

Aspire Johnson County – Group Meeting  
August 15, 2013  
Ivy Tech Campus, Franklin

Attendance: Brent Tilson, Kent DeKoninck, Jody Veldkamp, Marty Bales, Anita Knowles, Beverly Martin, David Clendening, Tandy Shuck, Erin Smith, Nelson Smiley, Jeff Byrd, Tricia Bechman, Ron West, Kevin, McGinnis, Kevin Hoover, Gail Richards, Garnet Vaughn, Greg Taylor, Susan McCarty, Loren Snyder, David Brenton, Pat Sherman, Brandyn Ferguson, Cindy Cook, Peggy Thompson-Rutledge, Carol Chappel, Barb Miller, Betty Davis, Steve Powell, Jeff Owen, Michael Winslow, Tina Gross, Cheryl Morphew, Dana Monson, Jan Reese, Becky Allen, Christian Maslowski, Jay Goad, and Pat Enochs

Lee Lewellyn called the meeting to order. A round robin introduction took place. Brent Tilson welcomed everyone and gave a brief recap of the first meeting and the expectations that came from that collaboration. Lee then expanded on the goals of Aspire and the process for the benefit of the new members. He reminded everyone that we cannot allow the cost of failure to be high. Instead, when trying to innovate, we must create a place for creativity, where when a mistake is made, a mulligan is given. This is a pact each of us needs to have for each other, if we are to make our home better. Each team then reported their current progress.

**Branding Team** – Team leader is Jeff Owen. Their group has begun to define the process that will be used to develop the brand. The main question is to how to move from discussion to reality. Many in the group have extensive marketing experience and realize in order to sustain the brand and marketing strategy, a professional will be needed. Funding was also discussed with a focus on long term planning and funding. One organization must be responsible for the image and branding of Johnson County. The Innkeepers tax is going to be important to this effort, even though it is a very controversial subject. Right now Johnson County is the only donut county that does not have this tax. However, other funding options should be researched and discussed. For the group's information it was noted that the Innkeeper's tax is paid by those using the hotels/motels and a tax of up to 5% can be passed by the County Council without additional legislation. In Bartholomew County, \$1.8million is generated each year for use in promoting communities, etc., through the county. A visitor's bureau is generally funded with this revenue stream. The final takeaway is that this is a professional process and funding needs to be found.

**Next steps:** Continue to recruit team members; educate themselves and others on the Innkeepers tax; secure a consultant specializing in branding counties; and put together an action plan on how to move forward.

**Corridors Team** – Team leader is Jody Veldkamp. Jody feels this is a good group of diverse people. They have begun to gather comprehensive plans from any community where major corridors are present. Corridors are defined as: I-65, US 31, SR135, and future I-69. Local communities have good detailed plans on these areas already. They have also discussed where future interchanges will be on 69. Bargersville will be affected and is already beginning to plan accordingly for that area. Plans are good but need to be acted on, therefore all members of Aspire Johnson County need to back our elected officials when they implement and/or propose changes like gateways, roundabouts, bike paths, etc., and support those changes. This group has coined the phrase "spine support for the leaders"! The East-West corridor is also important and plans are currently underway.

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**Corridors Team (Cont'd)**

Next steps: Look at expectations for the corridors; make people aware of change; educate the public on the value of these changes; and review the current comprehensive plans. These plans will be reviewed from a holistic county-wide basis—and not community by community. In doing so, they can look for commonalities and opportunities, how plans match up, and how they may work or complement each other. The group will be setting up meetings with key staff (i.e., Planners, etc.) in communities that touch the target corridors. They will also research resources that may be needed for planning. They are looking at funding for the Greenwood airport as well. They also want to explore renaming the airport the Greenwood Executive Airport as opposed to Greenwood Municipal Airport. Going forward, they want to coordinate with the Branding team branding on potential signage ideas to keep the message consistent. They also feel a lack of executive housing is an issue and executive rental space for the younger generation in these corridors should be explored.

**Talent Team** – Team leader is Bev Martin. She began by saying branding will be critical. They are looking at future members of this team and defining who the key players are, and who needs to get engaged in this effort. How the county is promoted helps determine retention of executives in the county. The team is looking at what factors help retain executives and attract new executives to the county. They will also gather information on all educational opportunities/assets currently available in the county. They want to promote what we have such as Franklin College, Ivy Tech and the 6 local schools districts and what each has to offer. They feel the county needs to try to find ways to grow what we have. An example of what they are looking at: Does Ivy Tech have the right programs needed for our employers? What is the impact of K-12 and college students as far as what employers want and students need? We have a great retirement community with wonderful talent, how do we leverage that talent/resource? Would like to see an industry “check list” on what they want/need for training, etc. They feel data is critical and needed on the demand side (employers) and that a trained workforce is important to attracting new business.

Next steps: Focus on how to accomplish these goals; survey area industry regarding skills gaps; and retention and recruitment challenges. Determine ways to collaborate with the schools and community to bring these needs to our county. Look for ways to utilize the retirement talent in our education system.

**Collaboration Team** – Team leader is Greg Taylor. He began by noting that this is not a political agenda, it is to attract a better quality of life for all residents. They want to do this county-wide. Mission is to ensure everyone understands we need the decision-makers to work together, that a “win” for Greenwood is a “win” for Franklin, and vice versa; that we need to have a forum where they can support one another. They want to promote the concept of working together as a whole and to bring everyone together in all areas such as industry, elected officials, schools, etc. They want to promote the right and consistent message. Four municipality leaders have already met to discuss ideas and to learn from each other. Kevin McGinnis briefly discussed this meeting and the goal of getting together to discuss common interests and common needs. He reported they have found there is much to learn from one another and thus have agreed to meet on a monthly basis. They have extended an invite to New Whiteland, the County, and Edinburgh and will invite other elected officials to join them.

