what they were experiencing and how the Township may assist.

- Connecting with local schools

- Mr. Halpin stated he heard back from Great Oaks and has a connection with them. The group then plans to connect with Great Oaks, Forest Hills, and the Anderson Chamber to identify partnership opportunities.
- Mr. Halpin asked why the Chamber isn't present at the meeting.
 - Mr. Sievers stated they weren't part of the committee but could try to invite them. Mr. Halpin replied how he would like to see the Chamber at the next meeting.
- Mrs. Lausten noted that Melanie Hartong, the Workforce Development Specialist with Forest Hills, has created workshops for high school students to learn about

Township government with the Trustees and the Planning and Zoning Department. She also mentioned that the Chamber has worked closely with Melanie.

8.1.3 (Preserve and protect the natural and environmental resources found throughout the community)

- Homegrown National Parks

- Ms. Fenner stated they have a sustainability team at her Church, St. Timothy's, that discusses native plants and the value that these plants bring, and there may be ways to work with this committee to broaden that message.
- Ms. Fenner presented about Homegrown National Parks, noting that Anderson has a lot of Greenspace and open space but also a lot of mowed yards, and the subgroup hopes to encourage homeowners to create these wildlife habitats. Homegrown National Parks is a grassroots movement created by Professor Doug Tallamy at the University of Delaware.
 - Ms. Fenner stated that the motivation behind the program is that the nation can't rely on the national parks system to do all the work with nature, so they encourage homeowners to grow more native plants. For example, the amount of butterflies has decreased by 25% in almost 2 decades. Homeowners, with their greenspace, have the capability to add wildlife habitats to their yards.
 - The subgroup's goal of with the program is to inform residents about the program and encourage them to participate and help reduce the invasive species. Participation in this program in Cincinnati is currently heavy around the Cincinnati Zoo, and there are currently 20 residents in Anderson that are participating. Anderson Township also has areas such as the Heritage Center Arboretum and Nagel Middle School rain garden. Specifically in schools it could be a great opportunity to educate students on native plants. Ms. Fenner indicated that if the Township Government is supportive, the subgroup could spread this information about wildlife and invasive species, possibly using Anderson Insights and Facebook to spread information. The Homegrown National Park website has links that tie into ZIP Codes and provide information on how to get started, what's invasive, and other resources on the blog.
- Ms. Fenner stated the subgroup has developed a proposal requesting the Township's support, but only staff have received this so far. The trustees have not seen it yet.
- Mr. Berno asked how you get approved as a Home Grown National Park after planting some native plants in the yard.

- Ms. Fenner responded that all you have to do is plug in the information (how much you planted, what space) and the website tracks all the data for you. Businesses can also participate as well, and you can see other residents who may be participating as well as you.
- Mrs. Lausten stated that this is a great way to start small and decide if you want to progress or stay where you are.

- Beautification Awards

- Ms. Fenner announced how they are working with the Township's Beautification Awards program to add a category for native plantings as this overlaps with Home Grown and would like to submit it for Township approval at the same time. Ms. Fenner also struck up the idea of creating a page about the Committee's work on part of the Anderson Township website. This could be a resource for residents on the Beautification Awards, and they also spoke with Native Roots to help assist and having them on the panel for a kick-off event.
- Mr. Halpin stated that the Beautification Awards tie in with the Tree Committee and he would like to coordinate more on projects, possibly getting someone in the subgroup to participate in the Tree Committee. The Tree Committee sends letters to developers that may be developing on a property to have them recognize the trees that may be getting removed and to either have them replanted or replaced elsewhere in the Township. The Tree Committee also provides trees to residents that may be impacted by the sidewalk assessments and constructions and have started this back in 2009. The Tree Committee also does a Tree Nomination each year where they present a plaque to winners of the Shade Tree Category, Evergreen Category, Ornamental Category, Fall Color Category. They also do survival monitoring on the street trees that they planted, keeping up on the health and survival of the trees that they planted, which started back in 2016.

8.3.1 (Encourage recycling and the safe use of appropriate disposal of solid waste and hazardous materials by all generators in the Township)

- Partner with local organizations (R3Source, Reuse Hub, etc.)

