



WILDWOOD

May 9, 2022

The Honorable City Council
City of Wildwood, Missouri
16860 Main Street
Wildwood, Missouri 63040

Re: Historic Route 66 Presentation to Missouri Main Street Connection Report (Wards – One, Seven, and Eight)

Council Members:

BACKGROUND>>> Historic Route 66 is an icon of international fame and recognition. The City of Wildwood, like many other communities in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area, has a part of this wonderful icon within its boundaries. Like a lesser number of communities, the City of Wildwood has the portion of this historic roadway that was its original location, when first commissioned by the United States Congress in 1936. Such makes this segment of roadway something special and an area the City has always wanted to celebrate from many perspectives, such as preservation, tourism, historic preservation, and economic development. Given the timing of the Project Kick-Off for the Route 66 Roadside Park design and the recent application for the Community Empowerment Grant through Missouri Main Street Connection, the City used these activities as an opportunity to host a Community Outreach Event to inform residents of the City's revitalization efforts along Route 66.

On Thursday, April 28th, the City of Wildwood hosted a successful Route 66 Revitalization Kick-Off Event in partnership with Living Word United Methodist Church, Big Chief Roadhouse, Rockwood School District, Wildwood Historical Society and the Route 66 Association of Missouri, with approximately 100 attendees, inclusive of area residents, business owners, property owners, church and school leaders, and public organizations, with representation from statewide and regional agencies and organizations that are involved in history, historic preservation, and tourism. The goal of the proposed community initiative is to catalyze small business growth in Wildwood by investing in the community's history and historical character that still exists in its landscape today. Emphasized at the event was the importance of involving the entire community in this project.

A portion of this event included a trolley tour of Wildwood's Original Alignments of Route 66, hosted by the Wildwood Historic Preservation Commission, in an effort to show Missouri Main Street Connection representatives first-hand the area proposed for revitalization. Approximately thirty (30) businesses and institutions placed signs and other displays along their respective frontages in support of this community effort, which did not go unnoticed by representatives of this organization.

The tour was followed by a presentation hosted at the Living Word Church. It began with Route 66 Roadside Park engagement and community history displays, with the presentation involving a welcome message from Mayor Bowlin, words of support from Rockwood School District and a performance from the Lafayette High School A Cappella Choir. These items were then followed by a general history of Route 66 provided by Joe Sonderman, of the Route 66 Association of Missouri, and ended with a presentation from City team members on the potential opportunities for revitalizing Wildwood's Original Route 66 Corridor.

The event concluded at Big Chief Roadhouse, a Route 66 National Historic Landmark, with attendees primarily congregating in an upstairs "Speakeasy", where the owners generously provided a wine tasting in support of the effort. This lounge area was also utilized by SWT Design as another opportunity for public engagement regarding the Route 66 Roadside Park. Overall, the event was well attended, has received positive feedback from both the participants and the attendees, and started the process of building important partnerships with key stakeholders in this revitalization effort. City team members have since created pages on the City's website for the "Route 66 Revitalization Initiative" and the "Route 66 Roadside Park", in order to share information and continue the community outreach effort.

IN CLOSING >>> If any of the City Council Members should have comments or questions regarding this information, please feel free to contact the Department of Planning and Parks at (636) 458-0440. No presentation is planned on this matter, given it is 'For Information' on tonight's Work Session agenda, but can be discussed, if any City Council Member should request the same. Thank you for your consideration of this information.

Respectfully submitted,

CITY OF WILDWOOD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Jan Stevens, Chair

Cc: The Honorable James R. Bowlin, Mayor
Historic Preservation Commission Members
Steve Cross, City Administrator
John A. Young, City Attorney
Rick Brown, P.E. and P.T.O.E., Director of Public Works
Melanie Rippetoe, Assistant Director of Planning and Parks
Travis Newberry, Senior Planner
Robyn Keefe, Planner