

**VISION DIXIE
STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES AUGUST 24, 2006**

Chairman James J. Eardley, Washington County Commissioner, opened the meeting at 2:08 p.m., at the Dixie Center, Entrada Room B.

Agenda

The proposed Agenda for this meeting was as follows:

- Welcome/Introductions..... Commissioner James Eardley, Chair
- Discuss Steering Committee's Role Commissioner James Eardley
- Overview of the Vision Dixie Process Ted Knowlton, Envision Utah
- Brainstorm impacts to project through scenarios..... Ted Knowlton
- Enlist help in getting attendance at the initial public workshops
..... Steering Committee facilitated by Ted Knowlton
- Discuss important goals/considerations in developing the vision
..... Steering Committee facilitated by Alan Matheson, Envision Utah
- Other business Steering Committee
- Schedule future meetings and Adjourn..... Commissioner James Eardley

Attendees

Those in attendance by invitation at the main tables and those interested citizens in the audience are as follows:

Main Table (Steering Committee Members)

Christina Schultz, representing Dixie State College
Mike Empey, Office of Congressman Matheson
Lee Bracken, Mayor, Enterprise City
Scott Hirschi, Economic Development
Jim Crisp, Manager, St. George Field Office of BLM
Alan Gardner, County Commission
James Eardley, County Commission
Jay Ence, County Commission
John Andrews, Associate Director, School & Institutional Trust Lands (SITLA)
Karl Wilson, Mayor, LaVerkin
Jane Whalen, Realtor, Hurricane
Donald Stratton, President Interstate Rock, Hurricane
Kenneth Sizemore, Executive Director, Five County Association of Governments
Kent Perkins, Director, Leisure Services Department, City of St. George
Doug Paddock, Central

Barbara Hjelle, Water Conservancy District
Lorri Kocinski-Puchlik, formerly with St. George Chamber of Commerce
Kayla Koeber, Merrill Lynch
Edna Hunt, St. George

Audience Members

Ron Whitehead, Washington County Public Works
David Patterson, Deputy Washington County Attorney
John Willie, Washington County Administrator
Dean Cox, Washington County Emergency Services Director
Martha Smythe, Washington County resident
John Reed, Ivins
Gary Esplin, City Manager, St. George
Daniel McArthur, Mayor, St. George
Jerry Rasmussen, Washington County Deputy Administrator
Amanda Smith, The Nature Conservancy
Alan Matheson, Envision Utah
Ted Knowlton, Envision Utah
Debora Christopher, Washington County Planning Commission
Julie M. Cropper, Washington County Planning Commission
Fred C. Johnson, Virgin
Shauna Johnson, Virgin

Welcome and Introductions

Vision Dixie Chairman James Eardley welcomed all in attendance, noting that this is the very first meeting of the Steering Committee. There were several absences among those who were invited, and he hoped that this was because of a schedule conflict rather than a lack of interest. Those who failed to attend will be contacted to ensure their willingness to participate. Chairman Eardley expressed gratitude for all those who made time in their busy schedules to be a part of the planning process which he called an outgrowth of the Washington County Growth & Conservation Act of 2006 (Land Bill). Those who have been invited to join the Steering Committee are basically being asked to oversee the process, providing their experience and expertise in various areas of business and culture in the county. Chairman Eardley asked that those seated around the table introduce themselves. Their names are indicated above.

Chairman Eardley admitted that there is some controversy about the benefits of the Land Bill, but

he added that the County feels that it is a vitally important and beneficial piece of legislation that will be of critical value to the future of the area. There will be hearings before Congress in Washington, D.C., concerning the Land Bill some time during the second or third week of September. The idea behind the Land Bill was to provide some direction for issues such as transportation corridors, utilities, and development in Washington County, given the explosive growth of the area in recent years. He introduced Commissioner Alan Gardner, who has been extensively involved with the Land Bill from its inception.

Commissioner Gardner said that there are limited places in the County in which to build roads economically because of topographical considerations and also bearing in mind that endangered species and native wildlife habitats must be protected. Whereas the designation of federal lands is an issue for Congress to deal with, it is the wise use of private lands that will be the subject of workshops and discussions among communities and interest groups, many of whom have already had a great deal of input in the planning process.

Chairman Eardley said that the Executive Committee would appreciate the attendance of Steering Committee members at the various workshops, to the extent that they can participate. Their function will be to facilitate the process, provide information to citizens, and encourage constructive discussion concerning their vision of what they would like Washington County to become in future years.

Overview of the Vision Dixie Process

Ted Knowlton, Planning Director of Envision Utah, presented a powerpoint slide show to explain to the Steering Committee what they can expect from this planning process. Vision Dixie is sponsored by Washington County, in collaboration with Envision Utah, the Nature Conservancy, the Oquirrh Institute, the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration, Five County Association of Governments, Dixie Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Washington County Water Conservancy District. The process will also help the citizens decide the disposition of critical lands, open space, transportation, and housing issues. Because both Vision Dixie and the Land Bill will ultimately determine the disposition of land, they are closely related.

The strategy behind Vision Dixie is to develop its vision by using a grass-roots process, going out into the community and listening to the public with no preconceived ideas of what may emerge as a result. Further, their ideas will be encapsulated into scenarios of what the County may be like in the year 2035. People will have the confidence that the ultimate vision represents

a good-faith, thoroughly researched idea of what life will be like in their community. Then the analysis of these scenarios is taken back to the public for review. The more people are involved in the process, the better the end result will be; there is power in many voices contributing to the vision.

A technique that has been used by the private sector for years in looking at various business and economic cycles is to use the *What if?* process. This involves looking ahead thirty years at various possibilities and scenarios. As with any experiment, it is useful to have a control - in this case, a baseline scenario, which provides a picture of the county if current development trends continue, guided by existing municipal plans. The baseline analysis helps to identify the relative advantages and disadvantages of each alternative growth scenario and will include a projection of land development, anticipated housing characteristics, air quality, traffic congestion, and water consumption.

The purpose of the workshops is to achieve a microcosm of the diversity that exists throughout Washington County at each workshop table. People will be forced to reconcile competing goals and find areas of commonality with their neighbors, to compromise and cooperate towards a shared goal. Often at the workshop table people arrive at common-sense solutions to a variety of problems. Mr. Knowlton said that one of the things citizens at the workshops are asked to do, as a guideline, is to accommodate projected demand. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget has estimated the population of Washington County will add to its population each year an amount equal to the approximate size of the City of Ivins, ultimately reaching the population of Boise, Idaho.

The workshops typically last approximately three to four hours. Each table selects a spokesperson, and ideally a member of the Steering Committee would be present at the table to act as a facilitator. The scenarios that are developed are modified using feedback from local planners and the Steering Committee. The public will be asked to indicate which elements of each scenario have the most support. Feedback will also be sought through surveys and websites.

Following the workshops there will be open houses, newsletters, and other strategies. Ultimately, a vision scenario will emerge, showing the benefits to the County as we embark upon the values that were supported by the majority of citizens in the workshops. A set of principles was adopted by the Wasatch Front Regional Council after consultation with Envision Utah:

- Optimize use and maintenance of existing infrastructure;

- Encourage contiguous growth to reduce infrastructure expenses;
- Encourage future commercial and residential areas within close proximity of each other to reduce travel distances;
- Use transportation to bolster town centers;
- Promote interconnected streets to reduce travel distances;
- Encourage an adequate supply of moderately-priced housing near regional job centers

Mr. Knowlton said that there will be a Summit Kickoff in early October, which the Steering Committee members should make every effort to attend. The scenarios will be released in early 2007, and the Vision Draft released in early Fall of 2007.

He reiterated that the role of the Executive Committee should be the day-to-day overseeing of the consultant work scopes, including administering the budget; the Steering Committee will make decisions regarding the visioning process using feedback from the workshops; and the Technical Advisory Committee will provide guidance on the technical content and data of scenarios.

Brainstorm Impacts to Project through Scenarios

Chairman Eardley encouraged anyone on the Steering Committee to speak out with questions, concerns, or suggestions. Scott Hirschi asked for clarification on the role of the consulting firms. Chairman Eardley said that different firms had been interviewed and certain choices made, as follows.

- Jeff Winston of Winston Associates is a firm out of Boulder, Colorado, and will take the lead in developing scenarios and working with Envision Utah in running the workshops. Mr. Winston has worked with a variety of communities in developing long-term plans and has an excellent reputation. Jeff Winston is one of the foremost specialists in the country at running grass-roots-based public processes.
- Bear West Company, a Salt Lake City planning and environmental services consulting firm, has extensive experience in multi-jurisdictional planning and consensus building. Bear West will help to encapsulate the scenarios and develop them into a vision plan.
- InterPlan Company is a Utah-based corporation dedicated to transportation planning services. InterPlan will model these plans and project traffic consequences such as congestion, driving time, etc.
- The Strategic Planning Group, Inc., of Jacksonville Beach, Florida, will do a housing analysis, using some data from today's situations and projecting into the future, using demographic features from the scenarios, land supply data, land prices, and so forth.

Ted said that, using figures from the State of Utah, Washington County is expected to have a population of 400,000 people by the year 2035. Ted suggests that Vision Dixie focus on the figure of 400,000 rather than the year 2035; in whatever year Washington County reaches that population figure, it should be ready, via the Vision Dixie process, to accommodate that growth.

One critical issue facing Washington County is workforce and/or affordable housing, and Chairman Eardley mentioned that there is currently another committee, the Dixie Area Workforce Housing Affordability Committee (DAWHAC), working on this problem. Commissioner Alan Gardner is the chair of that group, which seeks to remediate the problem of lack of affordable housing for people in the general workforce (teachers, police officers, nurses, etc.). Chairman Eardley urged that the two groups cooperate in exchanging information, making presentations, and sharing consultant data in order to avoid duplication of effort and cost.

Enlist Help in Getting Attendance at Initial Public Workshops

Ted Knowlton presented a Tentative Workshop Schedule, as follows:

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|---------|----------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Oct. 17 | Shivwits Reservation | 5:30-9:00 pm | Shivwits Community Center |
| Oct. 18 | Rockville | 5:30-9:00 pm | School House |
| Oct. 24 | Washington City | 5:30-9:00 pm | Washington City Museum |
| Oct. 25 | Toquerville | 5:30-9:00 pm | City Hall |
| Oct. 26 | LaVerkin | 5:30-9:00 pm | Old City Building |
| Nov. 1 | Enterprise | 5:30-9:00 pm | Senior Center |
| Nov. 2 | New Harmony | 5:30-9:00 pm | Fire House |
| Nov. 7 | St. George | 5:30-9:00 pm | Dixie Center |
| Nov. 8 | St. George | 5:30-9:00 pm | Senior Center |
| Nov. 9 | Santa Clara | 5:30-9:00 pm | Lava Ridge Inter. School |
| Nov. 14 | Springdale | 5:30-9:00 pm | Library/Community Center |
| Nov. 15 | Hurricane | 5:30-9:00 pm | Senior Center |
| Nov. 16 | Gunlock | 5:30-9:00 pm | |

Ted acknowledged that the dates are not absolutely fixed at this time. He encouraged committee members to utilize the sample letter to citizens contained in the three-ring binder provided, inviting citizens to attend the workshop(s) in their area. Anyone on the committee can send a letter to people they feel will be interested, will participate, and will bring to the table a meaningful and informative presence. No one should send out a letter yet, while the dates are still tentative, but members should be thinking about who would make a positive contribution to the workshop process. A final list will be prepared and sent out in the next two weeks. Ted said

that people should be invited to only one workshop, presumably in the area in which they live. Scott Hirschi suggested that there may be some citizens who own property in more than one area of the county and therefore may be interested in attending more than one workshop.

Donald Stratton commented that in his opinion Hurricane citizens would be more interested in what is happening in their own particular area rather than in the county at large. Chairman Eardley said that most people will, in fact, be concerned for their own “backyards,” but will also realize that what affects the rest of the county will eventually affect them, as well. Especially in terms of transportation issues, for example, the direction St. George takes will ultimately affect all outlying areas. Ken Sizemore asked whether Steering Committee members will be expected to facilitate the discussion at the workshop tables. Ted Knowlton said yes, that committee members can encourage people to think beyond their specific borders and take into account the common good of the entire county. Ken then said that the Steering Committee should have a dry run to practice and refine the workshop process.

Discuss Important Goals / Considerations in Developing the Vision

Alan Matheson, Executive Director of Envision Utah, expressed admiration for the Washington County Commission for taking the lead on this process. It is a vitally important planning effort and one that takes courage and conviction on the part of its leaders. Those decisions that are made in the next few years by members of these committees will have a lasting effect on the citizens of Washington County for decades to come. Alan said that the members of the Steering Committee, although diverse in background and personality, are all community members with credibility who care about the future of the county and are willing to work to ensure a positive outcome. He opened the floor to the members of the committee who may have questions or offer suggestions on how to best proceed, how to refine the process to fit Washington County’s particular needs, and so forth.

Ken Sizemore commented that this group is not generating a county-wide plan but rather creating strategies and goals for each entity to amend its own individual plans. The Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget requires that the committee create a critical lands element for the County General Plan in order to justify its portion of the funding. Five County will be involved in creating the actual document that becomes the Critical Lands Plan.

Scott Hirschi added that Ralph Becker of Bear West is an attorney and legislator, credited with authoring many state zoning laws, and Vision Dixie can rely on him to guide the process in the right direction legally.

John Andrews of SITLA asked how available scientific knowledge will be incorporated into the workshop scenario, such as information about soils, endangered species, the watershed, etc. Alan Matheson said that the Technical Committee would provide information to the Steering Committee, who will, in turn, decide how much information to impart to the workshops and in what manner. Chairman Eardley said that in his opinion the information should be available so that informed decisions can be made, but that the information need not be handed out indiscriminately.

Lorri Kocinski-Puchlik asked if there were some way to get technical information out to the media, to help identify top priority issues and educate the public about them through the media. Scott Hirschi suggested that the media would, by its very nature, drive people to attend workshop meetings, where information may be disseminated as needed. Kayla Koeber added that the process would be better served if invitees to the workshops were concentrated in the quadrants where they live. Too much information, that is spread over the entire county, may be overwhelming or too general for some people. She suggested that each workshop remain focused on a fairly narrow area. Alan Matheson said that the Steering Committee needs to weigh regional solutions vs specific solutions. Ted added that the workshops might spend twenty minutes to consider the key issues, grouping the most important into a top-ten list. He reiterated that the citizens are not being asked to come up with a final plan but rather to brainstorm ideas. The Steering Committee can then gauge the reactions of workshops attendees to certain situations.

Scott brought up the point that the projection for population in 2035 is 400,000 people, and that some in the community may not want to hear that. Alan Matheson responded that such a statistic should be presented as a projection, as the best information available, not as an inevitable fact.

The discussion turned toward the availability of water in the County, and the projections for that. Barbara Hjelle of the Washington County Water Conservancy District said that the District is forced to limit its growth scenarios because it must use the figures/projections from the State of Utah for its data. However, there are many variables to deal with, such as population, density, weather factors, etc. Don Stratton said that he thinks it is better to overestimate population figures because planning efforts can better be adapted down than up. In other words, if a community plans for a population of 400,000 and only achieves 300,000 it is much easier to adjust those plans down rather than up. He added that the infrastructure must be able to accommodate growth, and that those in positions of knowledge and expertise in that area should be consulted every step of the way.

Lorri said that consideration must also be given to recreational needs: placement of parks,

adequate open space, construction of facilities, etc. Marc Mortensen asked what the committee intends to do if the desires of the majority of the public conflict with the Land Bill. Chairman Eardley replied that the purpose of Vision Dixie is to try to accommodate public needs in relation to the realities of future growth. Not everyone will get everything he or she wants. Kent Perkins asked what could be done if the county gets too big. Doug Paddock wondered what happens in the thirty-sixth year of a thirty-five-year scenario. Alan Matheson said that variables and circumstances will change. What Vision Dixie does here is not carved in stone, but represents rather guiding principles that can be modified as circumstances require.

Ken Sizemore said he saw some logistical problems with the Vision Dixie plan thus far, in that the younger segment of the population is being largely ignored in favor of established citizens, landowners, and the elderly. He said that the venue for some of the workshops should be changed to include Dixie State College and the local high schools, so that the younger people can feel included. Christina Schultz from Dixie State College said that Vision Dixie would be welcome to use that location for a workshop.

Ken Sizemore also noted the absence of the community of Hildale for workshops.

Other Business / Next Meeting Dates

Chairman Eardley mentioned that a conflict exists with the previously scheduled date for the next Steering Committee meeting. The Huntsman World Senior Games will be occupying the Dixie Center on Oct. 12, 2006, for registration. Therefore, the date for the next Steering Committee meeting has been changed to **October 5, 2006, at 2:00 p.m. in Entrada Room B of the Dixie Center.**

The date for the next Executive Committee meeting is **September 14, 2006, at 2:00 p.m. in the Washington County Commission Chambers, 197 E. Tabernacle Street, St. George.**

Adjourn

Chairman Eardley thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.