



**New Albany Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Implementation Panel
September 12, 2024 Minutes**

The IDEA Implementation Panel met for the panel’s regularly scheduled session at the New Albany Village Hall, 99 W. Main Street, New Albany, Ohio and was called to order by Panel Chair Dr. Johnson at 7:00 p.m.

Those answering roll call:

Panel Chair Brianna Johnson	Present
Panel Vice-Chair Connor Berry	Present
Panel Member Marie Alvarado	Present
Panel Member Taru Saigal	Present
Council Member Marlene Brisk	Present
Council Member Andrea Wiltrout	Absent

Staff members present:

Abbey Brooks, Community Program Administrator
Chelsea Nichols, Planner II
Alonna Skinner, Community Program Specialist

Dr. Johnson asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the August 8, 2024 IDEA Panel meeting minutes. Seeing none, Panel Member Berry moved to approve the meeting minutes from the August 8, 2024 IDEA Implementation Panel meeting. Seconded by Panel Member Alvarado and the IDEA Implementation Panel voted with 4 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 0 abstentions to approve the meeting minutes.

Dr. Johnson asked if there were any visitors requesting to speak on items not on tonight’s agenda. Seeing no visitors, the hearing of visitors for items not on the agenda was closed.

Business:

Special Olympics

Planner II Nichols introduced Amy Thomas, co-founder of New Albany Special Olympics. The discussion involved the following:

- Amy and her husband, Paul, started Special Olympics when her son was eight years old.
- There are currently 60 kids total in the program.
- The sports currently offered include swimming, basketball, top golf, bowling, flag football, and track. They also offer soccer affiliated with Gahanna Special Olympics
- Ages of the participants range from 8-32 years old and there is no age maximum/no cut-off age.
- It is privately ran so people outside of New Albany can participate.
- They have plenty of general volunteers but they need a gymnastics coach. Anyone willing to volunteer. Season is usually Feb – June, once a week, and usually have about 5 girls that participate.
- Summer Picnic is very popular.
- They are always in the Founders Day Parade.
- People can attend games and matches to cheer on the kids.
- They currently need website help.
- They have seen kids go from not talking to really coming out of their shell.
- Fundraisers and Donations help with their expenses.

- The Polar Plunge is a fantastic fundraiser for them.
- They also have a Blue Jackets Fundraiser where they get a portion of the proceed.
- Council Member Wiltout stated they would love to help bring the community to Special Olympics, help support the program, and spotlight the work the program does.
- Panel Member Berry stated that it is incredible what these athletes will do when they are put in a competitive situation. They also pick up on what coaches are trying to teach them. As a coach, it is a very rewarding experience.
- It is also special to see what it does for the parents.
- Dr. Johnson suggested that the city make a video featuring this organization.
- Tuesday night flag football team, 6pm

The Panel thanked Ms. Thomas for attending the meeting and sharing all about the organization.

NA101 – August Recap and October Reminder

Community Program Administrator Brooks reviewed the NA101 information:

- Business Park Tours Recap
- Hinson Amphitheater; Tuesday, October 8th, 6-8pm
 - Tables and Stations
 - Vote on bands for concerts next year
 - Favorite thing about Oktoberfest and July 4th
 - Fall themed snacks
 - Have as many IDEA Panel members present as possible
 - Staff to send email for members to RSVP

Community Connectors Update

Community Program Specialist Skinner gave an update on the Community Connectors Program:

An informational open house was held on Tuesday, September 10th.

- 5:30-6:00 p.m. Meet & Greet
- 6:00-6:30 p.m. Presentation
- 6:30-7:00 p.m. Q&A
 - One application returned as of Sept. 12
 - 31 interest forms submitted online

The Panel would like to get more information from the applicants than just what is on the application. They would like to see one or two more questions added to the application form.

Kulture City

Community Program Administrator Brooks reviewed the Kulture City information:

Overview:

- 1 in 4 individuals have a sensory need or an invisible disability. These are individuals with PTSD, autism, dementia and strokes just to name a few.
- Sensory needs are a common medical condition in which the brain has trouble receiving and responding to information that comes in through the senses.
- Common sounds, lights, crowds and even certain smells might not only be overwhelming but also physically painful.

- Because of this, these individuals withdraw from communities not by choice but by circumstance as they worry about how the world will accept or include them.

Training:

- Sensory Inclusive™ Certification is available to venues, organizations, small businesses or caring individuals who want to learn more about sensory needs and how to better engage with individuals with sensory needs.

Sensory Bags:

- Sensory bags are designed to help sensory needs in both adults and children. Filled with items that can help lessen sensory overload and also engage, the bag items are also easily cleaned and sterilized for multiple uses.

Staff to send panel members the link to the website.

Diwali Planning Update

Community Program Administrator Brooks lead the discussion:

- Saturday, October 26 – 4-7 p.m. at the Hinson Amphitheater
- 19 residents in focus group
- Support from FIA (Federation of Asian Indian Associations)
- Dance performances in various styles, from different regions of India
- Student performances (middle/high school) and youth fashion parade (intermediate school and younger)
- Children’s Diya painting and Rangoli making
- Archery activity
- Dancing
- Fireworks (6:50-7 p.m.)
- 5 Vendors
- 4 Food Trucks

Community Attitude Survey

Planner II Nichols covered the survey slides that pertained to the Panel’s initiatives. Staff to send Panel members the link to the full presentation that was given to City Council.

2025 Planning

Community Program Administrator Brooks lead the discussion:

- Staff is pressing pause on an events discussion this month as city staff thinks through the logistics of adding the Independence Day parade and celebration, as well as Oktoberfest, to the 2025 event lineup.
- With that in mind, what should our 2025 focus be? How should NA101 evolve? Anything else you want this Panel to achieve?
 - Kulture City
 - Partner with Special Olympics
 - More things like Super Supper where it is a small event and community of people.
 - Business Park Tours
 - Partner with the Buddy-up For Life program
 - Networking for young professionals
 - Event like EmpowHER; event with a panel but also where you could meet someone new, with built-in discussion to talk to your table. Perhaps it could be called “Table Talks.”

- Integrate Accessibility into everything
- New Albany Heroes event like EmpowHER to recognize people doing amazing things in the community.
- Plan for two NA101 events but budget for three NA101 sessions just in case.
 - Be more intentional
 - “NA Together” with suppers/gatherings, and with Community Connectors.

Ms. Alvarado asked when new members would be added to the panel. Council Member Wilttrout stated that on October 1st city council will appoint three new members.

Other Business:

NONE

Adjournment:

Dr. Johnson adjourned the meeting at 9:04 p.m. Seconded by Panel Member Alvarado. All panel members were in favor.