Minutes of the Independence City Commission's September 17, 2018 Meeting

The Independence City Commission met for a special meeting on September 17, 2018 at 5:30 P.M. in the Veterans Room at the Memorial Hall. Mayor Leonhard Caflisch, Commissioner Louis Ysusi and Commissioner Gary Hogsett were present. Others present included:

City Staff
Craig Whitehead, City Manager
Kelly Passauer, Assistant City Manager/Zoning Administrator
David Schwenker, City Clerk/City Treasurer
Barb Beurskens, Park, Zoo and Cemetery Director
David Cowan, Director of Safety/ADA Coordinator
Shawn Wallis, Fire Chief
Michael Borovetz, Finance Director
Jerry Harrison, Police Chief
Terry Lybarger, Utilities Director
Mike Passauer, Public Works Director

Visitors
Dan Griffiths
Mackey Smith
Jean Barnett
John Kishpaugh
Jerry Bright
Judy Ysusi
Larry McHugh
Philipp Umlauf
Dean Hayse
Judi Harris
Lisa Wilson
Mike Baldassaro
Tim White

I. SPECIAL SESSION

A. Call to Order

Mayor Caflisch called the meeting order at 5:30 p.m.

II. PRESENTATION

A. Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC) presentation of the draft Community based Strategic Plan for Independence.

Dan Griffiths with Tanner, LLC based in Salt Lake City, Utah stated he was thrilled to be there. He introduced Mackey Smith, also of Tanner, LLC. Mackey stated that he had really fallen in love with this community, and that Dan could attest that this was his favorite community that he has done a process on. He stated that the community treated him like family.

"As Dan talked about, we wanted it to be led by members of this community. The things they love and the things they would like to see changed. Each committee member served a lot, thank you for your appointments and foresight in who you picked in those members to effectively engage in this community. Typically, they will distribute a survey and meet with two groups, a public forum and get on the plane to go home. I am grateful I could spend an entire week with stakeholder groups." He went on to talk about the various groups that he met with, such as Rotary, Chamber, Berean Christian ministry, CUFF, high school students and Penn Terrace. "This engagement, the wider the breadth of how many people we can engage with the higher the rate of implementation of the plan as everyone was able to contribute to it." He further stated that there were over 500 surveys completed and over 200 participants at meetings. He further stated that he interviewed Representative Jim Kelly, ICC President Dan Barwick, former Mayors and Commissioners, MCAC Director Tisha Purdon. "At the end what we are going to present is what the citizens of Independence value most."

Dan Griffiths stated; "The purpose of a strategic plan is to organize thinking on how you prioritize the items in your community that deserve attention and you spend resources on. What is Independence in the business of doing?" He further stated that all other strategic directives are appendixes to the primary directive. The five strategic directives get broken down into initiatives which are put into an implementation plan. "The advisory committee provided input for directives and initiatives, of what success looks like, and how might we evaluate success. Some are metric driven, easy to measure. Others are more intangible and more difficult. The advisory committee has weighed in with their thoughts." He further stated that the primary directive for Independence is *"Build upon our unique sense of community by offering residents the vibrant, welcoming environment that has led people to call Independence home for generations."* "What brought people here and what keeps them here. There was discussion of whether it really is that unique, but it is pretty unique. Mackey and I as outsiders eating breakfast at Eggberts, citizens tap us on the shoulder and say good morning to you. A welcoming environment. Committee felt strongly on incorporating that. Wanted to use vibrant, love the peaceful environment, but we started playing around with the words, but Independence is an economic vibrant powerhouse, want to build on that vibrant community that has things going on. How there is some real history in this place, and not lose sight of that."

Dan Griffiths then introduced one of the advisory committee members, Dean Hayse who covered Strategic Directive 1 – Economic Development. Dean Hayse stated; "Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the strategic planning committee, it is a great opportunity. Independence is a family friendly community, great community activities, great place to raise our children." He further discussed the impact of population

migration to the metropolitan areas, jobs, economic and business opportunity. "It is imperative to focus on a strategy that will grow new businesses, attract jobs and families to live in Independence. We will know we are succeeding when growing jobs. Eight initiatives are listed, many coming from survey responses." Use City resources for economic development opportunities as they arise. Structure the budget and prioritize those action items with growing businesses and growing jobs. Based on the expectation to have human and economic capital. Economic development is the foundation of that expectation.

Dean Hayse introduced Philipp Umlauf who covered Strategic Directive 2 – Infrastructure. Philip Umlauf stated that he has a great passion for our community and really enjoyed the time he spends serving on the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals. The second most requested point of improvement was infrastructure which is "a hot button issue." He mentioned the water plant improvements and rate increases needed to accomplish the upgrades. "There are some definite ways to avoid raising those rates. Automated water meters which brings about a real opportunity to better serve our citizens. How nice would it be to have a major water leak and just call up and say hey I've got a major water leak and they can just shut it off. Ability to turn water on at a moment's notice. Our roads and sidewalks, we do have some of the nicer roads in the county, but there are places they could be improved, like everywhere else, continue that path towards maintaining. ADA sidewalk, we are striving to become compliant with the DOJ directive on that. Push for that to get taken care of properly. City Hall, many had the mindset of we need to make a decision and don't look back and move forward with what the plan is. You are moving forward with a plan and everybody is pretty well onboard with that. Thank you very much."

