New Albany Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Implementation Panel
August 18, 2026 Minutes

The IDEA Implementation Panel met for the panel's regularly scheduled session at Water's Edge, 7815 Walton Parkway, New Albany, Ohio and was called to order by Panel Chair Alvarado at 7:05 p.m. Those answering roll call:

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

Staff members present: Abbey Brooks, Strategic Initiatives Director, Alonna Skinner, Community Program Specialist, Janelle Brown, Intern.

Action of Minutes:
Panel Chair Alvarado asked if there were any corrections to the minutes from the June 11, 2026 IDEA Panel meeting minutes. Seeing none, Panel Member Freedman moved to approve the meeting minutes from the June11, 2026, 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 Alvarado asked if there were any visitors requesting to speak on items not on tonight's agenda. Seeing none, Panel Chair Alvardo closed the hearing of visitors.

Business:

2026 Business Review

- $110K budget for 2026. Actual budget through July 31, $27,737.62.
- Proposed budget for 2027: $110K.
- Cultural Celebration: Diwali, "The Festival of Lights" now in its 4th year, will take place on 11/7/2026 at the Hinson Amphitheater. For 2026 have already secured $21,500 in sponsorships.
- Accessibility: 2026 was a banner year for accessibility initiatives in the city.
    - Kulture City Certification: Employees were trained to recognize and support individuals with sensory needs and invisible disabilities.
    - Sensory Tent: A quieter place for outdoor events equipped with sensory tools.
    - Accommodation Station: Portion at the end of the 4th of July Parade where participants were required to lower their volume, refrain from throwing things, and no flashing lights. The parade also had a dedicated accessible parking lot.
    - Momentum Refresh: Fully accessible, universally designed, mobile restroom at Oktoberfest.
- Education Series: "The Far Out Awesome Lit Fire Intergenerational Event": 5 different generations came together to explore how each generation communicates, thinks and experiences this world.

- New Albany 101: Souper Supper and Business Park Tour. Due to the overwhelming response of Souper Supper, in 2027 will be moving from the Heit Center to the New Albany Field House.
- Community Connectors: As of August 2026, there were 17 Community Connectors representing 15 neighborhoods which accounted for approx. 50% of New Albany households. Some select neighborhood events: Rangoli making party, food panty drive, neighborhood picnic, wine at Wivey, last day of school party.

New Albany 101 Business Park Tour and Appy Hour

- Scheduled for 9/10/2026 at Walton Parkway. Tours at 4 pm, 5pm, 6pm. Register on RecDesk. This was the same date as the next IDEA Panel meeting, and the panel decided to cancel the meeting so they could participate in New Albany 101.

2027 IDEA Panel Work Plan

- 2027 work plan would need to be approved in next IDEA meeting on 10/08/2026.
- Staff Members Brooks and Skinner discussed potential ideas for 2027 and encouraged the panel to come back in October ready to discuss their ideas at the next meeting in October.
- Discussed reviewing a proposed reduced meeting schedule in 2027 also in the October meeting.

Other Business: None

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Poll Members for Comment: None

Adjournment: Panel Chair Alvarado adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:35 p.m. All panel members were in favor.