Citizens' Advisory Board

June 25, 2025
10:00 a.m.
Councilman Denny Whayne Conference Room (Busch Building, 4th Floor)

Members Present: Erin Danastasio, Chair; Rusty Worley, Vice Chair; Andy Peebles; Clifton Smart; Becky Volz; Leslie Forrester; and Christina Angle.

Members Absent: Lauren Shantz*.

Guests:

City Staff: Collin Quigley, Interim City Manager; Maurice S. Jones, Deputy City Manager; Jordan Paul, City Attorney; Cora Scott, Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement; Melissa Hart, Assistant Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement; Kristen Milam, Senior Communications Coordinator; Amanda Ohlensehlen, Director of Economic Vitality and Workforce Development; Ron Schneider, Director of Parks and Recreation; Errin Kemper, Director of Environmental Services; Dan Smith, Director of Public Works; Steve Childers, Director of Planning and Development; Tim Rosenbury, Director of Quality of Place Initiatives; Macaylah Holden, City Clerk Administrative Specialist; and Anita Cotter, City Clerk.

*Arrived at 10:04 a.m.

Prior to the meeting being called to order, Becky Volz provided each Board member with a Springfield Neighborhoods pamphlet from the Neighborhood Advisory Council. No action was taken, and no discussion occurred.

Erin Danastasio, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:02 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Roll call was conducted. Present: Erin Danastasio, Rusty Worley, Andy Peebles, Clifton Smart, Becky Volz, Leslie Forrester, and Christina Angle. Absent: Lauren Shantz.

Mr. Worley moved to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2025, meeting as presented. Ms. Angle seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Danastasio, Worley, Peebles, Smart, Volz, Forrester, and Angle. Nays: None. Absent: Shantz. Abstain: None.

Ms. Danastasio turned the meeting over to Collin Quigley, Interim City Manager.

Mr. Quigley welcomed everyone and thanked the Board for their continued willingness to serve the community. Mr. Quigley began with follow up items from the May 21, 2025, meeting. He indicated each member had been provided with a Community Input Synthesis document. He explained the document was a summary of citizen feedback from the Forward SGF Comprehensive Plan and community input surveys. The community input surveys were called a "Citizen Satisfaction Survey," and they were completed every 2 to 3 years. He noted the last community input survey had been completed in 2023.

Ms. Angle asked if it was time to complete a new survey. Cora Scott, Director of Public Information and Civic Engagement, answered affirmatively but noted it was not included in the Fiscal Year 26 budget. She indicated a survey would cost approximately $20,000 to complete.

Ms. Danastasio expressed her appreciation for the Community Input Synthesis and thanked City staff for providing the document.

Mr. Quigley briefly discussed the Project Idea Portal previously reviewed at the May 21, 2025, meeting. Mr. Quigley explained the portal would be a way for citizens to submit project ideas to the Board in a centralized location. He indicated there would not be a press release or call for submissions and requested the Board provide feedback regarding the submission form.

Ms. Danastasio indicated Mayor Schrag had provided feedback on the submission form and explained there was a desire to ensure questions were adequately detailed to gather necessary information.

Andy Peebles asked if there was a set timeline to finalize the submission form. Mr. Quigley responded no, but it was preferrable to finalize the submission form prior to the July 23, 2025, meeting. Ms. Danastasio requested Ms. Scott provide the updated submission form to the Board. Ms. Danastasio also requested the Board provide feedback to Ms. Scott regarding the form no later than July 10, 2025.

Lauren Shantz expressed her belief it would be beneficial to clearly outline communication expectations at the onset of the Board's consideration process to ensure citizens understood when they might hear back from the Board. Ms. Shantz expressed she was not opposed to an informational press release on the submission form to provide citizens with knowledge of its availability. She indicated citizens had approached her on multiple occasions with a desire to present ideas to the Board.

Mr. Peebles expressed his support for an informational press release regarding the submission form and indicated he was eager to receive input from the community.