Philipp Umlauf introduced Jean Barnett who covered Strategic Directive 3 – Beautification. Jean Barnett stated; "Thank you for letting me be on this committee, we covered a lot." She spoke about old houses that are abandoned "attracting the wrong kind of people". Trash pickup going to once a week and expanding the recycling program. Encouraging partnerships with other organizations for events such as "Love Independence." "The City has been good in that respect and we appreciate that. Thank you."

Jean Barnett introduced Mike Baldassaro who covered Strategic Directive 4 – Parks and Recreation. Mike Baldassaro stated; "Thank you to you all. It is my pleasure to be before you and discuss the 4th directive, which is Parks and Recreation. One of the questions was what you like best, and the answer to that was Riverside Park which received the highest most positive response of more than 60% as the best thing they like best about the City. It is the crown jewel of the community and we felt as a group in discussing parks and recreation that the emphasis should be quality over

quantity. It's time to evaluate. The City has done a marvelous job in the maintenance of the Riverside Park and neighborhood parks. It may be a good time to review allocation of resources and make decisions whether the majority would go to Riverside Park or other parks as well. We may want to evaluate to optimize and consolidate some of the resources. Riverside Park is related to Neewollah, both of those assets bring people to the community, so we brought those items together. It is a great opportunity, the tourism potential in Neewollah and Riverside Park. Bring people outside of Independence and well beyond Southeast Kansas. Want to leverage that to the greatest extent possible and make that a destination. I enjoyed serving on the committee and appreciate the trust."

Mike Baldassaro introduced Tim White who covered Strategic Directive 5 – Community Spirit & Unity. "I want to thank you for allowing me to serve again. When I used to sit on that side of the table, I was on and served with different management. One was a builder and one was a maintainer, and now we have someone that plans for the future. Community spirit and unity, I am very much involved in. The word unique we talked about that over and over, and yeah, we are unique, a community spirit that is difficult to obtain, and it didn't happen overnight. The change in governance body from three to five, when I was on the Commission, Rick Mott was on the Commission at the same time. We wouldn't even ride the same golf cart let alone play in the same group together because we were afraid of violating the Opens Meeting Act. With five commissioners it would really been nice to be able to talk one-on-one ... and not have to worry about that kind of stuff. Using districting, we have three commissioners from different districts. The Diversity Task Force could become a recognized entity of the City. I was asked by Bartlesville executives about flags downtown and I told them we were celebrating Gay Pride, and it shocked them that a town this size would do such a thing. We also need to increase the communication with the City through live media and other avenues ... when we have decisions coming up to let everybody know that those are avenues that are available, through Facebook, through email, through newspaper. I think a continued use of annual surveys shows us what we're doing and what success looks like. One of the things we need to look at really deeply I think is to reduce the number of negative publications. I was talking to the late Hub Meyers one-time years ago and I was asking him about some of the negative publications. Hub, being the newspaper publisher had a kind of unique thing, he said 'I don't really care if they're true or not, they sell newspapers and pay the bills.' That hurts the community. Make the community members feel more engaged in the community. Increase announcements, the City Facebook page has always done a real good job. Evaluate the voting process, more districts in town, very engaging by the City. These guys have done a tremendous job and thank you for letting me be part of this committee."

Dan Griffiths stated; "Can you see why we are grateful for working with them. All please stand and be recognized." [Applause] "I don't think you know how many 500 survey responses look like, these folks spent a lot of time going through it. I never showed up to a greater prepared volunteer committee. They were prepared to discuss at some level of depth. What's next? First the City commission will review and adopt a community based strategic plan, staff will develop plans to execute and implement that plan. That will give Craig an opportunity to review that from an implementation standpoint, that is a heavy lift. Every six months the advisory committee wants to have follow up, each offered to continue to serve on the committee to have an update from staff every six months to see how things are progressing. Then a formal update to this Commission on progress. The best times to do that might be in February prior to annual Commission retreat, and then again in August or September, or this time of year to get second update on progress of the plan. Those are the next steps. Craig, do you want to talk about the staff implementation plan?"

Craig Whitehead stated; "On behalf of staff, thank you to Dan and Mackey and the advisory committee. This is not a staff plan, it is from the community and that is exciting. The next step, that is going to be a lot of work, key initiatives and develop sub goals to get there. Eventually see that success, really getting those sub goals in place and we are excited about it."

Mayor Caflisch stated; "Thank you for your time and input, paving new trails with the strategic plan, exciting to see the potential, as I read through it, former Commissioner Derrill Unruh said 'Plans are no good if they stay on the shelf.' How do we do that? Looking at the report it is more than a onetime review, I need to look at it again and again. I was thinking that I need to break it into pieces, key initiatives so they stay before me, review agenda and start talking about plans, keep relating back to us."

