

MINUTES

Master Plan Steering Committee

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH

Wednesday, July 23, 2014 – 5:45 p.m.

1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

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

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

Call to Order:

Chair Alpaugh-Cote (Chair Cote) called the meeting to order at 5:46 p.m. and welcomed the members. She then turned the meeting over to Mr. Throop who noted the focus of the meeting was to develop a survey to expand on and validate the Vision Forum held in April. “Let’s start out by talking about the sample surveys and review the categories they used” he said. The members began to review the sample surveys identifying the general categories as they related to the current chapter. Ms. Chollet interjected that she worked better “if I go to the questions, the things we want to ask then from there identify the categories to go to.” Ms. Cadorette noted the three things she felt were important included questions to validate the forum input, to gather additional input and prioritization and to look at the big areas to be addressed as a result. Ms. Vann added that those three things will be used for guidance for future chapters for the Master Plan and zoning. Mr. Throop interjected “and also guidance for town” noting “the Capital Improvement Program is an example of where we want to be investing in our community.”

The members went on to review the Durham, NH survey with Ms. Vann noting “I found the matrixes to be really valuable.” Ms. Chollet reiterated her desire for “multiple shades of gray” in the responses with Ms. Vann reiterating the importance of adding “the money question” (the support of spending public money for improvements). She concluded by noting “I feel the Durham survey is the best for us, for what we want to get out of this”

The members went on to discuss the number and development of questions for each topic. They also discussed the actual design of the survey and different ways to make it a self-return mailer piece. The members agreed essay or open-ended

questions provide a little more in-depth results on how people are feeling “and you get great quotes out of them” said Mr. Throop.

Ms. Chollet noted the Board of Selectman’s efforts to communicate and said “we need to ask the communication question, but I don’t know what that would look like because we are not sure how to ask it.” Mr. Throop noted that the timing of the Forum in relation to Town Meeting and “some contentious zoning items on the ballot” may have contributed to the perceptions about communication being a problem area. He noted complaints were received that the zoning public process moved to quickly with insufficient notice provided to those effected by proposed changes. He concluded “but there is *always* a way to improve communications, always.” Ms. Vann noted in her experience as a news reporter there is often a sense that “we don’t like what you are doing therefore you must not have told us about it” adding “anything radically different or changed begets the claim that they did not know anything about it.” Ms. Chollet interjected “yes, so we validate it and ask how to improve.” Ms. Vann replied “I agree, there is always a way to improve.”

Ms. Cadorette asked “is the survey in a format that really validates the information we got?” Ms. Vann replied “I do think these match up from the forum” adding “and remember, everyone at the forum is going to get a survey as well.”

The members briefly discussed the survey design from a demographics point of view. Mr. Throop pointed out “by knowing the demographic data you are able to analyze the data from different perspectives.” Chair Cote agreed noting “it tells us who is voting for what and with many things, but especially transportation, we are going find young and old voting for it.”

The members also briefly discussed seasonal or second home owners in town. Mr. Throop noted the number was surprising low, “about 50” he said. The members went on to reiterate the importance of bike paths, sidewalks and broadband (especially the expectations and desires by businesses and retailers when thinking about economic vitality). They also briefly re-discussed transportation, parking, preservation and protection of the access and use of natural resources and promoting a balanced growth to the look and feel of the town. The members also discussed maker spaces, what to do to support new business and attract young people to town. One member mentioned having a person dedicated to this effort with another noting the town’s past relationship with Jack Dugan of Monadnock Economic Development Corporation.