Clifton Smart also expressed his support for an informational press release but expressed his desire to remain cautious. He expressed his opinion it was necessary to clearly communicate the Board's expectations to the community.

It was the consensus of the Board to allow two weeks for feedback to be provided to Ms. Scott before the submission form went live for public use. It was also the consensus of the Board to have a press release announcing the submission form's availability and outline expectations for the community regarding the submission processing timeline.

Mr. Quigley thanked the Board for their feedback and indicated the submission form would be published after additional feedback had been received and incorporated. He briefly reviewed the role of the Board which was to recommend allocation of the 1/2-cent Spring Forward SGF Sales Tax to projects consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Quigley introduced Steve Childers, Director of Planning and Development, to present the City's Comprehensive Plan, Forward SGF.

Mr. Childers explained Forward SGF was the name of the City's current 20-year Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2022. He indicated criteria that had been set to guide the Board's work aligned with Forward SGF. Mr. Childers noted Missouri State statute required municipalities with a zoning code to have a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan would serve as a guide for growth and development in zoning, capital improvements, and funding priorities through 2040.

Mr. Childers noted the Forward SGF plan reflected a shared vision to "establish a long-term vision for land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and quality of life." In the creation of Forward SGF, nearly 1,500 participants had engaged in face-to-face workshops, and approximately 6,108 online engagements were seen. He explained the initial engagement process had included interviews, questionnaires, workshops, pop-up booths, and online mapping.

Mr. Childers explained the major themes of Forward SGF were quality of place, economic vitality, and future ready public infrastructure. Mr. Childers turned the meeting over to Mr. Quigley.

Mr. Quigley indicated a speaker would present on each major theme of Forward SGF and turned the meeting over to Tim Rosenbury, Director of Quality of Place Initiatives.

Mr. Rosenbury explained quality of place focused on ways to make cities attractive, so they became a place where people wanted to settle down, grow families, and invest in the community. He indicated attracting industry was a key part of growing a city. Mr. Rosenbury noted industry had been attracted to Springfield. He also indicated Springfield had been listed as one of the best places to work from home. Mr. Rosenbury explained Springfield simply had a different kind of workforce. He stressed making Springfield a better place to live through quality of place would also create viability for a sustainable economy.

Mr. Rosenbury indicated quality of place referred to the appeal and livability of a community, which encompassed physical characteristics and intangible qualities. Quality of place investments could include beautification, placemaking, and public space activation. Public space activation could include art displays, greenways, gathering spaces, and pedestrian-friendly street designs. In addition, quality of place investments should support community identity and pride while encouraging reinvestment in older neighborhoods. Mr. Rosenbury highlighted the Rountree Neighborhood as an excellent example of investment in older neighborhoods.

Mr. Rosenbury expressed his belief the City should be considering the desires of the younger generation and involve young professionals to create a quality of place that appeals to them

Mr. Rosenbury highlighted the objectives of quality of place, which included connecting people and places, a community vision built around shared values, stimulating activity and engagement, inspiring civic life participation, and transforming communities. He explained quality of place was a means to other ends that was best achieved through other initiatives.

Mr. Quigley introduced Amanda Ohlensehlen, Director of Economic Vitality and Workforce Development, to present regarding economic vitality. Mr. Quigley turned the meeting over to Ms. Ohlensehlen.

Ms. Ohlensehlen explained economic vitality moved beyond traditional economic development. Economic vitality asked how to build a resilient and innovative economy. In addition, it asked how to support sustainable development that would provide generational economic support. Ms. Ohlensehlen indicated economic vitality should encourage mixed-use developments and neighborhood commercial hubs. Further, economic vitality should develop aging corridors for new business growth to promote modern workforce needs. Economic vitality should also invest in public spaces and infrastructure to create conditions conducive to private development.

