

Do you ever ask yourself, “Why do I do what I do”?

What’s your basic motivation in your life?

Although, it’s one of the most fundamental driving force we have,  
we rarely share it.

It affects us, each and every day and it’s totally different  
for each one of us.

So what do you think happens when THIS basic driving force  
collides within a community?

It’s called THE Fight or Flight Response.

We either get involved or we run from it.

As a community, a healthy process is important.

Without it we lose our unity, the things we do so well together.

A Process of Simple Conversations, Learning, Thinking and

Acting on the Results has been the Key.

Step by step, our community has learned that a healthy process is important.

Remember, what we don’t know can hurt us!

So we asked,

“What would make East Jordan  
a Better East Jordan?”

In listening, we learned about our shortcomings as a community.

In order to grow, we needed a new wastewater treatment plant.

We have it now for future growth!

We needed a new tank for drinking water to replace the old 1909 tank.

We have that now with a 33% increase in capacity!

We needed to move the old boat launch

and after years of conversations with the State of Michigan,

it's now been relocated near the tourist park.

That location requires less future dredging.

Now those actions didn't just happen.

They were the results of a healthy process at the speed of trust,

a combination of leadership development and community outreach.

A Transparent Healthy Process that Looks into the Heart of its Community  
is what we strive for.

In order to Prepare for a Better East Jordan,

we have to be ready for development.

East Jordan has been working to be a

Redevelopment Ready Community.

A program we are currently Engaged In but not yet Fully Certified.

Why is this important? While too much development is not desirable,

Sustainable    Controlled    Growth

Aids in the Cost Sharing of Services

to those who Live and Play in our Community.

A healthy process is important, what we do know can help us.

Many years ago, our city developed a mission statement that

helps us to be ever mindful of our goals,

“To create an environment that promotes strong economic growth

while safe guarding the public trust and

building a sense of place that

Focuses on our Future and Honors our Heritage.”

I know that is a mouthful but honestly,

it’s how we remain Focused on the Heart of East Jordan.

As a reminder to each of us,

our mission statement is printed at city hall

on the wall in the room where

many meetings take place, including city council.

In order to position ourselves to become a better East Jordan, as

our community changes, we needed a new Master Plan.

“A plan that shows an Overall Development Concept that

includes Design, Landscaping, Infrastructure, Service Provision,

Circulation, Present and Future Land Use and Building Form.

It provides a **structured** approach and creates a

clear framework for development.”

The last two plans occurred in 2015 and before that 1998.

After completion of our latest efforts,  
it won the 2021 Michigan Association of Planning's  
Public Outreach Award.

Our city's administrator, Tom Cannon,  
is representing our city at their meeting at this moment,  
which is the reason he couldn't be here today.

Inclusiveness makes a better outcome.

Our citizens are paramount to the process  
but we recognize our community extends  
outside the city limits.

In recent years,

Our City Commission, Downtown Development Authority and  
the Planning Commission

have been meeting jointly, at least twice a year,  
to Focus Our Efforts on Top Issues to our community.

We're very fortunate because,

that doesn't happen frequently in other communities.

These Joint Meetings provide Momentum, Transparency and Awareness of  
city goals as defined by our Master Plan.

They also make communication and acting on any decisions  
a lot more efficient.

The moving of the East Jordan and Southern Engine #6 to Sportsman's Park,  
which was an effort to better celebrate our heritage,  
was a result of many years of community conversations and  
joint meetings.

And just recently,

the decision to seek Request for Quotation,  
for the future use of the Civic Center and Carey's Corner Market  
Properties resulted.

This process insures a great many More Eyes and Conversations  
about any proposals we receive.

Again, this is a healthy process.

We received a significant grant to fund the construction of "Joining Jordan",  
the boardwalk and pavilions defining the north side area  
crossing the Jordan River, from East to West.

This project is not just a physical project but also  
a metaphor to join all of East Jordan.

In many respects, it's time to connect all of the dots.

Joining together all the important issues of our city:

Safety, Economy, Culture, Environmental Stewardship and Physical Design,  
to bring together visitors as well as those who call East Jordan their home.