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**Collaboration Team (Cont'd)**

The Collaboration team meeting revealed that assets and weaknesses are not the same for everyone, and communities can build on this. Want to look at U.S. 31 corridor as one entity rather than each community working independently on plans. Want consistency and continuity.

Next steps: Want to coordinate a county group meeting that includes other entities such as schools, businesses and White River Township.

**Family Recreation Center Team** – Team leader is Gail Richards. The group is looking at a recreation center for the county that everyone could use—residents and visitors alike. The team is looking to recruit new members. The team started looking only at parks, but then added in culture and arts, when they realized a need to include for-profit entities like Mallow Run Winery, because they are a large part of the recreation assets utilized in the county. During their first meeting, it was agreed that if the county doesn't have a strong quality of life we won't attract talent and have a positive brand. Since gathering a list of all parks, they found a lot of opportunities already exist. They also noted that if there were a visitors' bureau there could be a way to keep all the county-wide information together. The challenge is to have a wrangler to keep everything focused. Finally, the group sees a need for a support person to help keep things going forward.

Next steps: Want to convene the various parks directors to coordinate plans and events, and also get a feel for what they feel they need and how to get these needs met; want to pull assets together; and research the need for a central county-wide center. They will look at LJC classes in the past and see what they have done, as well as determine if this could be an LJC project for this year. Also want to work on an idea for a community calendar. Finally, they will research the purpose of recreation marketing now, is it to sell to local residents or to attract outside visitors who could become future employees or even residents and look at what future needs could be. They do feel transportation is also important for this and other teams as well.

Lee then asked the teams to convene to network and discuss goals.

The meeting concluded with a presentation by Sara Laycock and Chris Pryor (both from Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors – MIBOR) to share results from their recent Johnson County Community Preference Survey. The presentation is attached.

The meeting was adjourned with a reminder from Brent Tilson to forward any inquiries or media requests about Aspire JC to him, Larry Heydon, Cheryl Morphew, or Gail Richards.

**Next Aspire JC Group meeting: Tuesday, September 24, 8:30 – 11:00, location to be determined.**

Aspire Johnson County – Group Meeting  
September 24, 2013  
Tilson HR, Greenwood

Attendance: Brent Tilson, Larry Heydon, Jay Goad, Beverly Martin, Jody Veldkamp, Anita Knowles, Greg Taylor, Jeff Owen, Barb Miller, Cindy Cook, Peggy Thompson-Rutledge, Gail Richards, Tandy Shuck, Jeff Byrd, Tricia Bechman, Ron West, Becky Allen, Kevin Hoover, Mayor Mark Myers, Loren Snyder, Pat Sherman, Tina Gross, David Bedwell, Jane Blessing, Betty Davis, Rick Wilson, Krista Linke, Angie Longtin, Schyler Culver, Pat Enochs, Dana Monson, and Cheryl Morphey

Brent Tilson opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to Tilson HR. Larry Heydon greeted everyone and expressed his pleasure with the progress of Aspire JC. A round robin introduction took place, then our facilitator, Lee Lewellyn asked for the 30/30 Reports from each focus team.

### **30/30 REPORTS**

**Corridors Team:** Team leader is Jody Veldkamp. Their group's initial charge is to understand the landscape today, before they can look forward. They have gathered all the municipalities' comprehensive plans and will overlay with a county map. They want to develop a county-wide map with all of the corridors identified—including the two rail lines. They did not initially include S.R. 252, but will now, as well as other arties/corridors throughout the county, not identified in the first round. How do these corridors connect us to communities outside of our county? If planning isn't coordinated among the municipalities, it can be a road block, as corridors bring commerce to our community. Finally, he reported that he and Christian Maslowski attended the Indy Connect (metro corridors planning) presentation to see how that may play a role in Johnson County.

**Next Steps:** Will review each municipality's zoning and learn the respective meanings. Goal is to create a comprehensive plan map for the entire county. Want to reach out to Columbus, Bloomington, Martinsville, and Indianapolis. Want to begin conversations with the planning directors and elected officials. Key Contacts they need: MIBOR, Chip Charles (Crossroads Engineers), and Luke Mastin – County Highway Director.

Lee suggested a college intern to help the group with data compilation. Beverly Martin mentioned that Franklin College has their Intern Fair coming up, so that may be a resource. Cheryl Morphey announced that Lisa Fears with Franklin College has joined the Aspire JC group and could serve as a great resource.

**Talent Team:** Team leader is Bev Martin. They now have about 15 members, but they really need a contact for Central Nine. The focus for this group may come from the Branding Team. What is the talent pool for JC? Must identify a talent market. Will begin to identify key assets from employers. Gathering research on studies of companies choosing a location based on the talent available. Bev reported the group has implemented 30-day homework assignments for team members to keep them moving in a forward direction. Want to identify training needs for the existing industry base. What does JC want to be known as from a talent attraction perspective? Would like to see information on growth projections from area industries. Lee explained that individual company projections is sensitive data due to competition, etc. and most likely can't be shared by organizations like JCDC.

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Next steps: Want to understand what students need at school and college to make them attractive to employers. Their group is not necessarily looking at programs but rather at graduates. What areas are turning out the most graduates that meet the needs of current/future employers? For example: how many engineers are graduating each year? They are looking at workforce as an asset. Know from area employers, that there is a critical gap in “human” skills like work ethic, critical thinking, and other soft skills when trying to recruit talent. They know there needs to be a soft skills supplement to those students with a tactical background.

**Collaboration Team:** Team leader is Greg Taylor. He noted they have had a bit of a challenge. In discussing a revenue source to support Aspire JC, they felt Innkeeper’s Tax was a possibility. Then found out the Branding team was focused on the Innkeeper’s Tax. Also learned that it cannot legally be a revenue stream for Aspire JC. Now looking at what the next stakeholder group is they can convene, perhaps the Superintendents. Have realized there is a crossover with some of the other groups. Believes they need to identify funding to support some of these issues. They plan to move funding to the front burner.

