



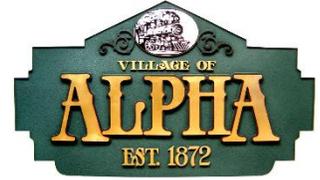
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# VILLAGE OF ALPHA

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Dear Alpha Community,

As a resident or business owner in Alpha, Illinois, you know that continued community progress requires the involvement of everyone in working toward common goals. In 2016, we conducted a community survey in 2016 to gather input about the future direction of our community. You can view those results on our website page [www.villageofalpha.org](http://www.villageofalpha.org) . Now, we are taking the next step in the process.

The Village of Alpha has entered into a partnership with University of Illinois Extension to conduct a series of four community meetings that build on the survey results and will result in the development of a Village of Alpha Community Action Plan. Through this process, we will identify some actionable projects and form teams to help us implement our community's vision. The four meetings are as follows:

1. March 8th: Developing a community vision
2. March 22nd: Understanding resources that are available to help implement plans and projects
3. April 12th: Identifying gaps in resources and prioritizing projects
4. April 26th: Developing a community action plan.

All four meetings will be held at the Alpha American Legion Hall and begin at 7 pm. The meetings will last no longer than 1 ½ hours and light refreshments will be provided.

We've taken the first step with the survey and now we want to follow through with an action plan. We are a small community and citizen involvement will be the key ingredient to developing a plan to achieve our goals for the future.

Sincerely,

P Dean Kernan Jr.  
Village Board President

(Watch for ads and announcements on our webpage and Facebook.)

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### **Alpha Community Planning Initiative – What is this about?**

Many small communities, such as Alpha, lack the resources or human capital for a full blown comprehensive planning process, let alone a strategic planning process. Many times, an abbreviated action planning process can move a community from inertia to small successes, perhaps stimulating additional planning and processes.

The four meeting process below outlines a process to move a committed group of community volunteers forward:

#### **Meeting 1 – Creating a Preferred Future/Community Visioning**

The first meeting focused on what a group wants to accomplish within their community. By creating a “vision”, the group can tease out what they feel is most important and most easily accomplished. A community vision is an overall picture of the character of the community sometime in the future. What do you want Alpha to look like in 5, 10, 20 years?

#### **Meeting 2 – Collecting Resources**

Many times, communities become overly focused upon dollars, whether it be fundraising, grants, etc. Often, this focus obscures the wealth of non-monetary resources that exist in communities. This often includes community members with specific skills, existing institutions in the community, and professional or personal connections residents might have with decision-makers. During this meeting, we identify that broad array of resources helping residents realize how many resources they already have available to them in their community.

#### **Meeting 3 – Bridging the Gaps**

During this meeting, we focus on the gaps between the preferred community vision and the current state of the community. By teasing out what needs to happen to create the desired community vision, community volunteers can begin to set priorities for action. Often they may find that the reality is not as far from the preferred community vision as they had originally perceived. It is at this meeting that the group will begin brainstorming projects to bridge the gap.

#### **Meeting 4 – Making the Action Plan**

During this final meeting, each participant is asked to fill out as many projects as they choose. On these forms, the participants will list their project ideas, what local resources can be leveraged to make the project a reality, and what they, personally, are willing to do to make the project happen.

Once the group has completed their forms, they each get the opportunity to share their idea to the rest of the group. By the end of the meeting, the group should be able to agree upon 3-5 projects to work on. Quick wins should be the focus on the first few projects. Once the group experiences some success, they should be able to recruit more volunteers and take on more challenging projects.

*The result these meetings will be the creation of a few committed actions teams to undertake projects. The group will set a timetable for reporting back on the progress of projects. New projects can be added as the first set of projects are completed.*