

**CITY OF BIWABIK  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**AGENDA**

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 27, 2024  
6:00 P.M. SPECIAL MEETING**

**BIWABIK CITY HALL  
321 N. MAIN STREET  
BIWABIK, MN**

- 1. Call to Order/Roll Call/Approve Agenda**
- 2. Reminder of Strategic Planning Process**
  - a. Implementing processes to achieve
    - i. Formed sub-committees
    - ii. Flushed out what can be accomplished by the sub-committees and what must be accomplished by the City Council and City Staff (in recommendations page)
  - b. Timeline established to culminate plan by end of 2025 (21 months remain)
- 3. Review recommendations**
  - a. Edit if necessary
- 4. Adjourn**

## City of Biwabic Strategic Plan

## March 2024 Recommendations

ACTION STEP	Progress Notes	Recommendations
A1. Determine the process to utilize the school district's electronic sign to market community events and amenities	City is authorized to utilize the E-Sign for community events. See City administrator for details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide instructions on the posting process for city employees</li> <li>• Promote in newsletter &amp; city website to inform citizens this is a possibility</li> <li>• Utilize this sign for marketing BACA events, amenities, and other community events</li> </ul>
A2. Update campground website for mobile users	completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to collect data for Council decisions and funding opportunities</li> </ul>
A3. Seek representation on the Iron Range Tourism Bureau Board	BIWABIK NEEDS TO BE INTENTIONAL WITH SOMEONE TO SUGGEST TO IRTB for adequate City representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is the best person to reach out to IRTB for a discussion on the process and what might be any next steps?</li> </ul>
A4. Inventory community amenities and determine responsible party/owner	Group has made a list of current amenities, group members reported on condition/recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss who is responsible for each amenity (owner)</li> </ul>
A5. Update city web site for mobile users and connect more clearly to area resources and amenities	This has been passed onto the City Amenities Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amenities Coordinator can inform group of current status and next steps</li> </ul>
A6. Determine deferred maintenance plan for amenities and identify potential funding mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee would like to see some type of form submitted to the City when city property such as the sliding Hill, City Park, pavilion, ball fields, campground pavilion, and beach area are used by groups. It would be interesting if we could track how often areas are used.</li> <li>• The stretch of the Mesabi trail between McKinley and Biwabik has been put out for bids</li> <li>• A Pavilion maintenance/repair list was submitted to City Administrator by committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine next steps and who owns each identified amenity</li> <li>• Committee to develop a list of next steps and turn over to City to execute</li> <li>• Develop a mechanism by which these items are reported upon by City</li> <li>• Develop a rolling annual maintenance plan for each amenity</li> <li>• Develop a mechanism by which these items are reported upon by City</li> <li>• Develop a capital expenditure plan for big ticket items</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop a mechanism by which these items are reported upon by City</b></li> </ul>
A7. Identify and utilize area partners to market amenities (e.g. Iron Range Tourism Bureau, ERJPB)	<i>This is improving across the board as a result of this group's work, BACA, Laurentian Chamber event, etc. More official representation is still needed Amenities Coordinator will be taking this on amenities marketing as a part of new role</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inform and promote citizens on all platforms on which a person can advertise and promote City and Community events</b></li> </ul>
A8. Work with ERJPB and ME superintendent to revive the Joint Recreation Committee to create a vision for utilizing East Range communities' amenities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Is this a possibility? If so, who is taking the lead on this?</b></li> <li>• <b>If not a possibility, what are we hoping to gain with this action item and are there other ways in which we can accomplish the goal?</b></li> </ul>

## SD2: ENCOURAGING AND FACILITATING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Definition: This strategic direction notes the crucial role of economic development for Biwabik's future. It recognizes both assets such as natural resources, updated infrastructure, and Giants Ridge and challenges such as dated housing stock, updates needed at commercial spaces, and some logistical issues. It works with regional partners to respond to the needs of existing businesses, build a stronger community message, and attract new investment.

ACTION STEP	Progress Notes	Recommendations
A1. Support housing developers seeking regional or state funding	Housing study completed. Group has recognized and discussed the need for market rate housing. Waiting on city acquisition on old School lots. Committee developing proposal to go to Council. Committee still working on details regarding pocket neighborhood. Materials to distribute via social media to provide explanation and garner support are forthcoming. The recent housing study being an 18 month process did not gain much interest within SD2. We have formed a subcommittee to look into and develop a plan for housing and look into pre-development funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop a plan AS A COUNCIL/CITY and seek appropriate next steps, including site studies and funding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>This is a separate group altogether from the SP, as it requires a great deal of special expertise and input from players outside a sub-committee</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
A2. Develop and launch business retention and expansion program including building owners and share the city's strategic plan during these visits	Members have begun to reach out to discuss with business owners the pros/cons of opening/seeking to open a business. Begin a plan to connect with owners more regularly. Laurentian Chamber of Commerce Presented to the SD2 group. Was a productive meeting. Laurentian gained members and fits the needs of chamber support for our city. Still currently awaiting ERJPB information on ER Chamber formation. Formed a subcommittee to develop a welcome packet for businesses in town. Hope to expand upon this to residential.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Execute a plan to attract new businesses to Biwabik</b></li> <li>• <b>Complete business welcome/instructional packet</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We do have empty Main St businesses</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	Once the Welcome is completed, will move into retention vs. welcome.	
A3. Work with partners to promote the entrepreneurial incubator space in city hall	There are currently 3 spaces in City Hall to utilize. Committee to decide what recommendation will come to full Council and seek to implement marketing strategy after improvements made (requires city budget approval). Incubator spaces list of actions given to City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complete requested upgrades</b></li> <li>• <b>Assist City in developing a flyer (hard copy and digital) to market new spaces</b></li> </ul>
A4. Work with Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation (IRRR) to build a Business Energy Retrofit and Downtown Storefront fund to encourage mixed-use development and preservation of the core commercial area and Bavarian theme	Committee Has started a sub committee and will be exploring funding and "bringing back" Bavarian theme. Next step is to contact IRRR and discuss and fund the Business fund. Bavarian Theme "Relaunch" almost ready for city council. Working to set up meeting with IRRR to fund a storefront program. Also check into options/resources within ERJPB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complete Bavarian design proposal</b></li> <li>• <b>Present design proposal to business owners and council members for feedback</b></li> <li>• <b>Seek funding sources for assistance</b></li> <li>• <b>Make edits &amp; Present to Council for approval</b></li> </ul>
A5. Create a "We want you, grow your business here!" outreach plan	Documenting steps in real time business development. Soon to have a sub-committee on this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What are the differences between A2 &amp; A5?</b></li> </ul>
A6. Attract and encourage remote workers to live in Biwabik	Sub Committee is working on details of not only attracting remote workers, but keeping young people here. Need to market area, and will make a plan for that. Without any available houses, it's difficult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discuss</b></li> </ul>

### SD3: CREATING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

Definition: This strategic direction emphasizes the importance of creating a welcoming, collaborative community. It acknowledges the fractured nature of existing information-sharing methods and the reliance of a small group of volunteers for many community events. It creates a plan for intentional outreach to bring new participants into the process and better share information on happenings in Biwabik.

ACTION STEP	Progress Notes	Recommendations
A1. Conduct outreach to grow stronger relationships with homeowner associations	HOA contact information obtained; phone calls will be made to alert of survey delivery via email. Surveys were electronically mailed and some have been returned already. Sub-committee members reached out via telephone to alert survey receipt. Survey results have been returned; next steps determined at next meeting. Next steps TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discuss</b></li> </ul>

<p>A2. Create a regular physical newsletter done in color to supplement and steer people to digital version</p>	<p>For now, we are focusing on the newsletter described below in A3. Distribution plan is being worked on. Newsletter went out with utility bills in February. Also in the Hometown Focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Determine how many newsletters should be completed annually</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Needs to be turned over to City to execute</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>A3. Hold an annual town hall or state of the city event</p>	<p>Group agreed that a newsletter be developed to share both current news and upcoming events. Group reviewed ideas for newsletter content; format of a “state of the City” update to be distributed. Newsletter will suffice for updates and information dissemination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discuss whether the newsletter and new website will suffice for this action step</b></li> </ul>

#### **SD4: RECONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY**

Definition: This strategic direction seeks to increase awareness of and participation in City of Biwabik affairs. It seeks to improve access to city meetings and better share information on issues of importance to the community. It builds partnerships with community groups, local media, and regional organizations to fully utilize their capacities.

ACTION STEP	Progress Notes	Recommendations
A1. Enhance city meeting agendas to include plain language explaining upcoming meeting highlights and issues	<p>Plan is to revamp the current website landing page and content, so as to increase the community's access to current information. We believe this will accomplish the goal of communicating better with community, along with the publication of this dashboard and quarterly Strategic Planning meetings open to the public. Met with City Administrator regarding feedback on website design. Administrator Jacobson and a committee member will meet to begin to make changes.</p> <p>Website has been turned over to City Amenities Coordinator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Website should serve as a source of Council meeting information and current topics</b></li> <li>• <b>Live stream and recordings will also assist in meeting this goal</b></li> <li>• <b>City staff will be able to drive traffic to the website as a way to keep current citizens informed and newcomers to the area informed</b></li> </ul>
A2. Research and install improved technology for hybrid, live-streamed city meetings	Live streaming will be a part of an overall technology recommendation from SD 2, included in 2024 City Budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Include this upgrade in next newsletter</b></li> <li>• <b>Include this on website</b></li> </ul>
A3. Develop a simple event submission form for the public or community groups to use	Other work on website will need to happen before this can be integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>This form will be revised slightly when website host determines what can be completed online</b></li> <li>• <b>Other website additions are higher priority than this</b></li> </ul>
A4. Build a stronger relationship with BACA to fully utilize their capabilities	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do Members feel informed with BACA happenings? Currently adding to consent agenda.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Any suggestions to improve?</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
A5. Engage with local partners to share Biwabik community events on their platforms (e.g. Iron Range Tourism, Hello Iron Range, Giants Ridge and RAMS)	This has happened in part to the purposeful use of social media sites, such as Facebook. Councilman Biondich began a FB page titled "Citizens of Biwabik". Citizens have posted things from lost pets to questions about garbage and City cleanup days, events, etc. Discover the Range has also been instrumental in the increase in engagement, although the new website will be a major move in improving connections with community members as well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Suggestions?</b></li> </ul>
A6. Determine local news media contacts, understand their communication methods, and how best to engage them	BACA has taken the lead mostly on this, as their events require this partnership. Increased collaborative communication with the City will enhance what is already in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Suggestions?</b></li> </ul>