



**New Albany Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Implementation Panel  
April 10, 2025 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 Berry at 7:03 p.m.

Those answering roll call:

Panel Chair Connor Berry	Present
Panel Vice-Chair Brianna Johnson	Present
Panel Secretary Marie Alvarado	Present
Panel Member Taru Saigal	Present
Panel Member Courtney Nixon	Present
Panel Member Alex Bilchak	Absent
Panel Member Antonio Pestana	Absent
Council Member Marlene Brisk	Absent
Council Member Andrea Wilttrout	Absent

Staff members present: Abbey Brooks, Community Program Administrator  
Chelsea Nichols, Planner II

**Action of Minutes:**

Panel Chair Berry asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the March 13, 2025 IDEA Panel meeting minutes. Seeing none, Panel Member Alvarado moved to approve the meeting minutes from the March 13, 2025 IDEA Implementation Panel meeting. Seconded by Panel Member Saigal and the IDEA Implementation Panel voted with 5 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 0 abstentions to approve the meeting minutes.

**Hearing of Visitors for Items Not on Tonight’s Agenda:**

Panel Chair Berry asked if there were any visitors requesting to speak on items not on tonight’s agenda.

Armando Casto, member of the public, was present to speak. He stated that last month they talked about job opportunities with the deaf community. He places people at employers such as light industrial entities, the Department of Defense, and within the aerospace industry. Those entities have questions about training, incentives equipment for communication, safety, bridging the gap, communion, and translators. He would like to get in touch with Pastor Crabtree from the LifeSigns Deaf Baptist Church.

City staff stated they would be happy to make that connection for him.

Seeing no further comments, Panel Chair Berry closed the hearing of visitors.

**Business:**

***Listening Session***

City staff lead the discussion:

- The Panel members reviewed feedback received by attendees at the Listening Session.
- The Panel specially reviewed the new document that included a table categorizing the feedback into four different areas of focus: events, infrastructure, operational, and partnerships.

- The Panel also reviewed the estimated ease of implementation (on a scale of 1-5) and whether implementation of each item would have a cost associated with it.
- Based on the feedback, the Panel discussed what they would like staff to focus on for 2025.
  - The Panel directed staff to:
    - Continue implementing the items on the table when possible.
    - Update people on things that are in progress. Perhaps through social media, a video, an accessible webpage.
    - New Albany should be a positive example to other communities.
    - Panel Chair Barry stated that the Gahanna Special Olympics has support from their mayor, but they do not have the resources New Albany has. He would like city staff to reach out to the New Albany Special Olympics to see if the city can help promote their events. He also asked about handicap parking at the amphitheater.
    - Staff explained that they will be creating temporary handicap parking at the amphitheater for community events.
    - Panel member Saigal asked for clarification on the general feedback received from the deaf community. Staff stated that the overall feedback was that they feel isolated and want to be included. For example, one specific item was having subtitles at the community movies. Staff can reach out to those entities that put the movies on to have them make that change.
    - Staff clarified with the Panel that they do not intend to automatically have interpreters at every community event. It will be by request.
  - The Panel discussed whether staff should move forward with implementing Kulture City into community programming.
    - Staff reminded the Panel members that Kulture City provides training and sensory bags to make events more sensory friendly.
    - Certification costs less than \$1,000 which easily fits within the \$24,000 we have budgeted for an accessibility initiative.

Panel Chair Berry moved to recommend city staff move forward with implementing **Kulture City** sensory bags, which will include staff training, at community events. Seconded by Dr. Saigal and the IDEA Implementation Panel voted with 5 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 0 abstention to approve the motion.

### ***Juneteenth Celebration – Planning Update***

City staff lead the discussion:

- To be held on June 19<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-9:00pm at the amphitheater
- Professional emcee
- D9 with proclamation
- Musical entertainment
- Student entertainment
- Live painting on stage
- Vendors, authors
- T-shirt sales
- Education
- Social services resources
- New banners, Step and repeat
- Kids activities

### ***Community Connectors Update***

City staff lead the discussion:

- Second Training Session to be held on May 6<sup>th</sup>
- Currently we have 15 community connectors, representing 13 neighborhoods
- The first newsletter from city staff to Connectors went out on April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Welcome boxes to include:
  - Map and note from Connector
  - 43054 Candel (Donation from Alene Candles)

**Other Business:** None

**Adjournment:**

Panel Chair Berry adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:25 p.m. All panel members were in favor.