Lee commented that maybe it is time to declare success and recalibrate the purpose of the team. Maybe it is sustainability? As we all continue to move forward, we need to look at possible funding sources, grants, etc. How can the Collaboration Team provide service to the other groups?

Brent Tilson commented there may be an opportunity for a business network collaboration effort.

Loren Snyder asked how we can reach the general population. Community outreach could be a focus for this team.

**Family Recreation Team:** Team leader is Gail Richards. The group has convened the Parks Directors from Greenwood, Franklin, Johnson County, and Edinburgh. Have found the recreational assets throughout the county are huge—both public and private. Is there a way to connect people to areas throughout the county? Know that driving distance can be an issue—even from one community to the next. According to the Parks Directors the county needs to have more “passive recreation”, i.e., opportunities for more foot traffic, not just trails. How do we change the mindset of residents that it’s ok to have these kinds of assets; that taxes to support such assets are not a bad thing? She went on to say, the elected officials throughout the county need to be on board with this change in mindset too. County officials may be the key to connecting trails throughout the county. Need to create a trail master plan or update an old one if it exists. Their group believes that U.S. 31 is the primary connector that links most communities together. Recreation should be viewed as an economic driver. Want to include smaller communities in the discussion, as well as Camp Atterbury. Is there a way to take Journey Johnson County and tie it into historical markers? Could this be an LJC class project?

Next Steps: Will bring the Parks Directors together in October to focus on their respective trail maps.

Loren Snyder proposed that they need to show the return on investment for every dollar invested in a trail to help with those who may not be proponents. This ROI should be documented.

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Anita Knowles offered that there is a county-wide trails map, but it needs to be updated. May want to check with the MPO to see what plans they may have and their impact on Johnson County.

**Branding Team:** Team leader is Jeff Owen. Their group did extensive research on the Innkeeper's Tax. Jeff presented a 101 on Innkeeper's Tax (*his power point is attached*). There was an in-depth discussion with the group on what it is, what it is not, and a brief history of the pursuit of this tax a few years ago. Ron West gave a detailed account of his time on the County Council when the Innkeeper's Tax was presented in the past. Anita Knowles asked that a list of county-wide amenities be compiled and provided to the County Council. It was suggested that if the Branding Team were to pursue passage of the Innkeeper's Tax that it garner support *individually* from folks, rather than as the Aspire JC group.

**Next Steps:** Need to evaluate how best to support those elected officials who wish to pursue bringing this type of marketing to JC. Will continue to help educate on the need for a CVB and the importance of marketing/promoting Johnson County.

### **BIG PICTURE DISCUSSION**

Lee asked the group to look three years out. Gerry Dick wants to do a feature on all of the great things Johnson County has done. What would we tell him? Assets, successes, what are we known for? Following is the brainstormed list from the group:

- Major concert venue at JC Park
- Additional 200 acres of park/open space
- Additional mileage of trails. Connecting Greenwood trails to Franklin Trails, etc.
- Kelsay Farms is the southside version of Fairoaks Dairy
- When folks enter JC, they will know they are in JC—"know where you are"
- Advanced manufacturing mecca, not only for business, but as a training destination
- Reputation as a supportive environment for both existing and new business
- Would like to see the executives and their families living here
- Municipal Business liaison/ombudsman to help navigate through their respective permitting systems
- Best transit system in Central Indiana—only county with a 5:00 a.m. service
- The only county where all college graduates can find an internship opportunity
- Premier executive airport in the region
- Attract diverse employment opportunities—including trailing spouse

Betty Davis commented that we cannot ignore the huge pool of talent and expertise found in the retirement sector. Want to encourage this group to use that talent pool. How do we mobilize that group? Should keep it at the top of the list.

Jeff Byrd offered that Atterbury Job Corps helps provides internship opportunities for his students. What he has found is that many of his students love it here and would like to live/stay here, but there is no real connect to the business community. As a result, some of his students have to go back home to find employment.

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Gail Richards stated that JCCF is funding a small grant to the City of Greenwood for a How To brochure on how to work through the city system. This business checklist will be online too. She mentioned there may be an opportunity for the Foundation to reach out to other municipalities for a similar grant.

**CLOSING COMMENTS**

Lee commented that it may be time to develop thoughts on the business sector. Has a hole been created that is not being addressed?

Larry Heydon: Time to think about governance as an organization. We will treat this as a business function.

Brent Tilson: Healthy discussions today. Appreciate the candor. We are here to bring ideas and work collaboratively with the elected officials. Need to have more members. Need to sustain our groups.

The meeting was adjourned.

**Next Aspire JC Group meeting: Thursday, October 24, 11:00 – 1:30 at Endress+Hauser in Greenwood.**

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Brent Tilson and Larry Heydon opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. A round robin introduction took place

The facilitator, Lee Lewellyn explained how the 30/30 reports work for the new members of the group. Each team thinks in terms of 30-day action steps and what the next 30 days will bring. The purpose of this is to give a process for everyone to think about how to improve Johnson County and try something they are developing. If it works it can continue, but if it doesn't, the 30 days give you a stopping place and a place to start a new initiative. He reiterated the high cost of failure is not applicable here. We are willing to try something and it is ok if it fails; it simply gives you an opportunity to try something new. This process has been working well for everyone so far.

### **30/30 REPORTS**

**Corridors Team:** Team leader is Jody Veldkamp. He stated the 30-day cycle is working well for his group. The team has gathered all of the communities' zoning maps except for Trafalgar, which they are continuing to request. MIBOR has agreed to assist them with this project. He met with the Family Recreation team to discuss how the team's respective research will dovetail together. He believes the collaboration among all of the teams is a strong part of Aspire.