The members went on to discuss the fact that big business was not coming to town. “It would be unreasonable to give that a piece of the real estate of the survey” said Ms. Chollet. Ms. Vann agreed adding “and manufacturing is gone” adding “we

have to be careful not to think we could get a UPS Distribution Center in town, it is not feasible.” Ms. Vann went on to say “I think it is better growing what we have and retain our own idiosyncrasies.” Ms. Cadorette replied “I respectfully disagree.” She then briefly noted the growing green businesses with Mr. Throop adding “we do need to strengthen the niche for small businesses to come here.” He noted the quality of life and the natural and cultural resources of the town as well as the maker space at the Guernsey Building, the plans for shared rental opportunities at the Brookstone Building and the Guernsey Building, and the potential for a media center that could be used as a telecommunications conference facility and for business meetings “among other things.”

Ms. Cadorette interjected “online college classes” adding “and offer a place for people who work out of their homes an opportunity to have a small office outside of their home.” Referring to medical records and MRIs and CAT scans to be read “receipt and delivery of this data as well.” Ms. Cadorette noted a trend of not-for-profit corporations that care about the community and service are being able to function as nonprofits without *being* non-profits. Ms. Chollet interjected “we have to realize businesses will come and go, we have to be really careful not to get into a funk when we see a business go. We have to simply look forward to who is coming in, we are not a failure, we are not a terrible town.”

Mr. Ward touched briefly on the look and feel of the town and its historic resources drawing people into town. “It is almost like we have taken it for granted” he said with Mr. Throop adding “yes, it was a huge part of the 2003 Vison Chapter.” “It is so important” replied Mr. Ward.

Ms. Van interjected “the buried wires in the downtown makes a huge difference” with Ms. Cadorette noting the brick buildings. Ms. Vann added “the uniformity and setbacks, the streetscape itself.” Ms. Chollet noted “I love driving down Union Street, all the houses are so different.”

Mr. Ward noted his dismay with a development going through the process of site plan approval and the “29 snout houses” it would produce. When asked what a *snout house* was Mr. Ward explained it was a residential structure where the garage jets out past the front door.” “It is a term of art” said Ms. Vann adding “and that is another thing, maybe we need to ask about design standards on this survey.”

Mr. Kelly noted “maker spaces and business collaborations are my favorites” adding his concern over the highest rated things like improve means and access to transportation “had no mention of feasibility or cost to the town.” Ms. Vann suggested creating matrix on how important things were to the townspeople that incorporated the question of whether or not they were willing to spend public

money to pay for them. Chair Cote mentioned user fees and the potential for funding improvements with that money.

Ms. Cadorette noted the aging population and the obvious lack of 55+ housing communities and the amenities they provide. Ms. Vann interjected “oh, as a planner I think there is another way to skin that cat.” With reference to the location of the meeting (third floor Kitchen meeting room) Ms. Cadorette also noted handicapped accessibility was lacking. “If we had a member in a wheelchair they would not have been able to be here tonight” she said.

Mr. Zeller noted he thought much of what the group was talking about was in the Durham, N.H. Master Plan Survey. He went on to offer a question revolving around eight of Peterborough’s attributes. These included *its small New England character, vibrant downtown, sense of community, traditional historic architectural character, outdoor recreation activities, local employment opportunities, pedestrian and cyclist friendliness and affordable and attractive housing opportunities*. He offered five answers (very important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, not at all important and no opinion).

He also offered the survey taker name the three top attributes that makes them want to live in Peterborough, what they feel needs the most improvement and the town’s biggest challenge for the future.

Ms. Vann again reiterated the need to “ask the money question” when the survey taker supports improvements. Ms. Cadorette noted the questions could be prefaced with some sort of a general statement asking “are you willing to use tax money for improvements to.....”

Ms. Chollet agreed adding “it makes people stop and think when it involves their pocketbook.”

When asked for her input Chair Cote replied she felt almost all of her concerns had been addressed by other members. “The one thing I would like to add is the mention of the protection of the local water resources” she said.

In closing Ms. Cadorette noted Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, a theory in psychology of human motivation.

Mr. Throop told the Committee he would take the input from today and work on a draft using the Durham, NH model that he would then distribute it via email. The members agreed the next meeting would be their regularly scheduled meeting on August 13, 2014 at 5:45 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant