

City of Emerson

Community-Wide Visioning Session

February 17, 2015

*City of Emerson
Community-Wide Visioning Session
Tuesday, February 17, 2015*

On the evening of Tuesday, February 17, 2015, residents and community members from the City of Emerson met at the old Emerson Elementary School for a Community-Wide Visioning Session. Carrie Barnes, a Community Economic Development Consultant with Georgia EMC, facilitated the meeting on behalf of Cobb EMC.

Participants:

80 community members were in attendance at the meeting.

Al Pallone	Fran Twelkemeier	Michelle Dover
Albert Woods	Frank Bennett	Millard Etling
Amy Popham	Frank Gelzer	Nancy Shipley
Annette Cook	Frank Zunno	Nathan Hale
Autumn Holt	Gary Twelkemier	Noel Vandiver
Barbara Stephens	James Becker	Patricia Burton
Barry Smith	James Berry	Patrick Draut
Ben Pope	James Dekoker	Patty Gilleland
Bill Popham	Jason Gunnell	Peter Hendricks
Bob Wainscott	Jennifer Brannen	Randy Pruitt
Brandon Lancaster	Julia Phelps	Rea Abernathy
Brenda Tidwell	Julie Meadows	Richard Osborne
Bryan Keeling	Kay Johnson	Robbie Swords
Carole Fessler	Kevin McBurnett	Roy Castonguay
Carole Miller	Kiza Draut	Roy Fowler
Charles Cook	Kyle Johnson	Ruby Webb
Charles Johnson	Lamar Banks	Sammy Bray
Charlie Lowry	Lamont Ellis	Sharon Holt
Clarence Stephens	Laurie Porter	Shean Phelps
Cyndi Smith	Linda Perkinson	Stan Bearden
Cynthia Wainscott	Lindale Rogers	Steve Winters
Danny Mitchum	Marcia Whitfield	Terry Webb
Darrell Abernathy	Margaret Grier	Todd Heath
Dee Anne Wyse	Margie D. Gardner	Veronica Mingo
Doris Shaw	Mark	Vickey Banks
Duane Johnson	Mary Struebling	Vincent T. Wiley
Ed Brush	Melissa Ferguson	

DEFINING DOWNTOWN EMERSON

As participants arrived, they were asked to vote on one of three designated areas that best characterized Downtown Emerson.

- *Map 1* defined downtown as Highway 293 from 9th street to Old Alabama Road.
- *Map 2* defined downtown as Hwy 293 from 9th street to Old Alabama Rd and Gaston Westbrook Avenue from Hwy 41 to its end.
- *Map 3* defined downtown as LakePoint Parkway north campus.

Results: Map 1 received the most votes with 40.

VISIONING FOR OUR FUTURE

Participants were divided into 10 groups upon arriving. Each group was asked to create a list for three topics:

- (1) What do you want to **preserve** in Emerson?
- (2) What are the city's **strengths**?
- (3) What are the future **needs** of this community?

The groups were given a few minutes to brainstorm then asked to share their list with the room in a “round robin” style. The items were recorded on a flipchart by the facilitator to develop a comprehensive list. When all three lists were completed, the participants were asked to prioritize the items. Each participant voted on one item from each list (preserve, strengths, & needs) that they felt was the most important. The list below is has been ordered from the most votes to the least number of votes in each category.

PRESERVE

- (26) Small Town Feel
- (10) Low Crime Rates
- (6) Stegall House
- (4) Historical Churches- Specifically Damascus Baptist Church
- (3) Trees and Natural Areas
- (2) First Methodist Church
- (2) Stars at Night
- (2) Water System
- (1) Affordable Housing
- (1) Diversity & Racial Harmony
- (1) Historic Cemeteries
- (1) Mining History
- (1) Old Court House
- (1) Quiet
- (1) Railroad Culture & History
- (1) Walkability
- Doug's Restaurant

Etowah River
Geological History
Heavy Traffic Off of Highway 293
Hillside views
Old City Hall
Old Elementary School
Post Office
Puckett Road Oven
Pumpkinvine Creek

