

Sense of Place Task Force Meeting Notes

Task Force Meeting: September 28, 2006

Travelers Rest City Hall

Attendees: Dianna Gracely, Betsy Schroeder, Todd Ward, John Wilusz

Purpose: Explore Travelers Rest

Dianna Gracely spoke about the work being done in Travelers Rest. The meeting took place at City Hall in TR.

Not long ago, TR did not have a master plan. Many people in the community did not see the value of development and growth. A mentality of, "what we have now, works. Why should we change."

The slogan for TR used to be "On The Way Up." That has changed. It is now "The Heart of The Foothills."

They also worked on letterhead and logo for the City. Make it look more professional.

They did not have any design ordinances on the books. TR needed standards in place that would protect them when a Wal-Mart came in, or other businesses. They needed these guidelines and standards to create a sense of place.

TR now has a master plan.

They realized that many businesses and organization were looking at the Highway 25 corridor. That meant that 276 was going to be ignored, in a way. TR saw the need for setting themselves apart. They knew that they needed to highlight 276. They have begun to put public improvements on 276, and the private businesses have stepped up and have done the things that they need to make it all work.

Within this are things like:

- Light Tram Trail – linking TR to Furman, downtown Greenville.
- Rails to Trails
- Streetscapes
- Downtown Square Plan
- Signage concepts
- Open spaces

Destination Points

- Leopard Forest Coffee
- Sunrift Adventures

TR never had a local Accomodations Tax. They never took advantage of Hospitality Tax. As of July 1, TR began collecting those funds.

At points along Main Street the road will go down to 2 lanes. SCDOT has approved this. This shows their seal of approval and proves that it will not cause traffic jams along this route.

One hope is that, as word spreads about the plans, more and more people will begin to acquire the property that is currently vacant.

TR is welcoming growth.

Currently building over 1,000,000 in improvements within their sewer capacity to accommodate all the growth and development.

Attraction of Businesses

- Along 276 small boutique shops. Specialty stores. Upscale.

Commercial Design Standards

Façade, sight layout, orientation of parking.

Landscape Ordinance

No current tree ordinance

The idea of railways and locomotive history is moving county-wide.

There is an opportunity in that TR has no really historic buildings to worry about if they tear them down? They are really starting from scratch with their buildings along Main Street.

Next Meeting

Oct. 19th, Noon. Place – TBD

11/16, Noon. Place – TBD

12/18, Noon. Place – TBD

Sense of Place Task Force Meeting Notes

Task Force Meeting: August 24, 2006
Carolina Fine Foods, Simpsonville

Attendees: Diane Eldridge, Eric Vinson, Dianna Gracely, Todd Ward, Beth Roddy, Russell Hawes, Brock Koonce, Russell Stall, Dennis Waltrap, Ed Brashier

Simpsonville

Russell Stall began the meeting by speaking some on the purpose of the Sense of Place Task Force and where we wanted it to head. For the time being, the group will travel from city to city across the county and listen to the success stories of those areas. The purpose behind this being that we can all learn what everyone is doing. By knowing what others are doing we could possibly tailor things so that we can create some consistency across the county. We all have our distinct personalities and we want to keep that.

The meeting, taking place at Carolina Fine Foods in Simpsonville, SC was to listen to Russell Hawes, Ed Brashier and Dennis Waltrap tell the success story of Simpsonville. Russell began the presentation by explain some of where Simpsonville came from, where they've been, and where they are going.

Historic Fact:

The name for Simpsonville came from Peter Simpson, a blacksmith in the area. Before that it was Austinville.

Russell Hawes also spoke about Greenville being "more than just a city." When one part of the county benefits, everyone does. This helps in recruiting talent, retaining talent, recruiting business, economic development. If Simpsonville and Greer grow and prosper the right way, then everyone else can benefit from that as a community. It takes good planning and smart growth.

Russell then talked about the architectural overlay's they've been working on. The Home Depot is a perfect example of a building where they worked with the corporation to ensure that the exterior would fit with the design scheme of the City of Simpsonville.

They used examples from other cities, like Mt. Pleasant in the lower state. In fact the City Administrator for Mt. Pleasant is a Simpsonville native, so they worked with him to make sure the steps they took were correct.

Eric Vinson stated that a "big part of Sense of Place is not only design, but how it is placed on a site." Meaning, access to and from, what is around it? Neighborhoods, schools, etc.

Simpsonville also worked with SCDOT on the bridge designs over 385, while you pass by Simpsonville. Due to the fact that there is no real representation of Simpsonville on 385, they made the bridges consistent through that stretch to "show" Simpsonville.

- A struggle has always been how to define where you come into Simpsonville.

They have also had successes with Public/Private partnerships. A new park off of Georgia Road. This park will tie into surrounding neighborhoods and schools. It was done in partnership with The Furman Co.

Also, working on the Simpsonville Cultural Center. It will be in the old Simpsonville Elementary School. The auditorium will seat 900 people. This was done in conjunction with the Simpsonville Arts Council.

Simpsonville created many strategies for the future, wrapped around the idea of never forgetting your history.

In 1996 Simpsonville re-wrote their zoning book. They added trees ordinances. The building overlay's also came from this.

There is a strong tree ordinance in Simpsonville. It's fair to developers. It's fair to citizens.

- If you take one tree out, you must put 2 trees back in.
- You must do a tree survey

Sign ordinance

- New developments must have monument signs. This creates consistency and establishes a strong sense of place

Downtown

They are currently working on redeveloping their downtown. It is a 4 lane highway and they are working on narrowing Main Street down to two lanes. Along with this, they are lowering the speed limit to 25. Currently, cars drive through downtown Simpsonville very fast, and you miss it all.

- landscaped medians
- -way-finding signs

Moving Forward

Simpsonville will continue to grow and create more sense of place things that will make them unique, but also keep them consistent with Greenville County. They will continue to market themselves as a "Great place to raise a family."

- The Rec. Complex is a direct result of this. It focuses on youth baseball and softball. It also answers a need for a place for children recreation.

Next Meeting:

9/28/06 – Traveler's Rest City Hall. Noon.

Sense of Place Task Force Meeting Notes

Task Force Meeting: July 27, 2006
Greer Development Authority

Attendees: Jerry Baldwin, David Swenson, Bill Hartzell, Todd Ward, John Wilutz, Josh Lane, Phil Hughes, John Kimbrell, Brock Koonce

Greer's Partnership for Tomorrow

- Started in 1998.
- Focus on community revitalization & economic development in Greer.

Phase 1 – 1999 – 2003: \$2m

Phase 2 – 2003 – 2008: \$1.53m

First phase \$10 – \$12 K was distributed to Downtown Greer.

Second phase 60K was given out in renovation and redevelopment

Phase 1 Focus

- City Center Revitalization
- Expanded Economic Dev.
- City Entranceway
- City and Commerce Complex
- Public Safety Center

Phase 2 Focus

- Economic Dev.
 - Recruitment and Retention of Business
 - Targeted Marketing
 - Property and Infrastructure Dev.
- City Center Revitalization
- Rail Relocation
- Etc.
- Community Dev.
- Education Dev.

The success of the Partnership is due to being able to have everyone at the table with a common goal.

Greer Statistics

- Community of Greer is growing rapidly.
- 1992 only 6 sq. miles
- Now it's over 27 sq. miles (mostly northern and southern areas)
- 16 mile north to south spread.
- Pop. Grown 63% (1990 – 2000) – 10,322 – 21,421)

Action Item:

- Municipal Complex Project
- \$17M capital investment

- Comprehensive Plan Updates.

CPW (Commission of Public Works)

- 1912 formed
- Provide electrical, water services
- Owns its own water supply. Local lakes. Enough water to see Greer through next 50 years.

- Total Water Improvement
\$12,598,141

- Total Sewer Improvement
\$27,000,000

- Total Gas Improvements
\$5,120,404

- Total Electric System Improvements
\$7,354,658

- Greer Development Corporation
4 goals (from pres.)