Ms. Ohlensehlen provided examples of economic vitality developments within Springfield that focused on corporate business attraction. She explained corporate business attraction and subsequent success helped inspire other investors' trust in Springfield, which could lead to further development. Examples of corporate business attraction included Costco, Target, and Buc-ee's. The development of the Costco location in Springfield led to redevelopment of critical infrastructure, supported sales tax revenues, and created nearly 200 jobs.

A secondary Target location in the Sunshine Towne Center would be part of a commercial development established as a community improvement district. Ms. Ohlensehlen explained the community improvement district would be established for a period of 20 years with the higher sales tax rate being used to fund critical infrastructure related to the development.

The development of a Buc-ee's location created approximately 175 to 225 full-time positions and necessitated expansion of critical infrastructure north of Interstate 44. The expansion of critical infrastructure such as roads, power lines, and sewer services also positioned the area for future development. Ms. Ohlensehlen noted Buc-ee's was also part of a community improvement district.

Ms. Ohlensehlen highlighted local small businesses which had received assistance from the City of Springfield through micro-enterprise loans, commercial loans, Chapter 353 tax abatements, and other programs. Businesses such as Sisters Mill/The Table, Kingdom Coffee, and Blue Room Comedy Club were established with these programs and brought additional revenue to the City. Ms. Ohlensehlen noted the Blue Room Comedy Club was a place-making location within Springfield that attracted comedic talent and outside visitors.

Approved by the Citizens' Advisory Board
on July 30, 2025

Ms. Ohlensehlen concluded her presentation by highlighting the Cherry Street and Pickwick Avenue area. This area included a collection of small businesses in close proximity that provided walkable services and amenities. She indicated areas such as this strengthened neighborhood character. Ms. Ohlensehlen also stressed the importance of complete neighborhoods with this kind of development because they met citizens where they lived and encouraged further infill development. Ms. Ohlensehlen thanked the Board for their time and turned the meeting over to Mr. Quigley.

Mr. Quigley turned the meeting over to Dan Smith, Director of Public Works, to present on future ready public infrastructure.

Mr. Smith explained future ready public infrastructure would invest in complete streets, utilities, parks, and public facilities. Investments would support long-term growth, adapt to Springfield's changing needs, and align with Forward SGF. Mr. Smith stressed the importance of well-constructed infrastructure that was built to last.

Mr. Smith indicated public infrastructure decisions should be coordinated with land use decisions and regional partnerships such as those with the Ozarks Transportation Agency, Greene County, and the Missouri Department of Transportation. In addition, investments should emphasize multi-modal transportation methods, create multi-use and high-quality facilities, and connect citizens to those facilities.

Mr. Smith discussed examples of public infrastructure investments that aligned with the Forward SGF Comprehensive Plan. These investments included Grant Avenue Parkway improvements, the Renew Jordan Creek project, Costco, Buc-ee's, the Art Museum expansion and renovation, and the Historic City Hall rehabilitation project. Mr. Smith explained these projects supported public infrastructure by meeting citizen needs, expanding critical infrastructure, and preparing areas for future development.

Mr. Smith thanked the Board for their time and turned the meeting over to Mr. Quigley.

Mr. Quigley introduced Ron Schneider, Director of Parks and Recreation, to present regarding parks infrastructure.

Mr. Schneider noted he considered parks as a place where public infrastructure, quality of life, and quality of place intersected. He expressed his belief recreation facilities and parks made Springfield a great place to live, visit, and play. He explained the Parks Department managed 3,200 acres of land, 50 miles of trail pathways, and 8 swimming pools, along with the Dickerson Park Zoo and other facilities.

Mr. Schneider reviewed infrastructure areas maintained by the Parks Department, including parks, greenway trails, activity centers, and sports tourism facilities.

The term parks included neighborhood parks, mini parks and school parks. He identified 38 neighborhood parks managed by the Parks Department, encompassing 275 acres, and noted these typically included a playground, a small pavilion, greenspace, and sometimes a sports field, sports court, or a walking path. He noted many of these parks were in need of some attention as infrastructure and amenity enhancements had been deferred for several years.