**Next 30 days:** Will finish identifying all zoning definitions and will compile all maps into one comprehensive county-wide map. Lee asked about their "big picture". Jody said it is to: 1) identify what each major corridor is and what it can become, 2) determine if all of the plans work together, and if they don't, what needs to be done to make it all coordinate. Brian Walker asked if there is already any kind of map similar to this in the county GIS system. Anita Knowles stated not at this time. Rick Wilson asked if all the towns had given this information. Jody said they are still working on this, and so far everyone has been helpful. John Rondot reported Edinburgh is looking at the increased traffic along the rail line through town, as there is concern about the train traffic's impact to many of the streets. Jody said they will include rail, but currently have not looked at it from a city-wide perspective.

**Talent Team:** Team leaders are Bev Martin and Tina Gross. Tina reported the team has spent time identifying who they need to include in their group, and as a result, have added three new members. They are continuing to do research on demographics and workforce trends while also looking at what is needed to recruit talent in these trend areas. They also reviewed some case studies to see what is needed and what gaps exist.

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**Talent Team (Cont'd):**

The team has developed a plan for internships and is building on the current youth sports plans that have been started through Franklin College, and want to consider if there is a way to use this as a recruiting tool for talent. Much discussion occurred around this idea including: Mayor McGuinness' brief update on a plan to determine the feasibility of creating a Franklin sports corporation. Brian Walker commented on his experiences with youth sports, particularly in Tennessee where he has traveled. Mayor McGuinness told of his experience with travel sports and the money he spends when he travels. He also commented on the City of Westfield and their new sports complex and the effect it will have on that community. Larry Heydon gave examples of his experience with youth sports. Lee then asked how that discussion correlates with the recreation group and the work they are doing. Gail Richards said they are complementary discussions and the two teams are not discussing the same things yet.

Next 30 days: They will divide their team into groups to review this idea and discover how it might work as a recruitment tool. Lee commented that community investment and company investment have changed over the last few years, that the availability of talent drives new investment now more than ever. Companies want to be where these folks live, rather than moving them to their location.

**Collaboration Team:** Team leader is Greg Taylor. He reported the team met and discovered there is quite a bit of overlap in the groups. Given the amount of collaboration that is occurring among the focus teams, his team decided they should consider their efforts a success and move into working with other teams. In addition, he and Pat Sherman continue to reach out to other entities currently not at the table, and are going to continue working on the sustainability of this group. Lee said when he and Greg met a few weeks back they discussed what the other groups are doing and how they are bringing together these different entities. Lee feels it is time to declare victory with collaboration and move on. Greg emphasized how important Aspire Johnson County is and wants to see it sustained, and will continue to be engaged.

**Family Recreation Team:** Team leader is Gail Richards. She reported they have expanded their team by three people. The parks directors from around the county also continue to work with this group. They have continued to look at the trails systems and feel the trails connect people everywhere, and this is a good way to bring even more connectivity to the county. The focus is on walking, biking, and driving trails. They reviewed the maps of the current trails for the possibility of new trails locations. In working with the parks directors they have found a great disparity between the parks with regards to funding and the amenities available. She also mentioned they discussed the benefit of having a CVB that could be the repository of all the information on local amenities and would be available to residents and visitors alike. During their most recent meeting, Rob Taggart, Greenwood Parks Director, shared with the team he is working with the County GIS folks to map the ditches and easements that could be used to develop trails. The advantage of using these easements is a way to connect trails without having to deal with private property owners.

Next 30 days: The team will look at where the trails could lead and what the destinations could be along these trails. They want to consider being a coordinator of local service groups on trails work and

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**Family Recreation Team (Cont'd):**

cleanup. They will also identify the gaps in what the parks need. Another positive outcome of this project is, that for the first time, the various directors are also beginning to work together to share information and are helping each other. The team wants to become advocates for recreation in Johnson County. The branding team is getting the list together to identify all the amenities in the county and this is a strong connection between the two teams. Dana Monson noted this is the first time the idea of using drain easements for trails has been discussed in the county. Ken Remenschneider mentioned these easements have to be maintained anyway and a trail is a great way to do so. A question arose as to whether emergency services are being included in the plan to keep trails safe. Gail said the plan is still in the early stages, but it will be included in the discussion. Rick Wilson asked if there is the option of using existing railroads. Anita Knowles explained the problem is too few abandoned rail lines, which is what we need for trails. Active rails are difficult to use. Rick Wilson also mentioned the possibility of using green technology for building trails. The team recognizes there could be competing demands and different plans with the various communities based on their respective desires for recreation. The idea of an all-county recreation pass was discussed. For example, an individual could purchase one pass allowing access to all recreation centers throughout the county, and the revenue from that pass could be shared among the various centers.

**Branding Team:** Team leader is Jeff Owen. He reported there has been a strong discussion on the need to market the county and how to go about this. The need is great, but volunteers simply can't sustain this and the option of a CVB is the best solution so far. Anita Knowles and Loren Snyder are working to pursue this idea. They have asked the committee to provide information and research on CVBs, what is needed to implement an Innkeepers Tax, as well as the creation of a CVB. They plan to present a proposal to the County Council for implementation of an Innkeepers Tax. As part of the information gathering process, the Branding Team met with several experts from the Tourism sector, including an executive director of a CVB, and the executive director from the state association. Jeff presented an overview of what they learned. Here are a few facts: Destination Marketing is the correct term to use, rather than tourism marketing. It is a form of economic development and should be an integral part of economic development for any county. The experts explained when a community utilizes the Innkeepers Tax, it is capturing export dollars into the community and not using dollars already in the community. Think of it as selling the experience of your county. The audience is huge—75% of those paying the tax are outside visitors and not family members of local residents. In addition, those visitors only spend 10% of their money on hotels; the rest is spent on restaurants, stores, and activities while they are travelling in your county. These visitors generate enough spending that it is reducing property taxes necessary for the residents. Employees of a CVB are not county employees. The CVB is its own nonprofit entity. Only revenue generated by the Innkeepers Tax is used to fund a CVB for its operation. They do not use any other tax money.

