

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire

Minutes of April 8, 2015

Members Present: Alan Zeller, Mose Olenik, Tyler Ward, Teresa Cardorette, Beth Alpaugh-Cote, Sue Chollet, Ivy Vann and James Kelly

Staff Present: Peter Throop, Director, and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development

Master Plan Steering Committee Co-Chair Alpaugh-Cote (Ms. Alpaugh-Cote) called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m.

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Olenik/Alpaugh-Cote) to approve the Minutes of March 11, 2015 as written with all in favor except for Ms. Chollet who abstained.

Vision Chapter Discussion:

Ms. Alpaugh-Cote turned the meeting over to Mr. Throop to review the Vision Chapter objectives, vision statements from other towns and to start to build the structure for Peterborough (including a summary statement, descriptive elements, core values and guiding principles) and broad goals.

He began by noting he would like to approach the discussion by dividing it into three parts. “The first of which is the question of what are we focusing on with a discussion of what we are looking for in this chapter. *What is it* you want the Chapter to do” he said. He noted the examples of Vision Statements for Madbury and Keene, New Hampshire as well as Andover and Sheffield, Massachusetts, Ithaca, New York and Taos, New Mexico and asked the members if they found anything in the examples that could “help us as we update our chapter.”

Ms. Alpaugh-Cote noted the vision statement is a guide for the Planning Board and yet needs to be simple enough for the public to understand. Ms. Chollet interjected “it needs to be a statement of what we heard from the townspeople, what *they* want to see for our town in the next five to ten years” adding “and serve the folks who will serve to write future chapters of the Master Plan.” She went on to say “we have enough information on what the townspeople wish to see. There should be a clear statement about it to serve as a guide for new people coming to town and developers alike.” Ms. Chollet concluded “*no matter what*, people will misquote the Master Plan so I would like it to be *as clear and unambiguous* as possible. It

will serve as the guiding light we can refer to and say no, the Master Plan *does not say that* it says the following.”

Ms. Vann noted whenever innovative land use zoning is involved “it has to be supported by the Master Plan.” Looking to Mr. Throop she continued “and I think we do need some of that language in the Vision Statement.” Mr. Throop replied that “general statements about innovative land use might make sense, but language that supports the requirement of the Statute relating to innovative land use is probably too detailed for the vision chapter.” Regarding the level of detail that belongs in the vision chapter, Mr. Throop noted “my personal bias is that you want enough (information) for guidance because it drives what happens in updates of the chapters but not so much (information) that it really belongs in the chapter itself.”

He went on to say “doing vision work is a challenge of finding the right level of detail” adding “that is why I sent you the examples, some provide nothing and others are very detailed.” Mr. Throop then echoed Ms. Chollet’s thought that the statement should be clear enough that outside developers or people considering moving here have a general idea about the essence of the town and whether or not it might be a good fit for them.

Ms. Olenik thought it interesting that communities have spent upwards of two years completing their vision statement, “working hard to get it right.” Ms. Chollet asked “has it been a year for us yet?” Ms. Alpaugh-Cote replied “yes, our Vision Forum was last April and we spent three months getting ready for that.” Mr. Throop pointed out that “it has been twelve years since the Vision Chapter has been updated and we have an active Committee that has been focused on keeping the Master Plan moving along.” He added “I think we will be done before our second birthday.”

Ms. Cardorette offered her definition of the vision statement. After reading it to the members she said “it is the overall character of the community in the future” adding “it describes what the people want, the plan and the starting point for action.”

Mr. Throop suggested being careful not to use too much jargon as we draft the update, adding “we want to make sure this chapter is meaningful to the towns people and the language we use is a big part of that.” He went on to say “we have captured the thoughts and ideas of our community members and we need to craft a vision for our community in as clear and unambiguous way as possible.”

The members agreed it was important to outline the similarities and differences between prior visions and the new vision. Mr. Kelly noted “it needs to be balanced and concise, not heavily driven by one thing.” Ms. Cardorette added “and

consistent with the responses of the Forum.” Mr. Zeller suggested including an update with itemized accomplishments citing improved water quality, repurposing of the Lagoons and the solar power program at the Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Mr. Throop reminded the members “it needs to adequately describe what we want to see in the future.” “What *do* we want?” interjected Chair Vann adding “and here is another question, how do we move in that direction?” Mr. Throop reiterated “it needs to provide adequate guidance for decision making and completing future updates of master plan chapters.” Ms. Cadorette added “without being too specific. It has to be balanced, concise and unambiguous.” Mr. Ward quickly interjected “and obtainable.”

The members then moved on to review the vision statement language of the example communities mentioned earlier. Ms. Cadorette complimented the Town of Sheffield noting “the moment I read it, I wanted to move there.” General discussion about the various community’s vision chapters (similarities and differences, complexity of content and desirability) followed. The members noted several of the towns had several paragraphs on their history as it led them into the vision statement.