Mr. Schneider explained trails were a recreational amenity and offered a secondary means of transportation for citizens. Parks works closely Ozark Greenways to plan, develop, and maintain the trail network. Once built, it typically becomes the responsibility of the Parks Department to maintain the trails. He noted there were approximately 50 miles of trail, and it was estimated the cost to maintain one mile of trail was $5,000 annually, for a total annual cost of approximately $250,000. Mr. Schneider further noted this maintenance cost only covered routine general maintenance such as mowing and debris removal and did not include replacement or improvement projects

He noted respondents to the 2023 Community Survey indicated trails were the number two priority investment in terms of all parks and recreation services. Number one was parks safety, and number three was neighborhood park improvements.

Mr. Schneider explained the Parks Department also maintained activity centers with unique amenities. These included the botanical gardens, Butterfly House, and Nature Center at Nathaniel Greene Park, Jordan Valley Park, and the Lake Springfield Park and Boathouse. He stressed these were essential for health, wellness, and socialization.

Mr. Schneider indicated the local parks also provided a plethora of natural areas with trees and greenspaces. He stressed an investment in green infrastructure was an investment in future generations.

The final area Mr. Schneider discussed was sports tourism facilities. He noted the goal of offering high quality sports venues to residents and the financial impact of hosting tournaments at these facilities. He highlighted recent investment into the Cooper Sports Complex and the acquisition of the Fieldhouse Sports Center as initiatives which would foster sports tourism opportunities.

Rusty Worley, Vice Chair, expressed his belief the City had done an exemplary job attracting major employers and retail centers to expand economic development and vitality. He also expressed his belief there were more corridors within Springfield that could be expanded.

Mr. Quigley turned the meeting over to Errin Kemper, Director of Environmental Services, to facilitate a thought-provoking exercise.

Mr. Kemper explained the exercise would provide the Board with two fictitious projects and a fabricated budget of $10 million. Each Board member was asked to determine how they would allocate funding in the proposed scenarios and then group discussion would take place. Mr. Kemper indicated the exercise was meant to encourage the Board to discuss ideas and begin learning how to work together as they allocated funding. At the conclusion of the exercise, Mr. Kemper expressed his belief positive discussion had occurred and encouraged the Board to continue future discussions with the same collaborative spirit.

Mr. Kemper turned the meeting over to Mr. Quigley.

Mr. Quigley noted the next meeting would include a community snapshot discussion, review of timely opportunities, and a second group exercise. He turned the meeting over to Jordan Paul, City Attorney, to review the Board's proposed bylaws.

Mr. Paul explained the proposed bylaws were, in essence, the same bylaws that governed City Council meetings. Lauren Shantz inquired if Zoom attendance would be allowed for future Board meetings. Ms. Danastasio indicated in-person attendance would be preferrable, but Zoom attendance would be an option with the stipulation the attendee could be seen and heard on the Zoom call. Mr. Paul affirmed this information.

Ms. Shantz, Ms. Danastasio, and Mr. Smart indicated they would be absent from the July 23, 2025, Board meeting. Anita Cotter, City Clerk, explained the meeting could be rescheduled if a quorum could be present. Mr. Peebles indicated July 30, 2025, was a preferrable date. Ms. Shantz, Ms. Danastasio, and Mr. Smart indicated they could also attend on July 30, 2025.

It was the consensus of the Board to reschedule the July 23, 2025, Board meeting to July 30, 2025.

Ms. Cotter explained the July 23, 2025, Board meeting would be shown as canceled and a rescheduled posting would be created for July 30, 2025, to comply with Sunshine Law posting requirements.

Mr. Smart moved to approve the bylaws as presented. Ms. Angle seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Danastasio, Worley, Peebles, Smart, Volz, Forrester, Shantz, and Angle. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Mr. Worley moved to adjourn. Mr. Peebles seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Danastasio, Worley, Peebles, Smart, Volz, Forrester, Shantz, and Angle. Nays: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:33 a.m.

Prepared by Macaylah Holden