**Next 30 days:** The team will create a facts sheet per the request of the County Council. Anita Knowles vowed to continue her due diligence and her plan is to present this at the December meeting of the County Council. She encouraged anyone in support of the plan to attend the December meeting. Brian Walker stated the previous attempt to implement the tax was confrontational and expressed his appreciation for how this effort has been done to-date. Jay Goad noted that while every county has different things to market, they are marketing heavily and we are not marketing anything.

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**Branding Team (Cont'd):**

Loren Snyder gave the example of Kelsay Farms. How visitors always ask the Kelsay's what else there is to do in the county while in town. How they would like to make a day of it, while in the county. He said this is just one example and illustrates how marketing the amenities in our county is an area that is seriously lacking in Johnson County.

**Discussion About the Future of Aspire JC:**

Lee said this begun with the fear that we may not be able to generate enough interest throughout the county for this initiative, but JCDC had an interest in trying. It has since become an amazing initiative. So the question is now, how does this continue? Where do you want to see this go? Steve Spencer said the fact that the region could potentially get the Super Bowl again should be a driver to continue this effort and we need to plan now for that event. Do we raise a capital committee to keep this going? We need to continue to support the public officials as they implement new ideas. Mayor Myers said it's because of Aspire JC that all county officials are meeting. Through that we can bring these ideas to fruition. Instead of the, us against them, it's now all about Johnson County. He feels we need to continue the fresh ideas for our future and thinks the opportunity for a sounding board is very beneficial. Larry Heydon feels globally this group is an advisory board. It should provide input and suggestions to those who can make it happen. Brent Tilson suggested creating an online forum to keep all the minutes and meeting calendars so that everyone could see what the groups are doing. Rather than task a committee, utilize technology. He is willing to research this with his IT guy. Lee said that is a great plan for how to continue; but now we need to address the what. What is Aspire? Perhaps we need to make the chairs of the teams a task group to help this grow. A suggestion was made to see how JCDC could use this group in their work. Lisa Fears commented that we need a plan. This level of collaboration has been good, but we need a strategy moving forward. Perhaps the teams could identify their priorities and bring it back to the group so a plan could be developed. Rick Wilson said there is still a lot of work to do and feels JCDC should be the group to keep it going. He suggested JCDC have quarterly meetings with the leadership through the county to keep the ball rolling. Larry Heydon suggested we model after Partnership for a Healthier JC. We could use title sponsors to help fund a small budget to sustain this initiative. He said JMH would be willing to be a title sponsor to keep it going. Loren Snyder said he doesn't want to see this end but perhaps let it take its course and find its way. Is it possible for Dana Monson and Cheryl Morphew to continue the coordination? Larry Heydon said he and Cheryl Morphew do not want to see this go away and will work to keep it together. He feels the most logical place to keep it is JCDC. Gail said the Foundation feels that if you shore up the economic development then there is less need for charity to help people. She is looking for grant money to get an intern or even a full-time employee to handle the work.

In closing, Lee summarized the general consensus of the group is a commitment to continue, to consider housing it with JCDC, and the development of a plan to make this happen.

**Next Aspire JC Group meetings:**

Wednesday, November 20, 8:30 – 11:00, location tbd  
Wednesday, December 18, 8:30 – 11:00, location tbd

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November 20, 2013  
Franklin College, Franklin

Attendance: Brent Tilson, Larry Heydon, Steve Powell, Katy Cavaleri, Barb Miller, Tricia Bechman, David Bedwell, Joe Moore, Tina Gross, Tandy Shuck, Beverly Martin, Ron West, Brandyn Ferguson, David Brenton, Jane Blessing, Dr. Pat Spray, Nancy Plake, Steve Spencer, Jody Veldkamp, Loren Snyder, Lisa Fears, Jay Goad, Jeff Owen, Dave Mauer, John Rondot, Gail Richards, Becky Allen, Cindy Cook, Pat Enochs, Anita Knowles, Joe Park, Karen Leuhmann, Dr. David Clendening, Pat Sherman, Christian Maslowski, Erin Smith, Mike Winslow, Jack Hess, Dana Monson, and Cheryl Morphew

Brent Tilson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and spoke of the excitement growing around Aspire. He then explained that the team leaders, co-chairs, JCDC and JCCF met to discuss the sustainability of the group. There is clear consensus to continue this collaboration into next year. Larry then welcomed everyone and stated he is also in support of this movement continuing forward. JCDC will house Aspire for the short-term and the plan will be to have JCDC consider this a part of their program. There is still a need to have a business plan for this organization which will be completed tentatively in January.

A round robin introduction took place, then our facilitator, Lee Lewellyn asked for the 30/30 Reports from each focus team.

### **30/30 REPORTS**

**Corridors Team:** Team leader is Jody Veldkamp. He gave a short summary of a Daily Journal article stating Greenwood as one of the top ten affordable residential areas to live—ahead of Fishers. He told the group about his Aspire presentation he gave on Infrastructure Day for Leadership Johnson County. He talked about how important infrastructure is for the county and how many times this is the one area that gets overlooked by many. He described how the LJC participants realized roads aren't just roads, but rather are opportunities. He said it was like a light bulb went on for the class.

The team has now added railroads as a part of their scope. The increased traffic of trains is definitely having an impact on residents. The team is continuing to work with the comprehensive corridors map and adding to this report. This is taking more time than they anticipated but they want to be thorough. Loren Snyder commented the new Worthsville road exchange will be a major factor for the county and will be a very important part of the plan. Lee asked if anyone can provide assistance to the team to please contact Jody.

**Talent Team:** Team leaders are Bev Martin and Tina Gross. Bev reported she feels the team is having difficulty finding a focus. Mayor Joe McGuinness joined them at their last meeting and they discussed how a sports complex could be a draw to families and talent, and have an overflow effect into other areas of the county. A new study will be out shortly showing the benefit to Franklin and to the county. However, one of the challenges is the difficulty in promoting such an amenity. The value a CVB could bring to this effort is why their team is very encouraged and supportive of the Branding Team's efforts. The team discussed forming an advisory group for this sports complex, and they have ideas of who could be members of that group.

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Recruiting and retaining talent still seems to be the major struggle. They are trying to reopen a strategic focus on one or two aspects. The team would like to get access to the German Chamber presentation conducted recently at Ivy Tech. The topic was the German Internship Model in which the work of retaining talent begins at the grade school level with your own residents. They want to focus on local employers and ascertain what their needs are. Finally, their work continues on collaboration with the education community.

Loren Snyder said we are fortunate to have regional colleges available to pull interns from to add to the initiative. Bev said they are excited about starting an internship initiative and are continuing to educate companies on the value of having interns. Brent Tilson suggested they merge the sports complex group with the Recreation Team, as these are directly related and would eliminate a duplication of effort. Cheryl Morphew offered to assist with a roundtable of industries to discuss the intern needs. John Rondot told of his very positive experience at Cummins with interns.

Lee commented that an initiative to recruit and retain professional talent is an overwhelming one. It is normal for the team to feel this way. It is part of the forming, norming, storming process and they should not feel like they haven't accomplished anything.

**Family Recreation Team:** Team leader is Gail Richards. She reported her team has not met since last month. She again discussed her concerns about how to organize the committee as it continues to grow, and feels there is a need for administrative support for note taking, meeting scheduling, etc. She feels this team will become a standing committee. The work on the trails using legal drains is continuing. She also commented on her experience with interns and recruiting them through the State's system—Indiana Intern Net. The website is [www.indianainternet.com](http://www.indianainternet.com).

**Branding Team:** Team leader is Jeff Owen. He reported much has happened since the last group meeting. The team has worked diligently to create a detailed packet of data and information for the County Council members regarding the Innkeepers Tax. The packet contains FAQ's, basic information, studies that have been completed, the state code, as well as a sample budget for a CVB. The packet has been sent to the County Council members. As part of the due diligence, the team met with local hotel managers and bed and breakfast owners. While the representatives don't like the idea of a tax on their industry, they do understand this is truly the best way to fund the effort, and believe a tax is inevitable. Interestingly, they wanted to know what the county's brand was. It was explained that the purpose of the tax and a CVB is to hire a professional staff that can create a plan for branding. Jeff feels a few of the hotel folks will attend the County Council meeting to speak against the tax, but believes the true issue they have is the transition to this tax. During the discussion, the hotel representatives requested the tax become effective in one year, to give them time to prepare for the implementation. The compromise will be six months with an effective date of July.

Loren Snyder and Anita Knowles will present the request to implement an Innkeepers Tax to the County Council on Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Anita Knowles said one of the council members is concerned about voting on the tax the same night it is presented. Loren Snyder acknowledged the hard work of the committee in putting this together in such a short time. He said others in the state are pleased that

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Johnson County is finally doing the right thing. He stressed it is vital to have many people attend in support of the tax to counter the negative voices. Jay Goad asked for a list of all the council members. For those who cannot be present at the meeting, but want to express their support, Anita Knowles asked for letters of support that can be read that night.

Lee summarized by saying how well this speaks to the power of networks. This is the model the Aspire Johnson County process is built on, and helps continue to build capacity. The downside? The Branding team has a “cookbook”, while the other teams do not. Please do not get discouraged at the level of your progress. Again, you cannot compare your progress to that of the Branding Team. Their advantage was, once they decided to pursue the Innkeepers Tax, the state statute outlined the process for them. The other teams do not have that and it makes it tougher. It is important to keep in mind, that if the Innkeepers Tax passes, the Branding Team has a megaphone to tell the story, BUT, the story has not yet changed.

**Guest Speaker:** Cheryl Morphew introduced Jack Hess, Executive Director of the Institute for Coalition Building in Columbus, IN.

Jack began by saying that as someone who does community coalition, he is totally impressed by what he has heard today. What Aspire is doing is the right thing, and is exactly how it works. For those overwhelmed, you are supposed to feel this way. There is supposed to be times of uncertainty and confusion which shows the teams are spot on. There will be many stories from this initiative.

Jack gave an incredible presentation on the transformation of Columbus over a 60-year period, driven by one man’s desire to make Columbus the “Best”—J. Irwin Miller. Here is the link to his presentation: <https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B6NP8bN9MuNESWVuSjFJZ0N3RkU&usp=sharing>

Highlights from his presentation:

Columbus in 1950 was described as average. Comparisons to peer communities confirmed this fact. However, as you look at census data from 2010, there was a dramatic improvement, which begs the question, “what happened”?

As the baby boom began, so did the growth of Cummins under the direction of J. Irwin Miller. The growth of the company highlighted the problems of the community. How was Cummins to recruit the talented people they needed, if the community and education system were viewed as simply “average”? Mr. Miller realized in the 1950’s that you can’t have a healthy company unless you have a healthy community.

Mr. Miller began the transformation by offering to pay for architects to plan a new elementary school. The first school got national attention and Columbus was seen as a small community making a huge investment in their children and their future. The hiring of nationally-recognized architects became a formalized program and has encompassed 72 properties over 60 years.

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There are several lessons learned from this work that relates to Aspire. The first is the stakeholder concept. This is a network of relationships that works together to find the value and needs of each stakeholder group, and how to work together to meet those needs. It is moving from self-interest to mutual interest. The fundamental creator or destroyer of value is stakeholder relationships. It is the leader's responsibility to balance those relationships for value of all. This is the sustainability of any organization.

Lesson two is the collaborative process. While the architectural work was the center of the goal in Columbus, the purpose of these buildings was to bring people together. Many times community collaborations fail because there is no process that is agreed upon. The default process is to get smart people together with the hope that a divine spark will create results. This does not work as it has no real process. The collaboration process works because it is based on the stakeholder model of leadership and depends on the relationships that work together. The trust and agreement of the group becomes the focus. Finding and identifying the issue, working through possible solutions with input from all, working the solutions, then starting the process again and again, and sharing the outcomes is true coalition building. A shared agenda, not an individual agenda, is vital. Mutually collaborative relationships are held together by one backbone organization. The collective impact model is the structure of successful collaboration. It needs a common agenda, continuous communication, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, and a backbone support organization. This becomes the "cookbook" that shows how to create results. The process then becomes the solution. All progress moves at the speed of trust.

The third lesson is high aspirations. Work to become not the cheapest community in America, but the very best community of its size in America. A community must be willing to self-assess themselves in order to achieve this. The vision must be tempered with reality. Columbus faced this when they did a self-assessment and thought they were doing very well, but when assessed by another group that looked at reality, they realized they were becoming average again. From this realization the Columbus Area Economic Growth Council was created. They also researched how welcoming they were and found they were not considered very welcoming at all. They were perceived as very insular and hard to acclimate with others. They began a coalition that worked to find ways to change this perception and also how to become more welcoming. Nothing is more expensive than mediocrity.

#### **CLOSING COMMENTS**

Brent Tilson challenged everyone to think "Best". Lee dismissed the group for networking.  
Meeting adjourned.

**Next Aspire JC Group meeting: Wednesday, December 18, 8:30 - 11:00 a.m., location TBD**

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Attendance: Brent Tilson, Larry Heydon, Pat Enochs, Nicole Otte, Tandy Shuck, Barb Miller, Mike Hefner, Tricia Bechman, Becky Allen, Cindy Cook, Jennifer Mauer, David Mauer, Dr. Kent DeKoninck, Steve Powell, Jay Goad, Forrest Mellott, Joe Park, Sherrill Morton, Christian Maslowski, John Rondot, Nathan Bilger, Mark Myers, Jill Bode, Jane Blessing, Anita Knowles, Jeff Owen, Jody Veldkamp, Betty Davis, Ron West, Jim Stockman, Joe Moore, Kevin Hoover, Rick Wilson, Loren Snyder, Dr. David Clendening, Scott Langdon, Tina Gross, Don Kinsey, Gail Richards, Peggy Thompson, Ken Remenschneider, Katy Cavaleri, Pat Sherman, Susan McCarty, Betsy Schmidt, David Bedwell, Dana Monson, and Cheryl Morphew

Our facilitator, Lee Lewellyn called the meeting to order. Jody Veldkamp is featuring Aspire JC in the January issue of Center Grove Magazine and asked that a very short break occur to allow for a group photo.

Upon the group's return, Brent Tilson welcomed everyone to Tilson HR. He gave a brief overview of the agenda. Larry Heydon then spoke and gave an overview of the future plans for Aspire. He explained the business plan is being developed and will be presented to the Johnson County Development Corporation (JCDC) Board of Directors in January. There are some business leaders who are stepping up financially as well. He then explained how the 30/30 reports work and a round robin role call was made.

### **30/30 REPORTS**

**Corridors Team:** Team leader is Jody Veldkamp. He reported they had to do a restart. Since gathering the data, they realized they needed to understand the end product. They know they have no power over the municipalities, but could provide influence as to what the corridors could become. The team wants to focus on what could make the corridors the best possible. The idea is to design a plan with community input. To identify what kind of zoning overlays could be used across municipal boundaries. The plan would include the key assets of each corridor. Jody reminded the group, they define corridors as S.R. 37/I-69, U.S. 31, S.R. 135, and I-65. They are also looking at the east west corridor plan and the Greenwood Airport. Becky Allen expressed desire for access/frontage roads, especially along U.S. 31. Brent Tilson is interested in Worthsville Rd having a boulevard feel to it, but expressed concerns about increased traffic volume. A need for welcoming signage and consistency in signage is also important to the group. An idea Jody shared would be to make a video of the drive along I-65 through the county and get input on the look and feel of it from both residents and non-residents. Next 30 days: Gather definitions of planning/zoning overlays from each municipality so they can work off of the same terms.

Lee reminded everyone that many times the various jurisdictions don't talk to each other, so there is a lack of consistency in the plans. The focus of Aspire is to help bring them together and start talking to one another.

**Talent Team:** Team leaders are Bev Martin and Tina Gross. Tina reported the team created a subcommittee for the youth sports initiative which will transition to the Recreation Team, so her team can focus on talent recruitment and retention. She gave highlights from a discussion Brent Tilson had with her team about creating an inventory of the businesses in Johnson County and identifying future

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opportunities for these businesses. Cheryl Morphew is assisting with the establishment of an employer roundtable in January to hear from area employers about their needs and how to increase mid-level jobs. This first roundtable will be comprised of seven companies in differing sectors. The goal is to continue the roundtables and look at other sectors such as Healthcare. The hope is the feedback obtained from these roundtables will help the team in the development of a talent attraction program. Lee commented that talent is the most critical component to attracting business per the site selectors' presentations at the Indiana Economic Development Association's Site Selector Guild held in October. Bottom line: Communities must be prepared.

The Skilled Trades industry is also an area the group would like to see emphasized throughout the county. This kind of training is vital and in short supply. This needs to start in the high schools to demonstrate to students the potential of jobs in that sector. There will be an education roundtable at C-9 to discuss this issue. Retaining talent is also an important issue for the county. Larry Heydon mentioned many students entered the healthcare field over the last five years due to an increased need for those jobs. However, those same jobs are now being reduced as healthcare facilities restructure, so a renewed focus on the skilled trades must take place. Jay Goad stated educators need to change from the idea of one career and you are locked in for life. That just is no longer the case. People do not stay in one field, but change many times over their lifetime. As a result, students need to understand the many career opportunities, what gaps there may be, and create an appropriate pathway. There is a mismatch of talent right now. The skills people have are not necessarily the skills that are needed. Next steps: The team will summarize the results from the employer roundtable discussion.

