

Futures Planning Team Forum
8:30 am, February 20, 2008
Waterloo Center for the Arts, Petersen Town Hall

IN ATTENDANCE: LaDene Bowen (IDM), Bill Wood (IDM), Don Chaplain (IDM), Cindy Angel (IDM), Alli Born (IDM), Drew Conrad (IDM), Floyd Winter, David McCalley, Thomas Jennings, Steve Schmitt, Tom Eachus, Sharon Juon, Pat Sass, Mike Young, June Watkins, Bob Lincoln, Vern Fish, Richard McAlister, Jeri Thornsberry, Bob Schaffer, Aric Schroeder, Blake Hollis, Amy Landers, Floyd Winter, Kathy Flynn, Janice Hanish, Barb Berquam, Richard McAlister, Belinda Creighton-Smith, Tom Ferguson (BHC), Kim Veeder (BHC), Frank Magsamen (BHC), Eileen Daley (BHC), Grant Veeder (BHC).

Magsamen and IDM staff commenced the meeting. Rick Smyre's PowerPoint presentation was shown again. During introductions, attendees mentioned improvements they wanted to see in county government in twenty years. Ideas provided (some more than once) included alternative energy sources, intergovernmental cooperation and coordination, better use of land for more livable communities, e-government, integration into the global economy, holistic approach to government, using local resources for energy, consolidation and blending of governmental entities, reduction of poverty, a cultural climate that encourages young people and retirees to stay or return here, provision of services for people who don't have families and/or resources, sharing of services on a regional basis, fiscal flexibility to meet needs, maintaining human connections, job competitiveness, inclusive vision for all residents, showcasing diversity, reduction of elected positions, ongoing conversation about the future, better Internet access for all citizens, state involvement in statewide local needs, being an acknowledged best-practices county and a destination point that takes advantage of its ethnic and racial diversity, having a plan to pay for all these improvements, having a workforce development plan to help implement these ideas, raising the bar on community health, being interconnected regionally and globally but still having a grassroots identity, breaking down the urban/rural jurisdictional divide, drawing more mature people back into the workforce and attracting quality people to county employment.

Presentations were given by Barbara Berquam (Emergency Management), Bob Lincoln (Community Services/Central Point of Coordination for Mental Health/Developmental Disability Services), Amy Landers (Youth Shelter), Kim Veeder (Information Technology), Aric Schroeder (Planning and Zoning), Mark Johnson (County Sheriff), Tom O'Rourke (Public Health), Bennie Spain (Veterans Affairs), Tom Ferguson (County Attorney), and June Watkins (Human Resources).

Most had handouts. I kept notes for those that did not, but I don't presently have time to write them up. I will try to get them ready next week.

After small group discussions with the first set of five offices, group representatives gave summaries of their discussions:

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: They discussed the impact of technology such as GIS. They foresaw substantial multi-disciplinary interaction and cross-training.

COMMUNITY SERVICES/CPC: It's a very complex situation. If regionalization is going to work we'll have to honor the cultures in the individual communities. Country View could be used as an assessment tool that results in referrals to other agencies. There is uncertainty in crucial federal funding.

YOUTH SHELTER: We need to get families involved with problem children; we have to work with school systems, Hawkeye Community College, job services, and the university to come up with solutions. We need to document and put in a database of what works to help identify services that can have an impact on future.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: The IT staff is very progressive. They talked about online and web-based services that give customers what they want. There needs to be a balance between privacy and the public's right to know. Funding is a big issue; IT-trained staff is in high demand.

PLANNING AND ZONING: We need to define acceptable areas of the county to grow so we don't have ongoing rezoning issues. We should review and rewrite ordinances. We should plan the redevelopment of land in incorporated areas for services for residents.

There following the second set of presentations. The small group discussions went until 12:30 pm, and there was no summary following.

The next Futures Planning Team meeting will be March 26 from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm, at which we will pull all of the vision elements together with a view to a written document.