Dan Griffiths stated; "May I comment? One of the practices I have seen in other communities is when they create an agenda they put a 2.3 next to the agenda item, this is from the strategic plan and this is why we're talking about it. Items on agenda that have no number, why are they on the agenda? Do we need to amend the plan to see if they need to be included?"

The Mayor stated; "Checkerboard, only move when threatened. Crisis mode, most pressing threat, leave other items unattended because that is not a threat now, and when it becomes a threat we move our focus. Economic development, things that were brought up, infrastructure, way we can stay level and address all issues in the City, feedback, the willingness of the committee to stay engaged and come back, because what is going to hold us accountable is the people, committee is nine representatives from the community, keep bringing it back to hold us

accountable. We can trickle down, staff has now in their hands that we are all coming together in one accord and focus in a written directive and continued engagement is a key element, it is not us three, Craig or staff. You have eyes where we don't. The cross section of our community is great. We have a true prospective of what the citizens are looking for and we are obligated to take it off the shelf and make it work. Something that I saw that we needed for a long time. Excited to see how I can make sure it is implemented and I am meeting the needs in my position as Commissioner. How do you feel?"

Commissioner Gary Hogsett stated; "I have a few questions. I would love to know committee discussion, sitting on this side of the table, can't you get more jobs, thrilled to see that is #1, we have to have good streets, and lower taxes. Take better care of our City, but lower taxes. What is the committee's thoughts to juggle these goals that are butting heads with one another?"

Dan Griffiths stated; "How do you prioritize? That is where staff has a big role to play as professionals in their areas of expertise, come back on an annual basis with implementation plan. What you will also see happen is that there will be points of time, they have had time to review, they stayed out of the committee meetings where feedback was being provided but had an opportunity to review. At the last committee meeting they could provide prospective. For example, GIS, that is a very useful piece of technology, so you know where the water lines are buried. The concept was if we can't do that, other capital planning won't work. Staff provided that type of prospective. In the implementation plan you will see some of those tradeoffs coming back to you. Other tradeoffs coming back, such as parks and where are those investments best made. This high-level strategic plan is not meant to say you should close this park and improve this park because there are more residents here, that level of detail will have to come. Those decisions will come back to you. But the residents have ranked their priorities."

Commissioner Hogsett stated; "The answer is that there is no easy answer." Dan Griffiths stated; "The great news is you have a document to easily guide." Commissioner Hogsett stated; "I love the major points, very aggressive in removing old houses that are abandoned. Trash pickup, my neighbor throws his trash over the fence, I don't know how it is contributing to beautification by reducing trash pickup." Dan Griffiths stated; "It allows you to use the large polycarts which will dramatically reduce the amount of trash that is being thrown around, animals getting in there and also frees up resources that make it more possible to do other things, such as brush or other pickups."

Commissioner Ysusi stated; "I'm glad that the people we picked served and glad to see the information you came back with. Daunting task, don't

raise taxes already high, but things have changed over the years, how City government operates, seems to operate like we always have, reached a point now with limited resources we need to find a way to direct some of those resources that we have neglected, such as street repair. Change the way we do things, but have to balance those out, one of the drawbacks if you continue to raise taxes they reach a point where they have more money going out than coming in. I saw a department I worked with go from seven to three, and we found a way to do it. If we look at that and try to be more proactive than reactive and hold ourselves accountable. Change how we are doing business in the past. Resources are limited and use more efficiency."

The Mayor stated; "Directive one, partnering or working with the County neighboring cities, go beyond economic development but other areas where we partner with the county when they send out bids for asphalt, there are a lot of ways in looking at the county or a region, how we can support each other, how can we lean on our neighbor to cut our cost, volume purchasing, county has equipment that can supplement us, how can we share and accomplish our goals, partner with Coffeyville to bring an industry which would benefit us, or vice versa. All seen so many changes in our life, need to look into the future, where technology is going to go. Change with the times, automated meter system, save manpower, serve our citizens better to respond quicker to their need. Accuracy to have an alarm with excessive consumption, water leak and didn't notice it until they got the bill. Opportunities are there. Need to brainstorm with beautification, pull in neighborhoods, break it down in different ways. For me breaking into the computer age, one of my clients insisted on everything electronic. I said no, I'll send you a letter, but now, 'You want me to print that, send me a pdf.' Look where we've been and where are we going to go, and meet those challenges of beautification and tax dollars and how are we going to overcome that. Community input to help us reach those goals, this has really reached into the community, give me an idea of where we can save money. Bringing our citizens into play."

Commissioner Hogsett stated; "Logan Fountain project, Community Mission for Improved Housing, Love Independence; get community involved and no limit to what we can do. Bridge project, City needs to partner better than we do, which is not much."

The Mayor stated; "Economic Development fund, break it down to reach out to smaller industry, support businesses in non-traditional ways to see coming to Independence for their home. Any comments that the committee members would like to give us other than what was in the presentation?" Commissioner Hogsett stated; "Other than your canned speech."

The Mayor stated; "If not, thank you committee members. Give us a call, you've got our phone numbers and email. Be citizen to citizen, if you have an idea call me, let us know. Thank you, Dan and Mackey, for your time and talents you brought to Independence for us, glad that you enjoyed your stay, there is office space available if you want to branch out."

