

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Committee Meeting – Thursday, May 1, 2025 – 3:00 PM

Branson RecPlex – Community Room – 1501 Branson Hills Parkway – Branson, MO

Where Values are the Difference

MAY: Excellence – Being the best by doing your best

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mark Colussy, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator for the City of Branson, calls the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

After reviewing the sign-in sheet, Mark announces that the quorum is met.

Present: William Mahoney, Cox Medical, Community Hospital Group; Gary Groman, Branson Planning Commission; Nick Sharp, Ph.D., College of the Ozarks; Mindy Honey, Silver Dollar City Foundation; Billy Ong, ECID Board; Alex Williams, Finance Committee; Matthew Kendrick, At-Large Resident; Cris Bohinc, Historic Downtown Branson CID; Kirk Elmquist, Tourism Community Enhancement District; Glenn Schulz, Branson Board of Aldermen, Ward II; Chad Meadows, Peach Tree Home Décor and Renovation; Devin Sonnenfelt, White River Electric; Dennis Wiggins, Taney County Partnership; Amanda Ross, Staff; Jennifer Luna-Thompson, Staff; Nikki Ashmore, Staff; Karen Cassata, Staff; Mark Colussy, Staff.

Absent: Ruth Denham, Branson Board of Aldermen, Ward III; Pamela Yancey, Branson Chamber of Commerce/CVB; Matthew Adkins, Taney County Partnership; Cherry Webster, At-Large Resident; Taylor Clark, Ignite Branson, Lakes Area Leadership Academy; Lisa Marshall, Taney County Health Department; Bill Skains, At-Large Resident; Mike Dawson, Branson Public Schools.

REGULAR AGENDA:

1. ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MARCH 27, 2025, CPC MEETING.

The floor was opened for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 27, 2025, meeting. Alderman Schulz so moved, and Gary Groman seconded. Motion Carried.

2. UPDATE ON KITCHEN TABLE CONVERSATIONS

During the March 27, 2025, meeting, Mark asked committee members to ask their peers/colleagues/friends/family/neighbors/club members/etc., or generally their spheres of influence, five questions every two weeks. Mark reminded members to complete their conversations prior to the next meeting, when feedback will be discussed.

3. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SURVEY DATA

By April 15, survey responses increased from 554 to 810, reflecting growing community engagement. The School District representation was given a draft student survey to review, ensuring relevance and inclusivity. Mark was told that it would be reviewed by staff, and he is waiting on a response. A proposal was also introduced to conduct an additional survey specifically targeting visitors, but this would have to be coordinated with the Visitors' Bureau. The survey's demographic data was compared with the 2020 census to assess representativeness. Key factors influencing relocation to Branson were identified, with affordability and job proximity emerging as primary drivers. Respondents also highlighted several top issues impacting quality of life, including transportation challenges such as traffic congestion and road maintenance, housing concerns, and the overall cleanliness of the community.

4. STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES/OPPORTUNITIES/THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

Community members have raised several important concerns about the future of their city. Public safety issues and the presence of vacant or dilapidated properties were frequently mentioned, alongside core community values such as faith, family, and patriotism. Residents highlighted the need for economic development, particularly the creation of stable, year-round jobs with better wages. Additionally, there is a strong desire for improvements in infrastructure and public transportation. The impact of homelessness on both tourism and local quality of life remains a pressing issue, as does the need to balance the interests of residents and tourists.

In discussions on affordable housing, many questioned how "affordable" is defined, especially given the financial realities in the area. Some noted that an annual income of \$65,000 and a \$23,000 down payment

are currently needed to achieve homeownership, making it inaccessible to many. The seasonal nature of tourism-based employment, which often spans only eight to nine months, adds to this challenge.

Proposed opportunities/solutions include utilizing underused "brown spaces," offering developer incentives, improving communication between builders and city officials, and focusing on smart design and efficient space use. Economic and development challenges were also addressed, particularly the dependence on seasonal tourism jobs and the impact of Community Improvement District (CID) taxes on residential development. Generational differences in perspectives on growth and development were acknowledged, with a consensus on the need for a variety of housing options that cater to people at different stages of life. Creating a business-friendly environment is seen as essential to attracting and retaining residents, especially as frontline workers continue to face financial hardship.

Finally, threats/concerns were raised about the city's development processes. Many participants called for a more streamlined approval process, citing delays that hinder project timelines and profitability. There were also concerns about inconsistent interpretation of code enforcement and the strain placed on existing systems by increased development demand. A collaborative approach between the city and developers was suggested as a way to improve efficiency and ensure future growth is handled effectively.

5. SET DATE FOR SURVEY & NEXT MEETING

Mark announced that the next CPC meeting will be planned for Wednesday, June 25th at 3 p.m. The meeting will more than likely take place at the Branson Convention Center, similar to the first meeting.

REPORTS

Due to the time, no reports were given at the meeting.

ADJOURN

The floor was opened for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Schulz so moved. Motion Carried.
The Meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.



Mark Colussy
Strategic Initiatives Coordinator