STRENGTHS

(14) Small Town Feel
(10) Fiscal Stability of the City
(7) Proximity to the Interstate
(6) Low Crime Rate
(4) Respect for our History
(3) Good Neighborhood Environment
(2) Accessible Government
(2) Citizen Involvement
(2) Citizen Involvement
(2) Low Property Taxes
(2) Schools
(2) Sense of Community
(1) Abundance of Southern Charm
(1) Citizens Come Together Peacefully
(1) City's Quick Response Time with Public Services
(1) Concentration of Nearby Historic Sites
(1) Good Water Supply
(1) Quiet
Affordable Housing and Commercial Property
Award Winning Fire Department & EMS
Compact & Well Defined Downtown
Economic & Racial Diversity
Economic Potential
Etowah River
Generational History
Good Distance from Atlanta
Good Relationship with Bartow County & City of Cartersville
Good Street Organization/Layout
Harmony Between Police Department & Citizens
Natural Beauty (Mountain, Valley, & Red Top State Park)
Outdoor Recreational Opportunities
Proximity to Lake Allatoona

Pumpkinvine Creek
Small Size of Community Allows for Personal Touch
Strong Transportation Corridors
Traffic is Manageable
Wildlife
Willingness of Citizens to Consider Change

NEEDS

- (8) Businesses That Provide a Sustainable Tax Base
- (5) A Park with Walking & Bike Trails
- (5) Create a Downtown Development Authority
- (4) Additional Street Lighting & Sidewalks
- (4) Grocery Store/Market
- (3) Improved road infrastructure
- (3) Strong Zoning Codes & Enforcement
- (3) Well Head Protection through GA Environment Protection Division (EPD)
- (2) Create Street Name for Highway 293
- (2) Creation of Bike Lanes
- (2) Improve Aesthetics in Downtown
- (2) Streetscaping/Beautification of Downtown
- (1) Active City Website
- (1) Citizen Steering Committee
- (1) Community Events
- (1) Continued Affordability of Property & Taxes
- (1) Divert Truck Traffic Away from Downtown and Neighborhoods
- (1) Do Away with Non-Viable Intersections (ex. 6th Street & Highway 293)
- (1) Expanded Sewer Capabilities
- (1) Hire an Economic Development Professional/Advisor
- (1) Improved Infrastructure for Water Supply
- (1) More Opportunities for Volunteering and Community Involvement
- (1) New Cemetery
- (1) Programs for Underprivileged Youth
- (1) Rename "Old Old Alabama" Roads
- (1) Security Cameras on Roadways
- (1) Senior Center
- (1) Stormwater Improvements (ex. New Emerson Bypass)
- (1) Visit Other Communities That Have Experienced Explosive Growth for Guidance & Ideas
- (1) Welcome to Emerson Sign
- (1) Well-Paying/Non-Minimum Wage Jobs
- Active Social Media
- Additional Traffic Lights at Busy Intersections (Westbrook & Hwy 293; Red Top Mountain Rd & Hwy 410)

Back-Up Well
Better Enforcement of Traffic Laws for Bicyclists
Bottle Great Water for Additional Revenue & Job Opportunities
Bridge over Railroad Tracks
Broadband Infrastructure
Citizens Retaining Ownership & Involvement in City
Community-wide Curbside Recycling Program
Create a City Motto
Development of City Branding Campaign
Good Working Relationship with Cobb County
History Center/Museum
Improve Storefronts on Highway 293
Improved Recycling Center
Improved School System and Educational Opportunities
Increased Presence of Post-Secondary Education Opportunities
Leadership Making Sure to Ask for Help from Outside Resources
Make Sure Future Emerson Businesses have Emerson Zip Code
Make the Railroad a Strength of the Community
More Magnet Restaurants
More Public Safety to Handle Increased Needs
Multi-Use Community Building
Prohibit Tractor Trailer Parking on Interstate Ramps
Public Safety Notification System
Reliable Power Grid
Shuttle between LakePoint & Downtown
Strategic Retail & Residential Development
Ultra High Speed Public Wi-Fi
Urgent Care Facility
Well Resourced & Robust City Government

Wrap-Up & Adjourn

Facilitator Carrie Barnes closed by telling the group she enjoyed working with them on behalf of Cobb EMC and looks forward to working with them in the future.