Dan Griffiths stated; "The hiking trail over by the lake is absolutely beautiful, you have some treasurers here. If only you had an international airport." The Mayor stated; "You are close."

City Manager Whitehead stated; "Typically what happens is the Commission formally adopts the plan. I don't know if you want to do that tonight." The Mayor stated; "I would like to read it again for myself, I see no negative but would like to digest it a little more." City Manager Whitehead stated; "I'll put it on the agenda next meeting."

III. ITEMS FOR COMMISSION ACTION

A. Parks/Zoo – award bid for construction of livestock pens — item deferred from September 13, 2018 Commission meeting.

Barb Beurskens, Park, Zoo and Cemetery Director appeared ready to answer any additional questions the Commission had. The Mayor stated that they had received a detailed breakdown that gives them control so they know specifically what each building will have; "It is simple, but it will do the job."

Motion:
On the motion of Commissioner Hogsett, seconded by Commissioner Ysusi, the Commission approved the bid from SEK Construction for all four animal sheds in the amount of $24,445.00.

Aye: Caflisch, Ysusi, Hogsett
Nay: None

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:
Commissioner Ysusi moved to adjourn. Commissioner Hogsett seconded.

Aye: Caflisch, Ysusi, Hogsett
Nay: None

Leonhard Caflisch, Mayor

Louis Ysusi, Commissioner

Gary Hogsett, Commissioner

Attest:

Kelly C. Passauer
Assistant City Manager

CITY OF
INDEPENDENCE
KANSAS

2018-2023 Community-Based Strategic Plan

September 17, 2018

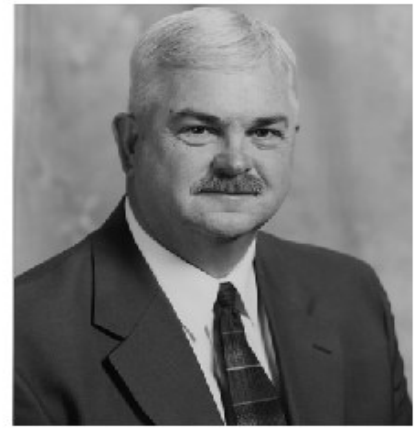
TANNER

Strategic Planning Action Committee (SPAC)

Pastor Mike Rose

Jean Barnett

Dean Hayse

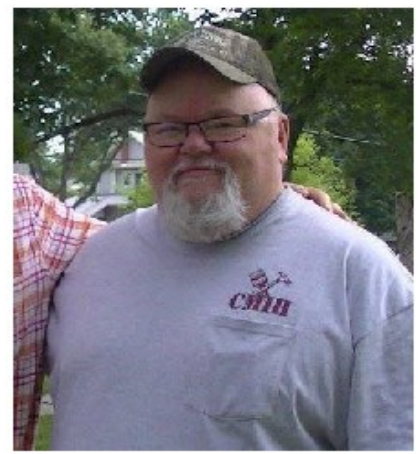


Rick Mott

Mike Baldassaro

Tim White

Pastor Brandee Mimitzraiem



Jerry Bright

Philipp Umlauf

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Community Engagement Summary

Facilitated Community Dialogue Sessions

9

Surveys Completed

500+

Organizations and Stakeholders Approached

30

The SPAC Followed Community Feedback in Creating the Strategic Plan

Format of Strategic Plan

- **Primary Directive** – What Quality of Life do we want in our community?
- **5 Strategic Directives** – Where should we focus our resources to achieve that quality of life?
- **Strategic Initiatives** – What specifically can we do to accomplish our directives? (Actions Items)
- **What Does Success Look Like?** (Goals)