Developments

2003 – 2005

1,069 new jobs \$104 m in investment

51 projects

Product Development

9 grants, \$59,000 in grants, \$1.4 m in investment

Greer Loan Program

Improved safety for community by taking out almost 20 rail crossings

New restaurants, business, office, etc. coming to downtown Greer. Gerard's developed restaurant downtown and have already expanded due to overwhelming popularity.

Greer Chamber

Story of two ships: Partnership and Leadership.

- Task is to market Greer as a destination point to visitors and locals through community.
- Events/festivals
- Enhance Greer Visitors Bureau into a one-stop shop for visitors

Future Plans

- Plan 2 downtown festival/events to promote Greer as a destination point
- Develop a new Guide to Greer

Upcoming Event in Greer

October 6th – Oktoberfest in Greer.

Education

- \$10,000 investment in After School program at Chandler Creek
- Will be started by other communities. Fully funded now by United Way?

- \$11,000 investment in Character Education at Greer Middle

- Plan to expand resource dollars and programs to other Greer schools.

Questions

- Ⓞ State Annexation Laws. **Does Greer have a service that they provide that you must annex to provide it?** Yes. Sewer services.

- Ⓞ **So many people aren't aware that Greer is a gem. Do you have any coordination with community groups with those in Greenville to having communities share opportunities?**
 - Focused on promotion – initiatives
 - Targeted mailings on East side of G'ville, west side of Greer.
 - Advertising in Greenville magazine. And SC magazine.
 - Billboards in Fall.
 - Participated in Market Street report.
 - Strong Downtown Association group.
 - PULSE discussion.

- Ⓞ By developing downtown and affordable space/office/housing, Greer is able to have an advantage in attracting young professional talent. A goal is to retain and engage the young professionals that are opening office, moving and/or living in Greer.
- Ⓞ Affordable housing
- Ⓞ Median age is dropping while County is increasing

We (Greenville County) want to be clear that Greer is part of our community. What can we do to create consistency across the board.

A huge amount of growth is in your own backyard.

- Ⓞ Target Audience for Greer Development / Growth / Tourism
3 Groups
 - Those in downtown that you want to stay.
 - Those that aren't there, but you want them to come
 - Those that don't know at all.

Where are you going to really make Greer special? What is going to set Greer apart? Is there a focus to stand Greer apart.

It's the niche destination. Historic downtown. Quality restaurants. Small town feel. Railroad Town. Mill village. (Changed Downtown Association to Greer Station Association)

How can we link all of our communities to create our own SOP?

- Ⓞ Light rail throughout county. This rail would link all municipalities / cities in County. You could get on rail in TR and go to Greenville, Greer, Mauldin, Simpsonville, etc.
- Ⓞ Consistent signage through all cities.
- Ⓞ Guide to Greenville County. Emphasis sections on each city and area in County. Each City has weigh in on content for their area. Not a "history" book. A tourists guide to seeing Greenville County. Is this something this Task Force could initiate and get done?
- Ⓞ Each area has something specific to their "history", "story", "lifestyle". Greenville has Bridge, Falls Park, Downtown. Greer has "Greer Station", downtown. Simpsonville has downtown, clock. Mauldin will have Community Center, Cultural Center. All cities need to have something distinguishable about them, but still keep the feel that you know you are in Greenville County.

Meeting Adjourned.

Next Meeting TBD. Possibly in Simpsonville to discuss Vision 2020.

Sense of Place Task Force Meeting Notes

Task Force Meeting: June 29th, 2006 12PM – Greenville Forward

Attendees: Nancy Whitworth, John Wilusz, Ed Zeigler, Brock Koonce

Meeting began with a recap of last two Task Force meetings. Attendance has been sparse, but initiatives have been good. A tentative agenda was given to help discussion. Discussion began about the last meeting and the items that were discussed. Many feel that the purpose of this Task Force is to find those great “Sense of Place” pieces throughout Greenville County and promote and build them.

What Are Some Examples of Greenville’s Sense of Place?

- “Feels Good” – How do we keep that / maintain that here?
- All Communities are unique – they all have their own special flavor and style. The all have their own identity.
- Trail, walking city – Connections between communities
- Landscaping
- Treelines
- TR – Gateway to the mountains
- Neighborhoods – Simpsonville, etc.
- Nighttime entertainment at Greenridge
- Town Centers
 - Entertainment
 - Activity

“Where did people go before Falls Park?”

- Give them life in different places.

What Is Not Being Done

- Cross Jurisdictional Planning
 - We have become very territorial in some respects (which isn’t necessarily bad), but the different areas in the county are not planning together. We could get a lot done in the name of “Sense of Place” if all communities in County were at the table talking to each other.
- We need to help educate people about change. Greenville is changing for the better, but some citizens are afraid of that. If we do not change, we are standing still, and that is not good. Citizens need to learn that the changes being made are for the best.

“Wish Words” To Describe Greenville

Greenville Forward recently conducted a survey among Juniors and Seniors in College in South Carolina. Within the survey, they asked the student to attribute words (one) to a list of given cities. The results were pretty interesting.

Greenville Forward asked the Sense of Place Task Force to create a list of “wish” words for Greenville. Meaning, if this survey were conducted again, what are the words you would like to see used for Greenville?

- 🕒 Unique
- 🕒 Fun/Cool – (Cool can be used twice. As in Fun/Hip, and as in Climate)
- 🕒 Pleasant – burg
- 🕒 Active
- 🕒 Vibrant
- 🕒 Pretty
- 🕒 Green
- 🕒 Opportunities
- 🕒 Picturesque (385 view of mountains when you are driving into city is an example)
- 🕒 Wow!
- 🕒 Welcoming
- 🕒 Quality of healthcare
- 🕒 Diverse / Tolerant
 - Age
 - Culture
 - Socio-economic
- 🕒 Easy to get around

At the end of the meeting the group decided that it would be a benefit to hold meetings each month in a different area of the county (Greer, Mauldin, Fountain Inn, etc.). Education must be done about what is going on in the county before we can move forward with helping create a Sense of Place in Greenville County.

Greenville Forward agreed to set up the next meeting in Greer, with the Partnership for Tomorrow, led by David Swenson and Ed Driggers.

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: July 27th @ Noon. Greer Development Corp. Board Room. Directions to be sent out.

Sense of Place Task Force Meeting Notes

Task Force Meeting: May 25, 2006 12PM

Attendees: Nancy Witworth, Todd Ward, Trip Muldrow, John Wiluz, Russell Stall, Brock Koonce

Meeting began with a recap of last two Task Force meetings. Attendance has been sparse, but initiatives have been good. Russell and Brock asked group what they wanted from this Task Force. The following is what was discussed.

Tasks

- Re-visit Vision
- Create "To Do" List
- Decide who else needs to be at the table
- Consensus among Planners/Cities/Counties
- Serve as a forum for all areas (Location) to come together and swap ideas...
- Create awareness and bring pieces together
 - Connectivity

HOW MANY ISSUES DO WE WANT TO COVER?

Who Should Be Here

- Partnership for Tomorrow – Greer
- Vision 2020 – Simpsonville
- TR Group – TRABA
- Good representation from across County
- TY from Paris Mountain
- Davis Swinson
- Martin Livingston
- Gaye Sprague
- Eric Vincent
- Donna Mosley Coleman
- Anita Wong (Retention)
- Tammy Propst
- Heidi Arroyave

What Is Sense of Place?

- Unique. Makes that place special (Downtown Example)
- Mountain wilderness (County)
- Physical attributes: "If you're in Mauldin – you know you're in Mauldin"
 - Avoiding "Generic"
- Keep the Village in Greenville
- Allowing unique experiences so people can develop a sense of place
- "This committee should be the good side of Sense of Place"
 - Keep separation, i.e. Vision vs. Land Use

What Are Some Sense of Place Things Happening in Greenville Now?

- Expo Center Example
 - Huge strides being made on building.
 - BUT, Not much being done on the Sense of Place in the area to help

What needs to happen to create a SOP on Pleasantburg?