**Family Recreation Team:** Team leader is Gail Richards. Dana Monson provided an update on some of the team's projects. Trails project update – work is progressing on the mapping of the legal drains in the county by Rob Taggart. As soon as the mapping is completed, next steps will be for the team to meet with the various parks departments and local officials to start connecting the drains to form a county-wide trails plan. Day of Caring update - the team is working with the parks superintendents to identify a list of needs for their respective parks so that a plan for a "Parks Day of Caring" can be finalized. The goal is to target Spring for the event. Dana then asked Dr. David Clendening to give a short presentation on the research that has been done regarding the creation of a Franklin Sports Corp.—a project the Recreation Team is interested in supporting. Dr. Clendening explained the origin of the idea for a Franklin Sports Corp. and gave an overview of the studies completed which were funded by the Franklin Development Corp. These two studies detailed the importance of a champion for the sports corp. and indicated a CVB is the ideal group to be that champion. The economic impact of such a sports venue is approximately \$1,000,000/ year. He detailed the percentage of folks who have attended sporting events in Franklin in the past year and where they come from. The report also stated that area sports complexes are considered some of the best in the nation, in particular Franklin High School's cross country field and natatorium. The Franklin College fields are also excellent and ideal for use through a sports corp. These are all positives for the community but unfortunately there are some negatives. One problem is the lack of quality/quantity of hotel rooms. The other issue is the lack of a CVB in the county. Without a CVB, there is simply no group capable of managing and marketing the sports corp. Loren Snyder spoke on the increasing amount of students involved in youth sports. He feels the idea of a sports corp. is very interesting and wants to pursue it. Pat Sherman asked if this could be elevated to a county-wide endeavor. Steve Powell gave some information about a similar project being completed in

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Westfield and the potential impact to that community. Dana explained the project is still in the early stages, so the team will continue to monitor its development.

**Branding Team:** Team leader is Jeff Owen. Jeff gave an overview of the December County Council meeting in which the Innkeeper's Tax was introduced. There was wide-spread support for this tax but there were also two hotel representatives who spoke against it. The Branding team has done research on the issues raised by council members at that meeting. He shared they identified two white papers that detail the effects of the tax on hotels. Both reports indicated the tax has a negligible effect on hotels and no impact on hotel occupancy. The tax was passed to the consumer and didn't decrease the need for the rooms. Anita Knowles detailed her discussion with Phil Klouse, the one hotel representative who expressed concern about lost revenue, and he continues to be unable to substantiate his claim. In addition, he admitted he would not lose any local business as a result of the tax. Loren Snyder and Anita are asking those who want to support this tax to attend the January Council meeting. They reiterated the need to continue to write letters of support to the Daily Journal editor, as well as to the council members. Anita also stated Bartholomew County has statistics that show the value locally to the community. She feels this is vital for the county and is basically a no brainer. Loren said he is not trying to tell people how to think, he is asking for folks to do their own research and come up with their own opinion. Some of the council members are adamant about no new tax regardless of the facts. Rick Wilson stated the tax is an accepted practice throughout the nation. Loren feels this is a competitive disadvantage for the county as we are the only ones in the Central Indiana region without it, and cannot benefit from it. He provided the analogy of Kodak—at one time a strong organization that did not evolve as the photography industry changed and is now irrelevant to the industry and will soon be non-existent. Ron West questioned the numbers for the impact to the county. He would like to see a way to definitively measure the impact for the county. If it only supports a bureaucracy he is opposed to it. However, if there is a way to show the impact and measure it he will be supportive. Jeff asked if anyone has questions, to send them to the team and they will research. Brent Tilson reminded everyone that Aspire is not a political group. He feels the tax is a solid way to move the county forward. However, the political implications have to be recognized in a sensitive way.

**Guest Speaker:** Brent Tilson invited Congressman Todd Young to attend today's meeting. Congressman Young expressed his appreciation of the group and how the dialogue has been civil and productive. He explained where his district boundaries are. He encouraged everyone to be vocal with their elected officials about concerns, and stated he can always be contacted through his office in Greenwood. Also, he schedules regular meetings at his district office which is another way to reach him. He said that many items discussed today are also items other communities throughout the state are working. The Ways and Means Committee is working on reforms for the tax code, which he feels is unfair and very difficult to understand and work through. The federal level needs to lighten the tax burden on the people and reward businesses for progress as opposed to working in the best tax district. He also explained some of the rules and regulations that are currently being considered for revision. Immigration reform is also an issue he is concerned with. While there is no optimal bill, there are issues that can be reformed to benefit the American people. Infrastructure is also an area that the country needs to address. His committee is not directly involved but does have an effect through

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bonding. This is not a political issue but an issue that affects everyone. He wants to hear from local residents concerning their views of the federal laws. He also feels his role is to help residents navigate the difficult corridors of Washington. When others are having difficulty with the government, for example, a veteran with benefits issues, he and his staff want to be advocates and want to be made aware of said issues. He then opened for a Q&A. Ron West asked what his position is on term limits. Congressman Young is very supportive of them, but not optimistic it would be applied at the federal level. Becky Allen asked if he understood the impact of ACA on non-profits. She also commented on the difficulty of navigating the website. He stated this is a vague area and is still not sure how it will affect these groups but will investigate this area. He thanked the group for allowing him to speak today.

**CLOSING COMMENTS**

Cheryl thanked Brent for hosting and providing the continental breakfast. She asked the group to send input as to guest speakers they would like to hear from and topics for discussion in 2014.

Lee discussed the idea of having a standard meeting date. The request is to have a set time of the third Tuesday of the month at 8:30 am.

**Next Aspire JC Group meeting: Tuesday, January 21, 8:30 – 11:00, LGI Room, Franklin Community High School.**