# School board, city council form community planning group, EDA to join soon

By Karen Snyder
ksnyder@olmstedcountyjournal.com
Mon, Sep 24th, 2012
Posted in Pine Island Education

With two-thirds membership enlisted and the remainder poised to join, the Pine Island Community Planning Team is preparing to roll.

The new triumvirate consists of the school board, city officials and soon, the Economic Development Authority.

The draft plan, introduced at the Sept. 17 school board meeting, explains the rationale:

"Team Focus – High level, cross-functional team tasked with addressing short- and long-term community planning in an effort to support future community growth, business development, school facilities and community infrastructure."

Overcrowding in the school building led to the planning team idea. Last spring, when the preschool program had to turn away applicants because of lack of space, the board decided a solution had to be found.

"We want a long-term plan," said board member Rob Warneke. "No more Band-Aids. We want to make a decision that helps not just the school but also the community, and we want to have a plan by next spring."

The board unanimously approved participation on the team and appointed members Warneke, John Champa and Kim Fall as its representatives.

A day later the city council voted its unanimous approval and named Mayor Paul Perry and Councilman Jerry Vettel to the team.

"The school is a driver of economic development," Mayor Perry said. "This is a great idea."

"We all have the same goal, to foster growth of Pine Island and make it a magnet community," said School Board Chairman Jeff Leland.

As for the EDA, enrollment seems assured. The group will take a vote at its Oct. 2 meeting, but Executive Director Karen Doll has already offered to organize the Pine Island Community Planning Team's first session and hold it at the EDA office.

The team will include, in addition to those already named, Superintendent of Schools

Tammy Berg-Beniak, City Administrator Abraham Algadi, Doll and two EDA board members.