

Minutes
Master Plan Working Group
8/16/17

Attending: Mary Anne Antonellis, Michele Cunningham, Allen Hanson, Jeff Lacy, Tim Logan, Meryl Mandell – Chair, Mike Vinskey

Approved 8/3/17 Minutes with edits. Michele will send to Susie to post.

Meryl, Mike, Jeff, and Tim shared documents with the group prior to meeting via e-mail with recommendations for MPWG moving forward. There is an additional statement from Joe Markarian, see below. All are attached here.

Michele shared that she had nothing to add to the documents provided via e-mail by the group which contained many different and interesting ideas. While she disagreed with some statements she did not feel the need to share that at this time, but would as we get into discussion.

Mary Anne shared that she disagrees with the statement in the Community Vision Report on p. 3 in the second paragraph that says, “Largely due to the population leveling off, the Town’s services and facilities have experienced stagnant demand while local taxation has increased.” She believes there are a lot of indications that there is increased demand including a desire for a new library, the fund raising going on and other data that support the idea that demand is not at all stagnant.

Allen is very much in support of the “low hanging fruit idea” and that we should spend time focusing on that tonight.

Tim asked Jeff about the accuracy of Paragraph 4 in his (Tim’s) recommendation document. Jeff agreed with his statement. See documents attached here.

Meryl stated our goal for the meeting to create a roadmap for going forward.

Ideas discussed included –

Common denominators i.e. financial issues – Town has already started on Financial goals.

Joe Markarian (See attached statement) is presently working with several members of Town Boards on long term revenue and expenditure projections as part of the Community Compact Project. We are wondering about this group that is gathering and includes one member of Finance Committee, Building Committee, Capital Planning with a goal of creating documents that reflect existing policies.

Some thought it most useful for us to begin by determining the town’s financial constraints.

Discussed projections and if they are valuable or not and how far ahead is feasible. The fiscal sustainability ideas MPWG is talking about are much broader brush than what this group that is working with Joe are looking at.

Idea of having existing committees take this on rather than a new group and being careful about committees and forming new ones. Many of the same people are already on committees and some are feeling taxed by that and we hesitate to request more from them.

Possibly have a conversation about this and the issues raised here with that group rather than us saying what we think they should do.

We should stick with the topics we would like to see considered by the appropriate committees – i.e. Grants.

What parts can we agree on?

This is the issue – these are the questions – these are the committees that are addressing them and how and then recommend to Select Board.

Fiscal stuff ended up in the Vision – but we cannot do in a vacuum since it becomes a more interesting project when you weave in the vision and try to figure out where we can go with it. Would like to see the issues dovetailed.

There is long term planning with Finance Committee and Capital Planning – not necessarily visible all the time – you have to look into the budget carefully to see that.

We do not have a 5-year forecast from Capital Planning although the Select Board requested that a number of times.

A lot of the things already exist – the right hand does not necessarily know what the left hand is doing. Projections have been done – health care – you do the best you can and projections are not reliable. We have a limitation on growth – lot sizes – building cap has expired but can be reinstated if desired – we did a space survey in town in terms of maintenance – community preservation committee – there appears to be a communication issue. A proliferation of committees does not solve the problem.

We need a new model for communication among the groups. Idea of assigning committees to complete a specific a short-term assignment and work with all the town boards to get the job done.

Community Preservation is already looking into senior housing – it is not the decision of this committee to decide if we are going to build a new library or any other building.

Idea proposed for a Lot O32 task force. We may be able to get all four things from the vision accomplished on Lot O32. (See Jeff's attached document.)

Start with solar project on Lot O32 – as a revenue generating project, keeping in mind the possibilities for what else might go there. (See Tim's attached document)

The other possible committee is the “low hanging fruit” committee to creatively brainstorm options that can bring quick rewards with low investment in time and resources. i.e. civil discourse, grants (FRCOG).

After much discussion, the group decided on three topics to mine in the coming months which we will do in this order noting that finances may come up as we go as well, but are also in their own category.

- Lot O32 – possible topics – solar field, housing, community Building/Library walkways, CPC fund a study?
- “Low Hanging Fruit” – possible topics – grants, civil discourse, existing building use
- White Paper on Financial Sustainability – possible topics - \$25/1000tax levy ceiling, school issues, capital improvements

Some general ideas to be considered about the structure include:

- Definitions and Charge for the group/task force/committee
- Who should constitute membership
- Who might be invited to contribute relevant information to inform the group

Our desire is to go forward on something that we can all live with even if we are not in total agreement.

Next meeting Town Hall on September 6, 2017 at 7:30.

Topic: Lot O-32 - All please read Jeff and Tim's document again and come prepared to talk about it.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michele Cunningham