

Narrative Summary of Strategic Plan Meeting

On 9/17/24, a FFL Commission Strategic Planning Committee meeting took place with Amy Mellencamp, Mary Danko, and Patrick Halladay, focusing on the ongoing development of the library's strategic plan. The discussion centered on refining the plan's focus areas, ensuring it reflects both the library's mission and community needs.

Strategic Priorities and Revisions

Amy Mellencamp opened the conversation by questioning the current focus areas and their order in the draft plan. Mary Danko shared that Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak had reviewed the document, offering feedback and suggesting revisions, particularly regarding the climate-related sections. Danko also highlighted the upcoming Thursday staff meeting as a chance for internal input on the draft.

Community Feedback and Library Mission

Mary Danko noted that recent community feedback mirrored earlier responses, with a notable emphasis on library programs and the collection, despite efforts to gather broader input on diverse community needs. This led to a discussion about ensuring that the strategic plan prioritizes areas aligning with the library's mission. Amy Mellencamp advocated for library programming and services to be central to the plan, particularly given the institution's role as a resource hub, rather than a housing authority. She suggested that the plan's focus on housing could be reframed to highlight community services and partnerships, which would allow the library to maintain its connection to these important issues without overstepping its core function.

Survey Context and Community Needs

Patrick Halladay sought clarity regarding the survey data, specifically on housing, asking whether the feedback was linked to the library or more general community concerns. Mary Danko explained that the survey was designed to gauge the community's most pressing needs. The group discussed the idea of reframing topics like housing, addiction, and mental health under a broader heading of "Community Services and Partnerships," ensuring these areas are acknowledged while keeping the library's primary role in focus.

Public Space and Climate Resiliency

The meeting also touched on climate resiliency, with Amy Mellencamp and Patrick Halladay both stressing the importance of integrating this into any discussions about public space and upcoming building renovations.

Strengthening Partnerships and Social Work Initiatives

Mary Danko highlighted the success of the Community Partners Desk initiative, which brings external organizations into the library to better connect with the public. She also emphasized the impact of the library's work towards hiring a social worker, who will be helping patrons navigate various services and strengthening community partnerships. This role was identified as a crucial action step in addressing community services.

Clarifying the Library's Role in Broader Social Issues

As the meeting drew to a close, Patrick Halladay reiterated that while the library serves as a vital resource connector, it cannot be expected to become an expert on complex social issues like housing. Mary Danko agreed, suggesting that removing direct references to housing from the strategic plan would prevent unrealistic expectations, allowing the library to focus on partnerships that provide the expertise needed.

Action Steps and Next Steps

To conclude, Mary Danko outlined the next steps. She will incorporate feedback from Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak and the staff into the draft, reordering the focus areas to reflect the library's mission while addressing broader community needs through partnerships and services. The language around community services will also be refined, removing any direct mention of housing to maintain clarity in the library's role. After gathering input from staff during the upcoming meeting, the revised draft will be passed to the communications intern for final formatting and branding, with a goal of limiting the final document to four pages for clarity and conciseness.

The final draft will be reviewed by the Mayor before moving forward for further action.