Mr. Kelly noted the importance of not just wanting to sustain everything, “but to get better.” Mr. Ward suggested that in reviewing the goals of the 2003 vision statement “we listed things like broadband internet service and pedestrian and bike paths” and asked “do we even *need* to re-write it?” The discussion that followed concluded many goals were still unattained and some were unattainable. Ms. Olenik noted “striving to be the economic center of the region is just not going to happen” adding “and we have some refocussing going on with recruitment and retaining of young families, good paying jobs and agriculture and farming in general.”

Mr. Kelly suggested the members review the vision statement examples he had selected for their review. Ms. Chollet interjected “with the understanding not all of us have read them.” Mr. Kelly noted he particularly liked the vision statement from Ithaca, New York. He looked around and said “*preserve and enhance, create and promote and engage and embrace*. That is why.” Ms. Chollet reminded the members of their mission to be as clear, concise and unambiguous as possible. “We need to be careful of too much detail in various areas. That is the job of the chapter” she said.

The members briefly discussed the complexity of Andover’s statement identifying core values, history and culture and educational resources as well as creating an avenue to enhance and promote them. The words *engage and embrace* came up

and were discussed as a different kind of value set crucial to get things done. Mr. Kelly added “and collaboration which is one of my favorite words.”

As the members reviewed the other vision statements they discussed the difference in scale of how communities deal with their issues, the maturity of the communities, those that were content full and those that were not and what they liked and disliked about each one.

When complete Ms. Olenik advocated a “broad brush approach” with Ms. Chollet noting bullet points may get directly to the point. Ms. Vann suggested a goal with starting point such as wanting to support a vibrant local economy and to that end note the maker-space programs or in the search to support new business list business models as examples of the direction the town would like to go in. Ms. Chollet added “and then the chapter can go into what that means specifically.”

Mr. Throop noted “the challenge in writing these things is the desire to work from the bottom up. Given our community assets and strengths, our vision statement might include being known for helping small business grow, mature and flourish.” The group talked about fundamental things necessary to move in that direction including broadband internet, young families and adequate housing. Mr. Throop briefly reviewed the efforts and actions of the recently revitalized Economic Development Authority (EDA).

Ms. Chollet reiterated the importance of inviting the public to participate and work of the chapter. “I think that is critical” she said adding “we strive to maintain an open, transparent and inclusive approach.” Ms. Vann interjected “open, transparent and inclusive draws people into the decision making for the town.” A brief discussion on (and encouraging) collaboration efforts followed. Mr. Kelly noted the collaboration between the Library and the Monadnock Center of History and Culture with the very successful *Community Conversations*. “They are talking to each other and cooperating, not competing” he said.

As the members continued their discussion about what they liked and did not like in the model vision statements distributed. Mr. Ward asked about the future of the Peterborough Town Library. Ms. Cadorette stated “that is a good question” and asked “what is the Library of the future?” Mr. Throop replied “As I understand it, it is an information resource center with meeting spaces and where collaboration is promoted.” He went on to say “the Library of the future will have access to resources and information professionals who know how to dig through those resources and get you the information you are looking for. There will still be lending collections and children and youth sections, and community programming will also be an important component.” Ms. Cadorette asked “how is that different

than the Rec Center?” Mr. Throop replied “it will have very different programming.”

Mr. Ward asked about the town’s renewable energy sources and about goals for sustaining itself if anything happened to the grid. Mr. Throop referred to *resilience* and how to sustain the livelihood and basic needs of the community with advances in food and energy security.

Mr. Throop concluded by noting he was beginning to get a sense of what the structure of the chapter might look like. He noted beginning with a brief historical context leading to an updated vision statement or set of bullet points. He added “that might be followed by a set of general goals organized by chapter category similar to the 2003 structure.” I suggested these could be updated base on an review of what has been accomplished, what may not be relevant and what is still germane, as well as integrating the key elements out of the recent forum and survey. He asked anyone would volunteer to review the 2003 data and Ms. Vann replied she was available to assist.

Mr. Zeller and Ms. Olenik both had reservations on how that task could be accomplished. Ms. Olenik added “I think we should focus on this chapter and then look at parts of other chapters.” Ms. Vann suggested taking the data and analysis for the UNH Collaborative and using similar headings as in one of the examples Mr. Throop distributed.

Reports from Other Committees:

Planning Board: Ms. Vann gave a brief review of the Planning Board activities and work plan. “Development inquiries are up” said Mr. Throop adding “and there may be some bigger projects down the pike.” He spoke briefly about possible regulatory amendments for the coming year, specifically the Open Space Residential Development and Shorelands ordnances.

EDA: Mr. Throop gave a brief review of the EDA activities. “They have established a Marketing and a Broadband Committee” he said adding “and they are meeting regularly.”

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant