



## February 24, 2011 CVC Meeting Summary

### **PANEL DISCUSSION: BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

A panel of experts was assembled to help inform the committee's discussion on a variety of topics related to the county's built and natural environment, including: libraries, infrastructure, sustainability, solid waste management, natural resources and environment, and parks and recreation. Participants included:

- Donna Lauffer, Johnson County Library (Libraries)
- Lee Kellerberger, Johnson County Stormwater Management Program
- Mike Armstrong, General Manager, WaterOne (Potable Water)
- Betsy Betros, Director, Pollution Control Division, Johnson County Environmental Department (Solid Waste Management)
- James Joerke, Director, Johnson County Sustainability Program
- Ginevera Moore, Environmental Program Manager, Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)
- Michael Meadors, Director of Parks and Recreation, Johnson County Parks & Recreation District

Each panelist was asked to take 5-7 minutes to respond to the following questions as it relates to their particular area of expertise:

- What is your department or agency's adopted vision for the next 10 to 20 years?
- What are the biggest challenges Johnson County faces in the next 10 to 20 years with regard to your department or agency's focus area?

### **Speaker #1: Donna Lauffer, Johnson County Libraries**

**Handouts:** PowerPoint, Johnson County Library.

Donna provided a brief overview of Johnson County Library services and their vision for the future:

- 7 member board
- Close relationship with counties
- 13 locations—14<sup>th</sup> branch: Monticello site—28,000 people without access within 10 miles
- Olathe is the only community that has separate library facilities
- 2010 Award- Gov. Fest; entrepreneurs; business support
- Also provide support for students after school, including access to teachers for tutoring
- Support for small businesses; job hunting; internet support; market research
- Complement other agencies in county who provide business support (e.g., CERl)
- Support for children: 6 by 6—program designed to build six skills by age six
- Hosted 40,000 parents and kids
- Relationships with at risk pre-school kids

- Completed master facilities plan for the next 30 years two years ago
- Calls for 2 new locations: Stillwell/Aubrey and Monticello site
- Serves as a resource center for business/job creation (particularly with recent downturn in economic activity)
- Library is in a more multidimensional phase now; no longer just about books; online access, business development, etc.
- Opportunities to be part of mixed-use development
- Right place to reach community
- Transition away from print materials—creates licensing issues
- Changing environment
- 85% of funding comes from property taxes
- Challenges in future include serving population outside of the 435 loop

**Speaker #2: Lee Kellerberger, Johnson County Stormwater Management Program**

**Handouts:** PowerPoint, Stormwater Management Program (SMP), 2.24.11.

Lee provided a brief overview of Johnson County's Stormwater Management Program and their vision for the future:

- Pre 1975—no cities in Johnson County had stormwater engineers; little funding; not much planning occurred. Lots of flooding issues as a result
- Cities and counties operated independently
- In 1990, enabling legislation created to establish Johnson County Stormwater Management Program
- Primary role of program to administer fund and act as a conduit between the board and cities
- \$250 million in capital improvements have been made as a result of the program (1990-2010)
- \$70 million in projects awaiting funding
- Est. \$150 million in unidentified projects—but no immediate plans to change funding
- Challenges:
  - Controlling non-point source pollution (more growth = more run-off)
  - More stringent water quality regulations
  - Maintenance of existing infrastructure
  - Regional coordination

**Speaker #3: Mike Armstrong, General Manager, WaterOne**

**Handouts:** PowerPoint, Citizen's Visioning Committee Water Supply Update, February 24, 2011.

Mike provided a brief overview of Water One's service area, role, and their vision for the future:

- Independent of county or city government; no taxing authority
- In the early 1950's growth in Johnson County was challenging due to water supply limitations
- Olathe has its own water system

- Currently serve a population of 400,000; 17 of 20 cities in Johnson County
- Government entity; but try to operate like a business
- System development changes; board has been adamant that growth pays for growth
- Challenges: capital funding; phased expansion; replacement planning (take care of assets you have)
- 2010 census will be used to do next MP update
- Wolcott Facility; highly efficient to operate; plan for max day/max usage (like transportation planning)
- Have facilities and land needed to build out system as planned.

