

MINUTES

Master Plan Steering Committee

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH

Wednesday, June 11, 2014 – 5:45 p.m.

1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

Members Present: Mose Olenik, Teresa Cadorette, Sue Chollet, Beth Alpaugh-Cote, James Kelly and Alan Zeller

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

Planning Committee Present: Audrey White, Tyler Ward, and John Trautwein

Call to Order:

Chair Chollet called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m. “Welcome back” she said adding “I would like to thank everyone for the amount of time and energy in preparing for the Forum. Tonight we are here to review the report.” Chair Chollet also acknowledged and thanked the staff for their efforts for a successful event.

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Zeller/Alpaugh-Cote) to approve the Minutes of April 9, 2014 as written with all in favor.

Vision Forum Event De-brief:

General reaction to the experience: Chair Chollet asked “any surprises? Any disappointments? I think we just want to hear general reactions.” Mr. Kelly interjected “I thought it was fantastic and elevated the involvement by those who came.” Mr. Kelly went on to point out maker spaces “right next door” (the Guernsey building) thus proving people were following up and action is being taken. When Mr. Trautwein asked who was driving that effort Mr. Ward replied “Jeanne Dietsch is organizing it.” A brief discussion about the maker spaces as well as a Coop Executive Suite owned and run by individual companies with shared resources for administrative and maintenance staff. The members also briefly discussed the status of hi-speed broadband and other synergies coming together.

Chair Chollet cautioned about staying out of the weeds noting “it is tempting with so many things going on.” She went on to ask the members about other plusses and negatives of the forum experience. “I thought it was great” replied Ms. White adding “the only negative was that Friday night was a bit long.” Mr. Trautwein agreed. “I thought it was great too but it made me look back to our reaction of the early part of our planning and the development of the forum.” He went on to say “in the end it wrapped up really well, I was surprised at the enthusiasm. My only thought was I questioned my role and thought it could have been better explained to me to solicit more participants. I think we were off target for that phase of planning.” He went on to say “if we do this again I would be more inclined to go out and talk to specific people with specific interests and stress the importance of why they should be involved in the process. Next time I would be more aggressive and interested myself, but with that said, it wrapped up really well.”

Mr. Zeller noted the instructions the members had received as scribes to not participate in the discussion directly. “I found that frustrating” he said adding “man, I had a lot to say but had to sit and listen!” Mr. Ward agreed. Ms. Olenik noted she re-directed the discussion when they started to build on misinformation. “I had to bring it back to reality by reminding them we just interested in the facts, not opinions” she said adding “I was not completely silent.” “Neither was I” interjected Chair Chollet. Both Mr. Kelly and Ms. White also noted they too took off their recorder (scribe) hats “to straighten things out.”

Ms. Olenik complimented Michelle Stahl from the Monadnock Center for History & Culture on the historic piece she prepared for Friday night. Regarding her earlier comment Chair Chollet asked Ms. White if she thought they should have cut out the meal to shorten the evening session. Ms. White replied “oh, no I just meant the introduction was too long.” “I agree” interjected Ms. Olenik. A brief discussion about the pros and cons of a single versus two-day session followed with Mr. Trautwein noting “those are the kind of questions to throw on the questionnaire.” Mr. Ward was all for the two-day session. “Friday night you get a jump start and it gets your mind going” he said. Mr. Trautwein replied “I heard no negatives, no complaints.” Mr. Zeller noted “it was good to do it over two days.” Ms. Alpaugh-Cote noted it allowed people to choose to attend either Friday night or Saturday or both. “I know some people that could only come to one or the other” she said. Mr. Ward concluded by complimenting Mr. Reidy and his staff from the UNH Cooperative Extension. “They did a great job” he said. Both Ms. Olenik and Chair Chollet noted it took some time to shift the intentions and format to fit what the Committee wanted to get out of the forum “it was a lot of work but we did it” said Ms. Olenik.

Forum Results:

The members spent some time determining how they wanted to review the results of the forum. They had each received a 38-page report detailing the Community Profile and Master Plan Visioning Programs. Their intent was to evaluate the process, evaluate the results and voting results, develop structure and plan for follow-up support of identified projects. Chair Chollet spoke about the next phase and the importance of a follow-up survey to give everyone an opportunity to have input and get a sense from the whole town. “Pulling out themes is an ongoing process, we won’t get that done tonight” she said.

The members began with *The Mosaic*, an exercise where the participants were asked to describe what the town looks like right now and what they would like it to be like in the future. Phrases and adjectives were called out and recorded on white boards. They began to discuss particulars such as the aging of the community and transportation when Mr. Kelly interjected “why don’t we start with the big picture and the check the little picture?” Mr. Trautwein replied “that is what the forum did” adding “I thought the process had done that.” Mr. Throop reminded the members that only about 200 people had attended the forum. “We need to pull out what we want to put in the survey and say this is what we heard at the forum” adding “we list the broad goals for the community in the future and ask for input that will help us get there.”

Mr. Trautwein relied “I thought the process (the forum) did that, digested it from a sample of the community” and asked “we should try to avoid reinventing the wheel here, we have identified the commonalities, why do it again?” Chair Chollet replied “so as not to miss things.” Ms. Cadorette noted that the report was a collection of data. “It is not an analysis” she said adding “we need to do that.” Chair Chollet asked “how?” Ms. Cadorette replied “the commonalities, people look at data in different ways.”