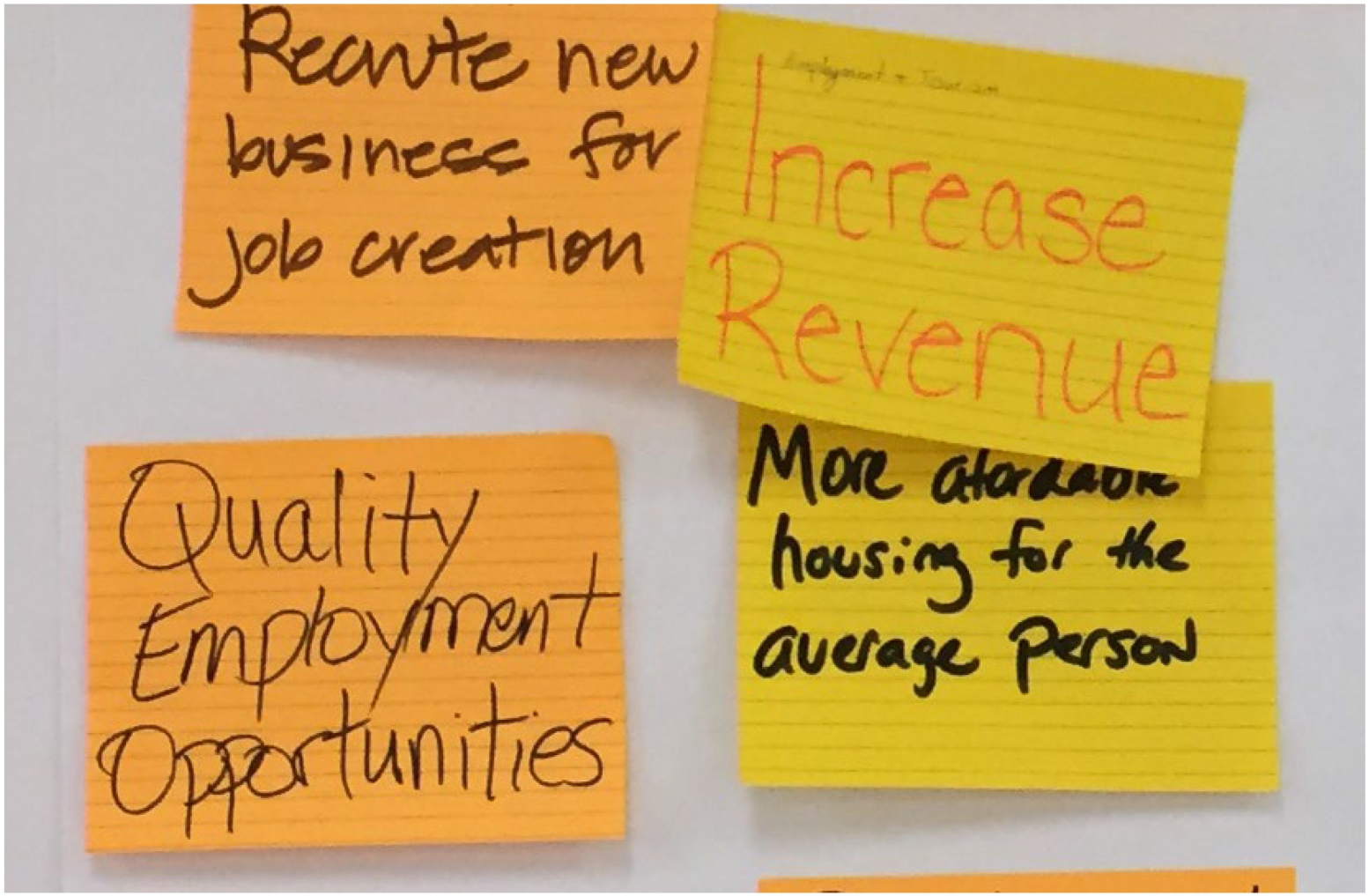
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Independence's Primary Directive

"Build upon our unique sense of community by offering residents the vibrant, welcoming environment that has led people to call Independence home for generations."

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

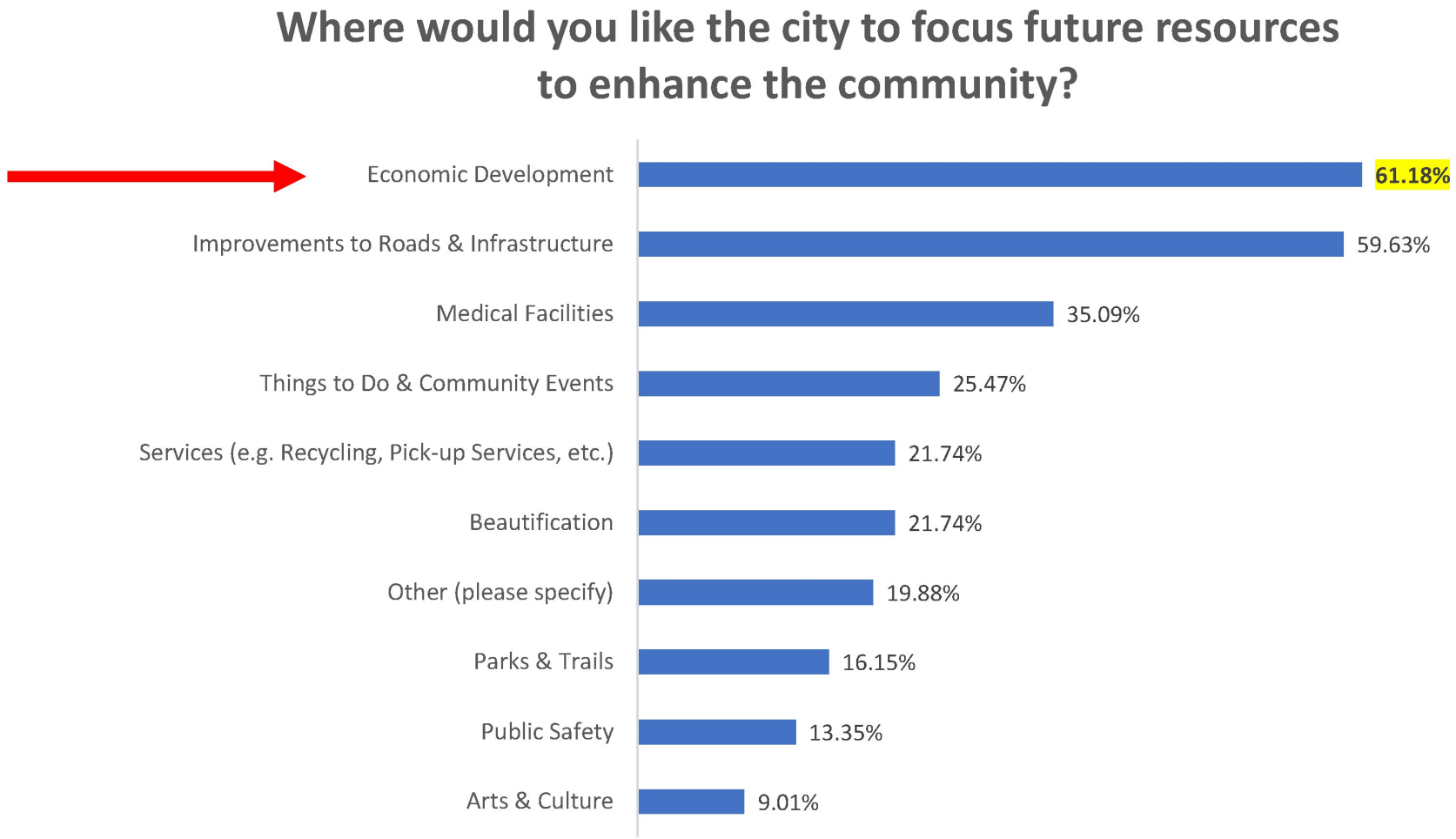
Strategic Directive 1 - Economic Development



