

MINUTES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE

August 16, 2017

7:00 p.m. Town Hall

Present: Timothy Thompson, Chair
Peter Curry
Elizabeth Goodspeed
Kevin Guimond
Penelope A. Jordan
Sara W. Lennon
Susana Measelle Hubbs
Harvey Rosenfeld
Victoria Volent

Also present: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner
Kelly Myers – Public Participation Survey consultant

Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order and asked for public comment.

There was no member of the public present, so Mr. Thompson closed the Public Comment period.

Approval of minutes of July 12, 2017

The minutes of July 12, 2017 meeting were approved without amendment 9-0.

Conversation with Town Manager Matthew Sturgis

Town Manager, Matthew Sturgis was welcomed by Timothy Thompson, Chair. Mr. Sturgis said that the update of a Comprehensive Plan should look into the future of a town, rather than be directed by current events. He said he is glad that Maureen O'Meara is involved in this process together with really good, motivated Committee and Town Council members. Mr. Sturgis is aware of all the challenges of getting input from town people, and observed that happy people are usually quiet. If anything negative happens, people are more willing to share their thoughts, and social media is one of their tools to do that. Ms. Lennon suggested that Matt take every opportunity to encourage people to get involved and let their voices heard. Ms. Lennon mentioned that she would like to see the Comprehensive Plan taking central spot on the town's website. Mr. Curry asked for an overview of revenue sources of the town, the credit ratings and forthcoming projections just to know the town's abilities. In his response, Mr. Sturgis said that the yearly audit is over; our financial situation is very strong. The main sources of town's income are the excise tax and building permit fees. Large projects, like the pool renovation and the transfer station's modernization are almost over; road construction on Hill Way started. There are no foreseeable changes in management positions. Mr. Sturgis is aware of how difficult it is to create a school budget when the State contribution is changes during the budget process. He

mentioned Fort Williams Park, as a success and a challenge too. As someone responded in a survey question: "Great place, don't screw up". Mr. Sturgis wished well for the hard work the Comprehensive Committee is doing.

Survey Review

The Committee started discussion on Draft #4 with Kelly Myers, RKM, public opinion survey consultant.

Ms. Jordan suggested changing wording on page 9, and suggested not to repeat "should" in every line. Discussion was about what word to use instead that would express the best what the committee means: enhance, promote, improve, support.... etc. Agreement was reached to use "should" only once and just list each item.

The committee discussed how to better phrase support for more commercial activities. Agreement was reached (7-2) to phrase the question as follows: "Do you want to consider creating new commercial zoning?"

Discussion was about changing the wording of the question Q60- "Do you think that the Town of Cape Elizabeth should use Fort Williams Park to generate funds for the Town?" Agreement was "utilize" rather than "use".

Ms. O'Meara suggested that placing a question on Fort Williams Park on Loomio may be a better forum. It was agreed.

Other minor changes were done and typos were corrected in the questionnaire's text: Q13, Q25, Q41 – add Community Services for seniors, Q44 – "affordable" to be replaced with "moderate income", Q56 – Instead of "improve", use "enhance", Q57 – Break the question into two: facilities and academic programs, Q58 – instead of "improve" use "promote".

Mr. Myers will make all the corrections on the questionnaire. He said that it became longer than it was expected. Final version of the questionnaire will be ready by Monday for final approval of Chair Tim Thompson. The survey is expected to be done some time after Labor Day. Motion was made and the committee agreed 9-0.

Mr. Myers admitted that his initial plan of how to deploy the survey most probably won't work in Cape Elizabeth because he thought that there are more people living in town. The different approach won't change his budget for conducting the survey, and said that it won't cost more; maybe it will be even less.

Discussion was held about the best approach and the statistical validity of the results. Mr. Myers proposed to send postcards to every household, so anyone can login and complete the survey. Logistics to spread the word and create a link on the town website will be coordinated with Ms. O'Meara. The committee questioned how to control the respondents will be Cape residents. Mr. Myers said he would use "billing address" to maximize respondents are residents. Phone numbers will serve as identification numbers to control for multiple responses from the same person. Ms. Volent is

concerned the survey results will no longer be random. Ms. O'Meara also noted this is a major budget line for the comprehensive plan budget because it was intended to be more statistically valid. Mr. Myers said he could correct for that by doing follow-up telephone surveys for underrepresented demographics.

Ms. Jordan had concerns about how people with disabilities might be able to participate in the survey. Not everyone is comfortable using the computer. She suggested having a question "Would you be more comfortable to be reached any other way? Mark here if you want to be called." Mr. Myers said he can accommodate that.

Committee members will get the link to the survey for testing. Agreement was reached that there will be no discussion about the test, and members will not discuss the test outside the committee meeting. Mr. Myers left the meeting.

Public Participation

In response to a public request, Loomio commenters will be asked to use their first and last name. Committee members discussed the report format for responses on the Loomio site. Judy Colby-George will provide a report. Members agreed to get a separate report on each question once it expired. It would be useful, if once the question expires, the possibility to comment wouldn't be available any longer. Committee members would like the report to capture key themes.

The committee discussed the meeting schedule, which needs to be changed to accommodate every member's availability. After extensive discussion, the committee agreed on the fourth Monday of the month. The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 25, 2017 at 7:00 pm, then October 23rd. Ms. O'Meara will distribute a new schedule for the next meeting.

The committee reviewed two mini-surveys to be conducted by in-house staff for New Homeowners and Condominium Residents. New homeowners who fill out the survey will participate in a drawing for a \$100 gift card to the Museum at Portland Head Light. Existing Cape condo owners will receive a survey. The committee's budget covers the cost. The committee approved the surveys.

One component of the public participation plan is for committee members to meet with community groups and give a short powerpoint presentation. Ms. O'Meara is developing a list of neighborhood associations and other groups to create a community group presentation list. She asked committee members to help with adding contact people for the groups on the list, then she can work on scheduling.

The committee mentioned that they would like to meet with department heads. The committee identified the following department heads to meet with: Public Works, Fire, Police, Code Enforcement, School Superintendent and Assessor. Committee members requested that some of the meetings be at department facilities.

Economy Chapter Review

Ms. O'Meara introduced the state comprehensive planning rule listing the information that should be covered in the economy chapter. She explained that the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance need to be compatible. Mr. Rosenfeld gave an example from the Town of Scarborough about court appeal when the comp plan and land use regulations are not compatible.

The Committee began review of the Economy chapter, most of which was drafted by Jessa Berna, GPCOG. Mr. Guimond questioned the number of businesses in Cape (300). Ms. O'Meara asked the Assessor to provide her with a report on personal property tax rolls, and there were 106. It was agreed people who run businesses from home may not pay personal property taxes.

Ms. Victoria Volent asked about the reason of significant changes in some areas and wondered what could be the Census' explanation.

The Committee discussed possible reasons why the job growth is the lowest in Cape Elizabeth and why the wages are lower here than elsewhere in the neighborhood communities. Other communities have larger, more robust business districts, which Cape residents don't want.

There was a discussion about disposable income and spending locations. Ms. Lennon asked if we should have a question about this, asking for opinions what we should do about it. Ms. O'Meara suggested having the data first, and discussing policy later.

Ms. Volent would like to know if the 21% of retail sales that comes from lodging includes short term rentals. Ms. O'Meara explained that she added the short rental information, so the lodging information probably does not include short term rentals.

The Committee discussed the Cape Elizabeth Population Density by Census Block 2010 map of Cape Elizabeth and tried to figure out if home businesses are included. Can we remove the map if we don't like it at the end? Ms. O'Meara will check this.

Ms. O'Meara suggested that the comp plan reference existing town reports, like the Town Center Plan. There will be no time to re-do the existing plan that was approved by the Town Council with goals. The focus of this committee is a broad spectrum review.

Ms. O'Meara will add a paragraph explaining what TIF means in the Town Center.

Neighborhood Business district – Ms. O'Meara will insert BA District maps.

The committee noted commercial activities in residential zoning districts, such as special events, home businesses, and day care. Fishing and Farming are featured in the Marine Resources and Agriculture Chapter, so the committee agreed not to duplicate that in the economy chapter.

The committee reviewed the Economy Chapter goals, which are similar to the last plan. Ms. O'Meara will add a paragraph summarizing the Short Term Rental regulations.

The committee discussed the pros and cons of contract zoning. Ms. O'Meara explained that it was considered and rejected by the town in 1997, but the town could look at it again if desired. Mr. Thompson suggested thinking about it until the next meeting and having a further discussion on it.

Mr. Thompson asked Committee members to send Agenda items to Maureen.

The Committee voted to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Aniko Varadi
Minutes Secretary