- Ms. Griffis addressed two specific areas of interest since their subgroup is working as a group. First discussed was the recycling drop off center in Anderson Township, which is potentially changing with the future reconstruction of the Anderson Operations Center. The group is hoping to get a survey in April or May to see what the usage is. The last survey was done in 2017 and had an interesting result with people who don't have trash collection. There's been development since that study

since Clermont County is opening a drop off center in Batavia which may better serve Clermont County residents who usually use Anderson's drop off.

- Ms. Griffis also touched on Rumpke developing a mailer for their customers who don't use the recycling service, reminding them it's a free service when you have a trash service. Rumpke won't release the addresses to the members of the committee but is working closely with the Township on the design of that and will coordinate the mailing.
 - Mr. Sievers stated that Rumpke is now the only provider of residential waste collection in the Township.
- Ms. Griffis stated the subgroup hopes to also encourage larger residential communities (condominiums, apartments and senior housing) or larger businesses who don't have on-site recycling, to get that service implemented for their residents.
- Ms. Griffis mentioned how she lived in the condominiums in Newtown, and they didn't have a recycling option, so it all goes to the trash. She noted that at the time she also didn't know about the drop-off center and wondered how many other neighborhoods are like that.
- Mr. Sievers commented that 86% of Rumpke's customers in the Township use recycling, 16% don't. Rumpke charges one fee for both trash and recycling, only a few select addresses that are grandfathered in for trash only service. Republic doesn't offer curbside service. Rumpke is willing to provide recycling for individual customers in the neighborhoods that have a joint contract, paid for by a homeowners' association for example, for waste homeowners.
- Mr. Sievers stated that curbside recycling customers subsidized the drop-off center as the Township receives funds for the amount of recycled materials (and 90% of that comes from curbside recycling). We are at the point where those funds no longer pay the amount that the township spends on the drop-off center, and it is not sustainable moving forward. He added that the survey Ms. Griffis mentioned is set to occur on May 2nd, May 3rd and May 4th, and the Township could use volunteers to help with that.
- Mrs. Stone asked how much recycling is going into the containers.
 - Mr. Sievers responded that the contamination is the lowest it's ever been based on the number of complaints that staff have received and time to clean up the site, but we don't have a statistic.
- Mr. Berno commented that from a 2017 survey, 21% of people don't have a trash service.
- Ms. Griffis proceeded to talk about Reuse Hub, R3Source, and Cincinnati Reuse and Recycling.

- Mr. Berno noted that the Cincinnati Reuse and Recycling Hub and R3Source are independent entities. Mr. Berno also discussed the orange garbage bags that you buy from Kroger for recycling, and Rumpke comes to pick it up.

- Expand awareness of recycling in the Township

- Mr. Sievers stated that staff separated the recycling discussion into two aspects, traditional recycling (curbside) and then everything else, and that they felt the group was focused on how to get awareness out, whether it be reconnaissance or other methods.
- Mrs. Stone asked whether Vantage was going to have recycling.
 - Mr. Sievers answered that they are not sure, but the township had requested it, and Vantage said they will look into it.

Motion to Adjourn the Board of Township Trustees Special Meeting at 5:34 p.m.

Mrs. Lausten moved to adjourn. Mrs. Stone seconded the motion. Vote: Mrs. Lausten, yes; Mrs. Stone, yes; Mr. Gerth, absent.

5:35 Next Steps

- Mr. Drury asked that the subgroups continue working on their projects.
- Mr. Davies added that if anyone had any comments about other subgroups' projects, they can reach out to staff who can pass the feedback along to the people working on the project.
- Mrs. Wheatly asked staff what the next steps for her subgroup could be, as they are ready to move forward but are currently stopped because they need to wait for the Trustees' meeting and are hoping to continue forward in May.
 - Mr. Drury replied that this meeting provided a good opportunity to present to some of the Trustees, but that they would need all three to be informed at another meeting before moving forward.
 - Mr. Sievers mentioned there is a planned Earth Day event at Anderson High School, which is taking place on April 19th, where students will have presentations established and the public will likely be invited to take part.
 - Mr. Drury wrapped up the meeting by asking groups if they have any other questions or suggestions for staff if they do so by reaching out to Mr. Davies, who is coordinating this Committee, or reach out to the staff members that are advising the groups.

Next meetings:

- Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 4:30pm

- *Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 4:30pm*
- *Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 4:30pm*

5:15 Work Session (*optional*)