- Beautification from 385 to Laurens Road

Ideas for SOP In Greenville

- Un-Authorized Guide to Greenville
 - Hidden secrets for the tourist
 - Locals provide anecdotes
- "A Day In The Life of Greenville"
 - Project of a Furman University Senior

Next Meeting

June 22 @ Noon. Location: TBD

Homework Assignment:

1. Bring more examples of some Sense of Place things Greenville has, County-wide
2. Bring 1 or more ideas about what could help Greenville accent is Sense of Place

Sense of Place Task Force Meeting Notes

Task Force Meeting: April 20, 2006 12PM

Attendees: Phil Hughes, Bill Hartzell, Russell Stall, Brock Koonce

Russell began the meeting discussing a recent trip to Chicago.

Examples of Chicago "sense of place" are apparent everywhere. Example: 1000 faces artwork / fountain.

How do we make this group interesting enough that people want to come. We are experiencing poor attendance.

How do we get in front of the DOGS (Downtown Owners Group)?

We need to avoid the fear that the group will get started and going, and nothing will ever get done.

Example of "Sense of Place" can be found in Artisphere's commitment in donating one statue per year to Greenville. By taking that one step, they got more done than just sitting around talking for years.

Our task is inform the public about what our sense of place is. Establish goals. Then try to achieve those by 2025

Example:

Laser City. A series of lasers throughout city.

What are the top 10 "sense of place" things we have now?

- Ⓞ Falls Park
- Ⓞ Liberty Bridge
- Ⓞ Condensed restaurant location. Downtown food court.j
- Ⓞ Mice on Main
- Ⓞ Walk-able Downtown
- Ⓞ Downtown Ballpark
- Ⓞ Bi-Lo Center
- Ⓞ Main Street Experience
- Ⓞ Governor's School
- Ⓞ Statues
- Ⓞ Mountain Wilderness
- Ⓞ Lake Conestee
- Ⓞ Furman
- Ⓞ Theatre culture
- Ⓞ Heritage Green
- Ⓞ Downtown Alive
- Ⓞ Distinct downtowns throughout county (Greer, Fountain Inn, TR, etc.)

What are the top 10 we want next?

- 🕒 Trail
- 🕒 Power lines underground
- 🕒 Trees beyond Main Street
- 🕒 Public art / sculptures a year
- 🕒 Flowers
- 🕒 Bike rental at Riverplace
- 🕒 Festivals
- 🕒 Rooftop bars
- 🕒 Link Heritage Green to Main Street
- 🕒 Music
- 🕒 Independent business
- 🕒 More gathering spots
- 🕒 West End Arts District
- 🕒 NEXT / Digital Alliance – Support these types of groups
(3 groups. “here and you want to keep them.” “know about it and you want to get them.” “don’t know about it and you want to get them.”)
- 🕒 Water (fountains, etc)

Example from Phil: In European towns, you have to use all your senses. (smells, bells). The sense of place is inherent in all aspects of life.

What do we need to do to help achieve these aspects?

- Help other cities in County create these “nodes”

Next Steps:

Build the Task Force. We need more participation from others on Task Force. How can we do this?

Greenville Forward to set next meeting date (**May 25th at Noon**).

Will send out notes and invite to meeting on 5/9. 3 weeks before meeting date.

Sense of Place Task Force Meeting Notes

Task Force Meeting: March 16, 2006
Innovate Building

Present: Bill Hartzell, Shane Steffen, Bucky Tarleton, Chris Stone, Phil Hughes, Russell Stall, Brock Koonce

Background from the Past (Note: Attach Chris Stone "Sense of Place" document)

- Chris Stone stated that group met only twice (not a lot) and did come up with important decisions.
- A lot of goals are to form collaborations and get something done (Russell noted Riverplace, etc.)
- Creating better pedestrian connections throughout Greenville is an important part of sense of place. Connecting all the communities with less reliance on the automobile. (Main Point)
- Avoid sprawl.
- Develop places where people want to gather.
Number one priority is not on the Vision Statement. There is not one arching theme. Too much "sameness". We need to create a place which is unique.

Comments from Phil Hughes

- The answers are different than the question.
- The "mall of America" You don't know what mall you're in, same in every town.
- Sense of Place should mean: "When you are there, no else place is like it." It's not creating a sense of place that is truly ours, but it is creating something that is unique. For example, Fairview road in Simpsonville could be anywhere. Whereas The Peace Center, Falls Park can't be anywhere else. They are unique to Greenville.

Reference Portland.

What do the people of Greenville hold dear to them to make us unique?

- Architecture, uses, and how you create them.
- Sense of place means you have this geographically specific area and you want to improve that, not necessarily connect to other cities.
- There should be something that changes the ease of getting something done. (.e. The Grape vs. The Raw Bar.)
- Citizens groups are making Greenville "not fun". Citizen's groups are given power to turn down projects without the expertise needed to understand the impact on the growth and future of Greenville. (e.g., Zoning board)
- Increased bureaucracy is hindering growth. It is becoming more and more difficult to get projects approved and through the system.
- Council responsibility with citizen communities. City Council is not sufficiently tracking projects.

Who's in charge?

- Lack of time
- No accountability
- No power

There is not a common direction in developing a sense of place. Every group wants to do something, but we need to recognize that there is no common thread that is pulling everyone together. Get everyone on the same page, in regards with an identity. Groups are currently working independently.

We are not used to talking to each other. Government is used to setting the rules and saying "this is what we are doing". We are not used to talking to each other, and government is not used to listening. One participant suggested that government does not want to listen. This is changing, but it has just started.

Example: Government: "We want to look better" – set up a task force to engage people to come help us. Then, we will listen and negotiate and make a decision. Rather than we make the decision and we will tell you the deal.

There is a leadership void in Greenville. Charlotte had Hugh McCall. Greenville used to have that (Charlie Daniel, Buck Mickel, The Grid). But, now we don't have a cohesive group of individuals who don't care who they make mad, as long as they are helping the community. Greenville citizens are confused about who's in charge.

Corporate business is not at the table. Where are they? We may become transient. By leaders of corporations not staying around for long enough to build an allegiance, we are losing corporate presence.

Everything is fast and furious. We are all moving at a much faster pace than we used to. There is increased competition. Therefore, consensus building needs to be done. We need to practice "smart growth." (Chamber 16 Points).

Fifedoms are still alive and well in Greenville. There isn't a global view on where Greenville is going right now.

How do we make everyone feel like we are making an impact.

- Needs to be an objective.
 - Vision needs to graduate to something else. It currently offers objectives that are too wide. Morph into something new, that citizens of this community would use to see that pathway. Would create a consensus. Not everything can be done. It needs to graduate to something new that makes citizens say "WOW!" The end result is something impressive.
- Do another Falls Place.

Some feel that there has been too much emphasis on Downtown. We are currently leaving Pleasantburg, Laurens Road, parts of the count outside the city, etc.

What does Greenville need?

- Business towers on Pleasantburg.
 - Need hotel configuration outside of Downtown. This would serve as support for Expo Center. Currently the Expo Center cannot attract major expositions and conventions because there is not place for conventioners to eat or sleep.
- More well managed parking garages
- Marketing materials on Downtown Business District. CVB has some. Chamber has some. No one has really good materials.

Greenville has created "Design Guidelines" for business in City which are hurting development. (i.e. – you can't put metal on buildings. 20% of parking has to be in the front of building.) This is causing many businesses problems when trying to keep up with guidelines. Greenville is a "brick" city. We could never put a Guggenheim in Greenville because of these guidelines.

Greenville is a "surprise". We don't get the word out enough. We need to let people know what we have. All visitors are surprised Greenville is as nice as it is.

"Good to Great"

Who are the right people to have on the bus to achieve the Vision. Get on, do the work, drive it.

- Economic Development
- Quality of life

What do we need to do to attract people to Greenville in 20-25 years?

We already have a great location between Atlanta and Charlotte. But, we could end up looking like both of those cities if we are not careful now.

Greenville Forward should work with Greenville Forum. The Forum probably has the right people on it to make a difference.

Politicians respond to numbers. 20 people can stop anything.

If Vision 2025 had to do one thing, what would it be?

Suggested Next Steps

- Reconvene a larger group of sense of place task force in the next month.
- Develop a better definition of what "sense of place" means.
- Understand what defines Greenville's sense of place.
- Develop metrics for understanding our sense of place and determine how to measure them.
- Develop preliminary tactics for achieving sense of place goals