

## **CommUnity Team**

June 19<sup>th</sup> 2024

Advocap- 237 Broadway

Members Present: Sue Trampf, Chris Kalupa, Michelle Cassidy, Barry Abbott, Allison Gohlke, Karen Winkel-Dishong, Marie Reilly, Tim Ludolph, and Karen Coats

The CommUnity Team meeting was called to order at 10:01 A.M. by Tim Ludolph.

The notes from the May meeting were available for review, but Ludolph didn't hand them out since they lacked in-depth details.

During the meeting, the CommUnity Team deliberated on the primary goal and objectives of the group. It was evident that there was a sense of uncertainty due to the lack of a clear identity, as the members expressed a stronger connection to the Community Action Partnership model and promoting civic pride rather than being solely a business-oriented organization.

Ludolph updated that he had passed on the names and contact information of some group members to Greg Wright from Spark Towns. Greg is currently participating in a regional tourism research project that seeks to offer recommendations for tourism projects in the region. This partnership indicates a move towards coordinating the group's activities with wider community development objectives.

Ludolph handed out the Civic Health report for 2023 from the University of Wisconsin Madison during the group discussion, outlining the overall objectives. He pointed out that the issues faced at the state level are closely tied to what communities are experiencing locally.

### **Group Updates:**

Sue Trampf presented the update for the ABC group. The July 3rd event one of the two major events coming up less than two weeks away. This event has received great advertising including 105.7 the Rockin' Apple. Oshkosh Herald and Neenah paper. Free food to those who find the decorated patriotic rocks.

They have benefited from cancellations from larger communities and the ones who have not cancelled have eliminated much of the arts and entertainment aspects. There will be prizes given out to those who enter into the raffle. As always there is a need for more volunteers.

The ABC group is already envisioning the Christmas Parade committee putting on this year's lighting of the trees and parade themed "Celebrate Kindness and Giving." The committee is encouraging participants to support groups in need, especially in the area of food insecurity, this next holiday season.

Michelle Cassidy added the Bootify Berlin date is set for Saturday October 19<sup>th</sup> and they are actively working with the bars to put on a bigger and better event than the initial two years.

Karen Winkel-Dishong gave a warm welcome to everyone at Advocap's location, mentioning that while the back space may not be as cozy, the front space is ideal for engaging conversations.

Winkel-Dishong gave an update of Advocap activities. One of the relevant issues Advocap is actively working on is homelessness prevention. For illustration of the scale, there are 485 homeless families in the tri-county area, with no specific count available for Green Lake County, although it

is believed to be proportionate. Advocap is actively working on gathering data and developing innovative solutions to address this crisis.

Although Jan Griedl was not in attendance, Winkel-Dishong highlighted the Education Program - Tuition Assistance, which covers a range of fields including CNA, Nursing, and Trades Skill Enhancement. Advocap also offers Business Development and Weatherization programs, positioning themselves as the go-to local resource for these services before seeking assistance elsewhere.

Marie Reilly stated that the BCDC is still facing difficulties in assisting small business start-ups because of the lack of available space. There is optimism that the BCDC will be granted the Rural Business Development Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture soon. Additionally, a sporting goods store and an olive oil plus cheese shop are in the process of opening, demonstrating that what may seem empty is actually on the brink of being occupied. Reilly also noted that the BCDC effectively utilizes the Downtown Facade Improvement and Building Improvement programs, and Ludolph could provide further details on this.

Barry Abbott gave an update on the Berlin Boat Club, announcing that the group has reached a consensus and will focus on organizing events for 2025, as well as providing support to other organizations throughout the current year

Allison Gohlke provided an update on the Berlin Area School District, announcing the continuation of Summer School until the end of the month to maintain a sense of normalcy. Additionally, there will be a baseball camp and swimming lessons offered at the Miller Natatorium. ALICE instructor training is scheduled for July 8th through the 9th at Clay Lamberton Elementary School, and the School District has appointed Carey Metras as the new Community Education and Recreation Coordinator, starting at the end of the month.

In addition to these updates, the Natatorium will be open for laps, swimming lessons, and water walking in the mornings. The School Board is also considering a referendum, and Michelle Cassidy mentioned that the school's communication lifeguard training class has been beneficial in providing the pool with capable lifeguards.

Michelle Cassidy gave an update on the Berlin Farmer's and Artist's Market. Despite the heat and rain on every Tuesday, the market has been very busy. The Fire Department demonstration received positive feedback, and upcoming events will include the 4H group, as well as being at the July 3rd Let Freedom Ring event. More information can be found on their Facebook page. The Farmers and Artists market focused on ensuring that the food they offer is consistent and meets the public's expectations by coordinating with commercial kitchens. They have also successfully negotiated with the Parks and Recreation department to have a restroom facility installed in Nathan Strong Park with the support of the Kiwanis. Additionally, she announced the implementation of SNAP to provide the general public with access to fresh quality food, in addition to the existing Senior and WIC programs.

Karen Coats provided an update on the Financial Institutions to the group. They have been collaborating with the Boys and Girls Club to organize Operation Backpack, especially after the departure of the group's director.

Ludolph shared the latest news from the City, highlighting the return of the nuisance abatement initiative with the arrival of summer. However, the group expressed disappointment in the initiative, noting that it was not effectively addressing the increasing property nuisances, front yard parking issues, shady driveway installations, unsafe fire pits, and the lack of action against chronic nuisance offenders, which was tarnishing the community's image.

Concerns were raised about the communication regarding public fire protection and the perceived lack of transparency in decision-making processes. The group felt that the city needed to be more proactive and compassionate in assisting residents, particularly seniors, with maintaining their lawns and addressing nuisance trees, rather than just imposing fines that could force people to leave the area.

The attendees emphasized the need for a town hall forum and improved communication strategies to engage the community in efforts to clean up the neighborhood, similar to the successful former large trash pickup initiative.

Ludolph also updated the Common Council had approved the event request for the Cruzers Car Club though would not be having police escort.

Chris Kalupa presented an update about the Berlin Area Historical Society. The Berlin Area Historical Society museums will now be open on the second and fourth Sundays until Labor Day. They are also planning some Community Education events following the success of their previous event, including an Antique themed event in December with more details to come.

Chris Kalupa presented an update about the Berlin Public Library, handing out the monthly handouts for June. The focus is on the Summer Reading program and associated events, as well as collaborating with the WinneFox region to promote the explorer brochure.

Michelle Cassidy mentioned that the VFW group will be hosting Brat Fry's for lunch every Wednesday over the next few months, offering a tasty option for those looking for a midweek meal.

The next meeting of the CommUnity Team is scheduled for Wednesday August 7<sup>th</sup> 2024 at Riverside Park- South Shelter House

The meeting adjourned at 11:38 AM