**Speaker #4: Becky Betros, Director, Pollution Control Division, Johnson County Environmental Department**

**Handouts:** PowerPoint, Future of Johnson County's Environment, February 24, 2011.

Betsy provided a brief overview of efforts underway by the Johnson County Environmental Department and the department's vision/challenges for the future:

- Department roots in sewage and solid waste
- No other county in Kansas has this extensive an environmental program
- Key objective to protect public health; inform public about environmental issues
- Program has continued to grow; compliance rates high
- 1970's saw a strong movement towards environmental regulation
- Work of this group led to formation of the stormwater task force
- More about working together to prevent waste and pollution; but still need regulations
- Provide tools to guide decision making
- Challenges: solid waste/air quality
- 2009—54 percent of waste going to landfill (down from 1990 levels)
- Johnson County below national average on recycling
- Biggest opportunities: education, recycling, development patterns, energy efficiency

**Speaker #4 James Joerke, Director, Johnson County Sustainability Program**

**Handouts:** PowerPoint, Envisioning a More Sustainable Johnson County, February 24, 2011.

James provided a brief overview of community-wide sustainability priorities:

- Collaboration with cities on multi-modal transportation
- Increasing public understanding of sustainability/support for sustainable programs
- Promoting activities that reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Preservation of Green Space
- Finding sustainability "champions" in the development community to support sustainable building practices
- Updates to energy and building codes
- Economic development incentives to promote/attract sustainable businesses and industries

He also identified the following challenges for the future:

- Building political will for major transportation investments
- Mitigating impacts of rising energy prices
- Accommodating a growing and changing population
- Intergovernmental coordination
- Engaging the community in efforts to make Johnson County a more sustainable place

**Speaker #5 Ginny Moore, Environmental Program Manager, Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)**

**Handouts:** PowerPoint, Sustaining Our Natural Environment, February 24, 2011.

Ginny provided a brief overview of the MetroGreen program and its multi-dimensional benefits:

- MetroGreen calls for a robust, regional green space system
- 85 corridors built
- 100,000 miles of protected stream corridors
- System provides infiltration opportunities for stormwater
- Benefits:
  - Economic—Increased home values near open space, decreases stormwater costs
  - Environmental—habitat, water quality, streambank stabilization
  - Transportation—alternative modes (walking, biking)
  - Health—encourages physical activity, connect people to nature
  - Safety and Welfare—safe off-street access, increased visibility
- Challenges:
  - education; funding; political will
  - Value not always recognized by public
  - Regional planning; local funding model hasn't been that successful
  - Don't have land trust or similar to help implement system
- Opportunities:
  - 70 percent of land in MARC's area is vacant or agricultural land—presents opportunity for expansion of framework

**Speaker #6 Michael Meadors, Director of Parks and Recreation, Johnson County Parks & Recreation District**

**Handouts:** PowerPoint, Johnson County Park & Recreation District, What to YOU do for fun?, February 24, 2011.

Michael provided a brief overview of the Johnson County Park & Recreation District's Map 2020 plan, ongoing efforts, and challenges for the future:

- JCPRD parks see 2.5 Million visitors annually; rivals that of some national parks
- Need to develop more access—not all park land accessible currently
- 3 regional parks developed and utilized

- Previously received 82 percent support for tax increase to purchase open space—when this expires, when will next window for preservation be?

**COMMITTEE QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:**

1. Are we doing anything to generate power?
  - JOCO landfill has methane production
2. How does new recycling code work with cities and county?
  - Doesn't over rule cities;
  - No yard waste
  - Incentives for recycling, e.g., pay as you throw
  - Variety of ways in which these programs affect county; all linked, partnerships critical
3. Where are the disconnects between vision and implementation?
  - Communication—what's happened and where is JOCO going
  - Need to get the word out
  - Feeling of inclusion (not everyone able bodied)
  - 6 school districts; State School for the Deaf should be part of the conversation
  - Best parts of the county