A healthy process is listening, learning, thinking and meaningful action.

While using the master plan's Future Land Use map,  
we're reviewing ordinances to make suggestions for  
housing projects within the city and to  
help Manage Short Term Rentals,  
to balance the growth of needed tourism lodging  
with that of our year round housing.

In the process of continual review,  
we're hoping to maintain the character of our local neighborhoods.

WITH the East Jordan Housing Solutions Committee,  
and in conjunction with Housing North and other partners,  
a Countywide plan is being examined to address  
affordable housing needs in the coming years.

I'm pleased to announce that East Jordan has local developers  
interested in building affordable homes  
while the city continues to plan for water and sewer  
infrastructure upgrades to improve its  
efficiency and capacity.

Recently, we were awarded a \$300,000 DNR Trust Fund Grant  
toward the Sportsman's Park. Construction will commence in 2022  
to add a Kayak and Non-Motorized Watercraft ADA Access,  
Restroom Improvements and  
Trail Access to the Friends of the Jordan property.

There are also preparations in the works,  
in conjunction with the *Friends of the Jordan*, *Little Traverse Conservancy*,  
*East Jordan Area Chamber of Commerce*, *City of East Jordan*,  
*Local Entrepreneurs* and *Industry*,  
to explore the Expansion of the Nature Trail on the  
West side of the river from the  
Little Traverse Conservancy Parking Lot on Rogers Road  
to the city's Sportsman's Park.

Few communities in Michigan hosts it's own Nature Preserve within  
their city limits.

It's one of the many appreciated assets of our town  
but most often overlooked.

Many years ago, there was one man who saw its importance.

The late Joel Evans, a local businessman and conservationist,  
worked very hard to encourage osprey to nest in that area.  
He knew full well it would soon bring the nesting of bald eagles also.  
I hope you all have had the experience of watching the beauty of the  
eagles flying overhead.

Due to Joel's vision, East Jordan, once known as Swan City,  
is the host to game, fowl, and fish, for all to enjoy.

His environmental stewardship acts as a springboard that can grow  
into eco-tourism,  
a word that is now part of the lexicon for economic development.

I'm sad to say, however that one of our swans  
died this last week as a result of flying into the lines,  
which stretch across the bridge.

I understand the death of one swan  
may not seem important to some.

However, the fact that swans mate for life,  
this death will have an impact  
on the population of these magnificent birds  
for years down the road.

Is it time to bury those cables?

Not only would it prevent losing more waterfowl but  
also it would tremendously  
enhance our skyline and the view.

Just a thought!

What we know can help us!

With the harbor and the tourist park business at record setting levels,  
we are seeking federal and state grants to assist in  
substantial harbor improvements in the near future.

Not letting up on our pace,  
a use feasibility and/or master plan for Elm Pointe  
will begin in 2022, to help guide possible  
revenue sources to fund improvements and insure  
sustainability of that property.

A mountain bike trail has opened adjacent to the East Jordan School property,  
which happened under the leadership efforts of Scott Beal  
in collaboration with the Top of Michigan Mountain Bike Association,  
the East Jordan Public Schools, the chamber, the city and  
many more.

Is it time to connect East Jordan with the  
bike trail system in Northern Michigan?

Pursuing a healthy process enables government to be more efficient.

This has been a long journey.

As I drove into town for the first time in the summer of 1986,  
the view of a church steeple  
coming through the tree tops  
got me thinking, “Is this the place I’ve been dreaming of”?

After 35 years, I know it is, but the dreaming is not over.

We must dream together, Knowing Our Mandates  
to Listen, to Learn, to Think and Take the Opportunity to Act.

It takes our collective voice to bring to the surface a  
Vision of a Better East Jordan and  
To Retain its’ Heart and Heritage.

I was asked to expound on the State of Our Community.

A community that I love, pray for and have tremendous hope for.  
Being fully aware of the many challenges before us, I am pleased to report  
today, that the State of Our Community is Strong, Vibrant and Growing.