Economic Development is the 1st Directive for a Reason!

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Strategic Directive 1 - Economic Development



Most Common Survey Response Involved Economic Development, and <u>Every</u> Focus Group Talked About this

Strategic Directive 1 - Economic Development

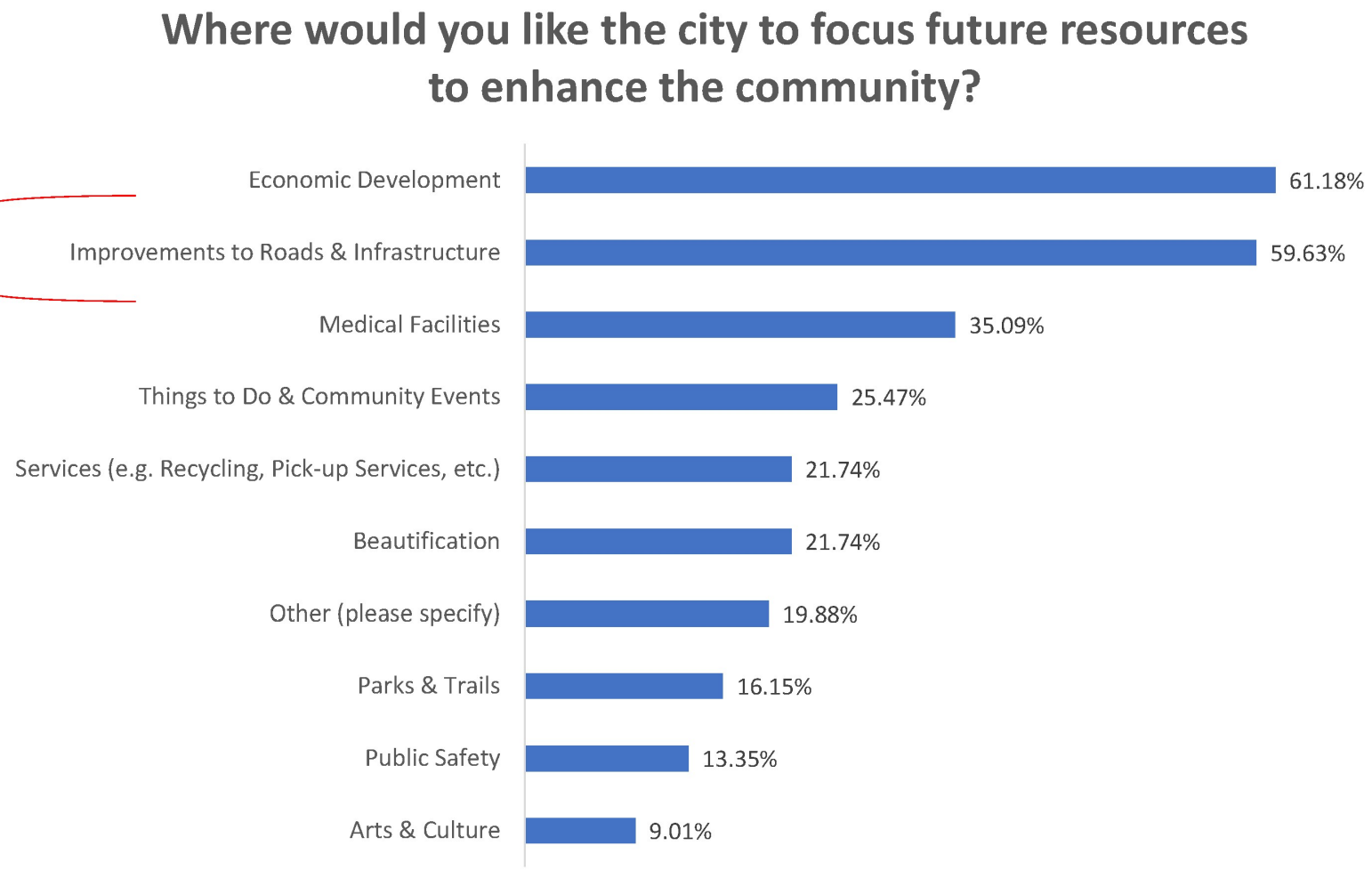
Initiatives Centered in: **Growing Existing Businesses, Recruiting New Businesses, and Growing Independence**