Mr. Throop then briefly reviewed the 8 Key Themes, the Goals and Opportunities that were identified as well as the Voting Results. He looked up and said “I think talking about the voting results might be good starting place.” A very brief discussion about some of the strong personalities in the groups followed (mine was not a random group interjected Ms. Cadorette) with the members agreeing “you hear better when you are not talking.” Mr. Throop also noted the proximity of the forum to Town Meeting adding “I would not do this again before Town Meeting!”

The members reviewed the Saturday afternoon voting results noting improved means and access to transportation was the highest goal on the list. Mr. Ward noted

the progress that was being made by Public Works Director Rodney Bartlett in getting the Vermont Bus Line to stop in Peterborough. Ms. Olenik noted “but it is also quality sidewalks and bicycle and pedestrian paths.” Chair Chollet added “and insured access to community resources for work and play. So complete streets that are bike and pedestrian oriented.” She added “like the plan for Union Street.”

Mr. Throop noted several techniques used in surveys to rank and rate priorities. Mr. Ward spoke briefly about how to get the information out to the public. He suggested coordination and outreach through social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook in addition to the posting at the town buildings and in the newspaper. “We have all the avenues pretty well covered” he said adding “short of knocking on doors.” Mr. Throop noted the use of focus groups as another way to get information to the people.

The second highest scoring goal was for *a transparent, lasting, sustainable public/private organization to leverage current assets, effect policies, coordinate and promote outreach.* Ms. Olenik asked “what is that about? I am confused.” A brief discussion followed with ideas of what the goal’s focus was. Mr. Trautwein noted “I think we need to find a way to have a better sense of what is available in this town.” Ms. White interjected “everything boils down to communication.” The members discussed several options including a community calendar and joining the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Trautwein noted “the goal says to create an organization so I think it means something entirely new.” Chair Chollet noted “so an entity that everyone knows THIS is the place that everyone goes for information.” Ms. Cadorette interjected “it sorts of exists between the River Center and the Chamber” with Mr. Throop adding “and the Town House and the newspaper.” Mr. Kelly noted it would have to be a collaborative effort that would include the creation and support of new business. When one member asked if the Chamber of Commerce was inadequate another member answered “yes, because it is not inclusive of all businesses.” Mr. Ward suggested they invite the new Chamber of Commerce Director to a meeting. Mr. Kelly replied “that is possible” adding “the theme is more collaboration to bring new business to town.” The members also briefly discussed the idea of the Dublin chalkboard for posting public information before Chair Chollet redirected the conversation noting “we are getting into the weeds, these are good ideas but let’s move on.”

The members reviewed the other goals that included economic, health, transportation, technology and business growth issues. Mr. Trautwein noted “staying the same and maintaining the economic vitality means nothing.” He asked “who can disagree with keeping the same look but increasing jobs?” Concluding with “no passion, no action.”

The members briefly discussed the underserved populations as well as those who feel like they are outside the embrace of the town. “That is another important theme that keeps coming up” said Mr. Throop. The topic of the Community Center was mentioned as an example. Mr. Zeller noted “I don’t know if that is a good example, it gets used every day.” Mr. Kelly replied “not by me.” Ms. Olenik interjected “and not by the teenagers. It is used but under-used for its potential.” The members then briefly discussed the potential of having a communications director to facilitate information.

Survey:

In conclusion Mr. Throop briefly discussed the role of UNH’s Cooperative Extension (UNHCE) in assisting the members in getting to the next level. He noted he had met with Charlie French and Molly Donovan adding “they are the people who head up the group Dan (Reidy) works for.” He explained they had the software “to help us get the survey on line as well as the processing of the data to be interpreted in an efficient way.” He told the members “while they have a lot their plate this summer, they will assist with us with the kick-off of the survey.” He told the members “it will be structured in a way that is more streamlined and productive to help us focus” adding “we will meet once in July and once in August.” When asked about payment Mr. Throop noted there was some money in the budget that he would allocate for UNHCE assistance if the members agreed to hire them” he said adding “I have confidence in their ability for this kind of stuff but I wanted to put out to you as a group.”

Mr. Trautwein asked “do we need a survey?” with Ms. Cadorette asking “what is the goal of a survey?” Mr. Throop replied “those are good questions” as he went on to explain that with 200 or so people at the Forum “we hopefully had a good subset of the community. But now we need to get out and get more opinions, expand and validate.” Chair Cholet interjected “validation is the real thing, we need to make sure the data is accurate and representative of the whole town.”

The members went on to discuss what a survey would accomplish as well as the approach in which to deliver it. The members reviewed the pros and cons of multi-media approaches with Mr. Zeller noting “not everybody goes online or even has a computer but everybody gets mail.” Mr. Throop concluding “this is not the easiest thing in the world but the folks at UNHCE will have some thoughts on how to approach a combined effort.”

A motion was made/seconded (White/Olenik) to have Mr. Throop proceed with the feasibility of involving the UNH Cooperative Extension and move ahead with the 2014 Vision Forum follow up survey efforts with all in favor.

Mr. Throop briefly updated the members on the status of the recently passed agri-tourism ordinance and the technical problems that need to be addressed adding “that Board may want to have some questions in the survey.” Mr. Kelly cautioned that the survey content be simple “this is about the vision and not about politics” he said. Ms. Olenik suggested they meet with the Planning Board to hear them out. Chair Chollet disagreed noting “we are the owners here and I think we should keep ownership.”

In closing Mr. Throop also suggested getting on the agendas of the local service clubs and organizations to share the survey results and draft vision chapter before holding the public hearing.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant