



December 9, 2011

## PRESS RELEASE

*McDonough, GA:*

*For Immediate Release:*

### Visioning Public Meeting Draws Large and Diverse Crowd

In spite of the wet weather, a large number of McDonough citizens, and those having interests in the city, gathered on Tuesday, December 6, in the Fellowship Hall of the First Baptist Church of McDonough, located on Macon Street, to participate in the first public follow-up meeting since the June Visioning Workshops were held in the city.

Interim Community Development Director John Cheek, Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) staff member Allison Duncan; and Craig Lewis, along with his team from the Lawrence Group Town Planners & Architects, the North Carolina consulting firm hired by the City as lead team for this particular project, were prepared to address those gathered.

Director Cheek welcomed the large crowd gathered and briefly recapped the LCI activities which began in 2004, when work on the formulation of the LCI (Livable Centers Initiative) plans and directives for McDonough's future began. He covered the Visioning Workshops that were held in the City in June of this year and shed light on the focus and reason for this meeting.

Turning the podium over to ARC staff member, Allison Duncan, she presented an informative PowerPoint review of the findings and conclusions arrived at based on information assimilated throughout the June Workshops. On display were conceptual renderings, also from June, of existing buildings in the downtown business district offering some creative ideas and possible upgrades. A short presentation was made by Lewis explaining where this consulting team begins, after taking the reins in conjunction with the City, and provided a preview of focus and direction from this point forward in the process.

Regarding Tuesday night's public meeting, Director Cheek stated, "I was very gratified by the turnout, both in its number and its diversity. I was also pleased that over half of the participants had not attended any of the earlier Visioning Workshops, so we reached more of the community and got more valuable input from a broader cross-section of this community. The turnout was also a testament to the great efforts of volunteers, staffers at the City, the tourism board, Henry County, the Chamber of Commerce, housing authority and school board to get the word out to a large number of stakeholders."

Director Cheek, in reference to the January meetings, said, "The upcoming focus group meetings will not be more efforts to cast the vision; that is done. They will be to discuss things like specific provisions we are proposing for the new codes or potential incentives we may be considering for a business recruitment program or specific proposals for street redesigns." He further added, "We will be looking for feedback like what unintended consequences participants may see from us taking particular courses of action or what provisions are missing that they think are necessary for us to be able to get results. The work products from this process will not be more plans rather implementation tools for the City to use to help implement the vision, and the sessions will be aimed at how best to craft those tools."

As McDonough officials, specialty teams, and other participants move through the different levels in this extremely important process, the patience, understanding, and continued involvement and support of its citizens will be the engines providing the power necessary to move this whole process forward.

#### **PHOTO....004**

**Interim Community Development Director John Cheek welcomes the crowd of close to 60 gathered for the Visioning Follow-up Public Meeting on December 6.**

#### **PHOTO....009**

**ARC's Allison Duncan provides an overview of the conclusions reached from information assimilated during the June Workshops.**

#### **PHOTO....040**

**Craig Lewis, the Lawrence Group, discusses where this process goes from here.**

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