What Does Success Look Like? **Increased Population, Decreased Unemployment, Increased City Revenue**

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Strategic Directive 2 - Infrastructure

2nd to Economic Development



CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Strategic Directive 2 - Infrastructure

AUTOMATED WATER METERS

Avoid Raising Rates

ROADS & SIDEWALKS

Increase Budget to Improvements

CITY HALL & PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDINGS

Make A Decision and Don't Look Back

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Strategic Directive 3 -Beautification

"Need to more aggressively clean up old, dilapidated buildings and houses and to clean up trash in alleyways and front lawns"

- Independence Resident

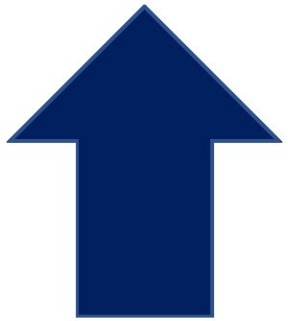
"Tear down all of the eyesore dilapidated houses. Driving through this town and seeing once beautiful homes left to rot and fall down is very discouraging."

- Independence Resident

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Citizens Care how the Community Looks

Strategic Directive 3 – Beautification



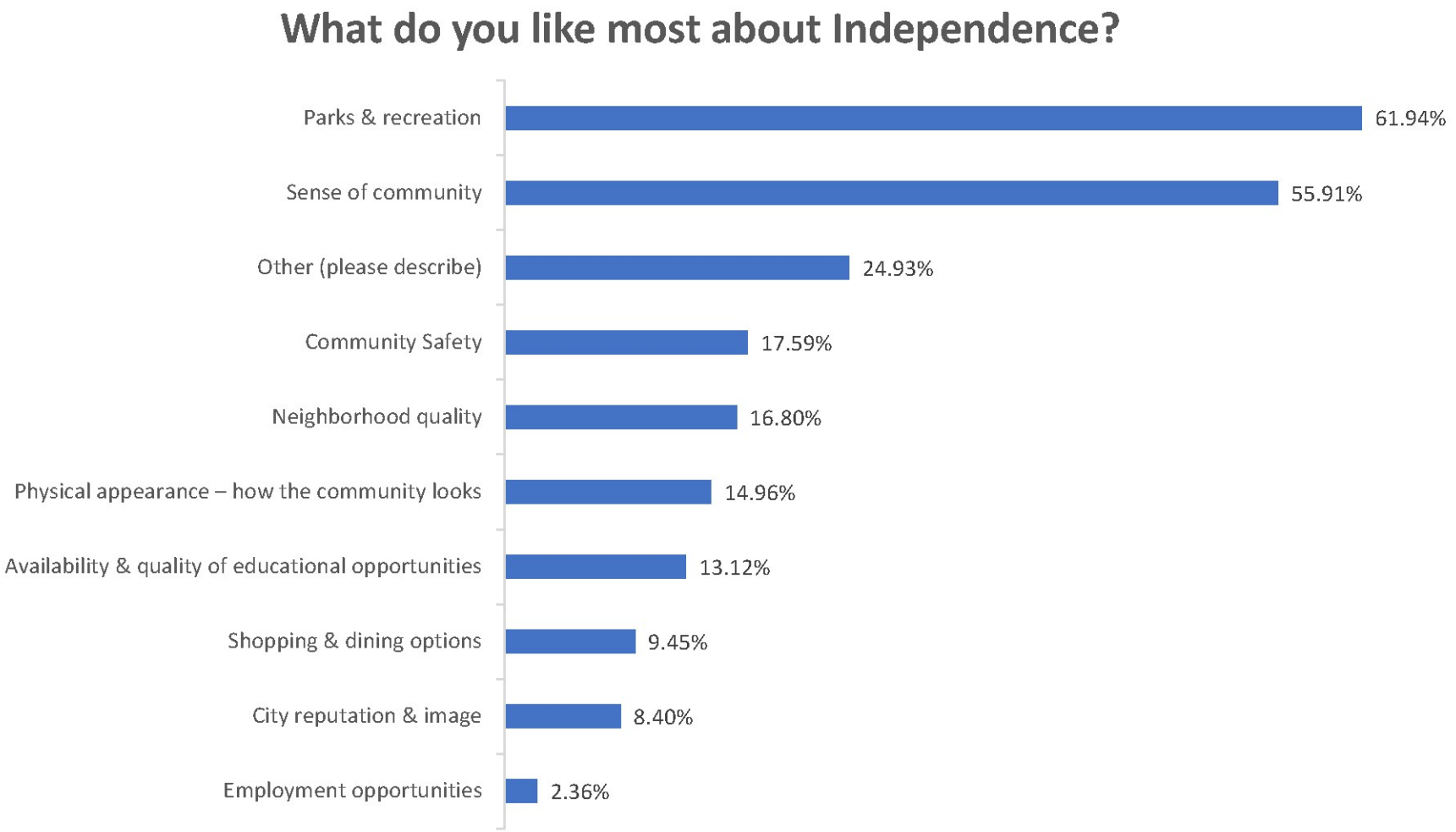
Increase Rate of Tearing Down Abandoned Homes

Reduce Trash Pick-Up to Once a Week

Expand Recycling & Pick-Up Services

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Strategic Directive 4 – Parks & Recreation



Riverside Park is a Point of Pride for the Community

Strategic Directive 4 – Parks & Recreation

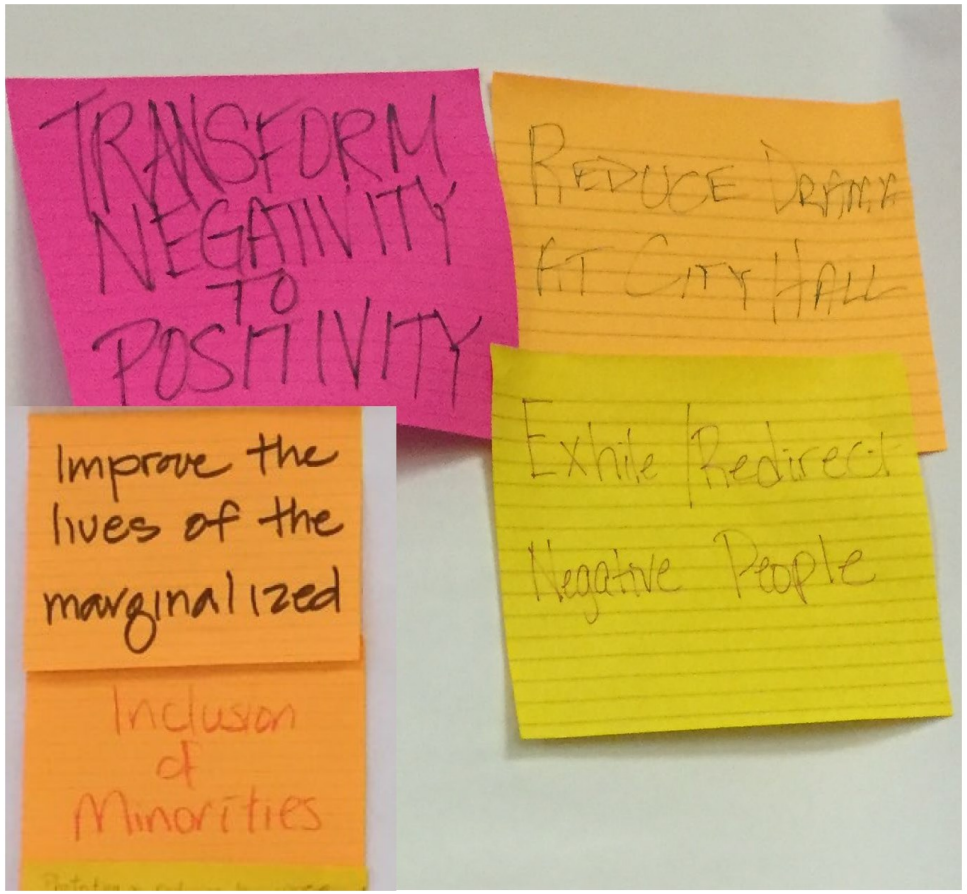
Maintain Riverside Park & Zoo

Quality Over Quantity

Leverage Neewollah for Tourism

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Strategic Directive 5 – Community Spirit & Unity



"I love Independence! There are some wonderful folks here. People who move here fall in love with the town and do not want to leave...there's so much community spirit now."

-Independence Resident

"I would hope to impress upon the community that Independence is stronger and better if it is "we" not 'those' and 'thems'."

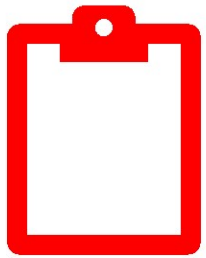
-Independence Resident

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Great Sense of Community, but Improvement Needed

Strategic Directive 5 – Community Spirit & Unity

Evaluate Modifications to Governing Body and Size of Commission



Distribute Annual Citizen Satisfaction Survey to Track Results

Strengthen Channel of Communication between Diversity Taskforces and City Leadership

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Increased Voter Turnout, Inclusion, and Harmony in Community

How Do We Keep Momentum?

1. City Commission will Review and Ultimately Approve and Adopt a Strategic Plan

2. Staff will Execute and Implement Plan

3. SPAC will Conduct Semi-Annual Status with Staff on Implementation of Plan

4. SPAC will Report to Commission on Plan Implementation

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE KANSAS

Q&A

CITY OF
INDEPENDENCE
KANSAS