

TOWN OF CAPE ELIZABETH
MINUTES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

June 16, 2005

7:00 p.m. W. Jordan Conference Room

Members present: Barbara Schenkel, Chair	David Griffin
Jay Chatmas	Frank Strout
Skip Murray	Bob Dodd
Elaine Moloney	Julie Franklin
Anne Swift-Kayatta	Maryann Lynch
Marybeth Richardson	Julia Beckett

Also present was Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner.

Mrs. Schenkel asked for comments on the minutes. With one correction noted, she asked for a motion.

Mr. Griffin made a motion for approval of amended minutes.

Mrs. Kayatta seconded the motion. 11 in favor, 0 opposed. (Mrs. Lynch arrived later.)

Mrs. Schenkel asked the Committee if they were happy with the content of the minutes or would they like more or less information.

The Committee decided they liked the amount of detail provided in the prior minutes.

Mr. Griffin made a motion to keep the minutes in the current format.

Mrs. Swift-Kayatta seconded the motion. 11 in favor, 0 opposed.

Mrs. Schenkel asked the Committee how they would like to receive information from town staff.

It was discussed amongst Committee Members and Ms. O'Meara stated that she would email information when available, with the exception of the Chair (due to the inability to process large attachments), and the Committee would receive hard copies of all emailed information in packets that would be mailed the Friday prior to the meeting.

Mrs. Schenkel encouraged anyone who would like to have something added, or changed to the Agenda, to let her know.

Committee members were also reminded that email communications between members were subject to the Right-to-Know Law and should also be copied to the Town Planner.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

Mrs. Schenkel asked the Committee what their thoughts were concerning the Survey in respect to options and feedback received.

Mr. Griffin thought it important that they find out how the citizens feel about certain issues in Town.

Mr. Dodd is in favor protecting property. He would like survey questions to reflect where the Town should be in 5-10 yrs.

Mrs. Swift-Kayatta wants to get the breadth and diversity of thought and what the majority of people have for views. She is concerned with low response from the prior survey and wants to ensure they get a representative sample from the majority of the Town.

Mrs. Moloney stated that the prior survey was mostly about comprehensive land use and there was very little concerning schools. She would like to gain information from the survey to determine what the community's commitment is to the schools.

Mrs. Richardson stated her interest in the Town's natural resources. She would like to see more questions concerning that without making the survey too voluminous.

Mr. Strout stated the importance of how the survey was done. Scarborough's survey was mailed out and then followed up with phone calls by professionals. The survey ended up with a response rate of 30%.

Mr. Murray stated he would like to see more pointed and diversified questions on the survey. He has concerns of the small response from the prior survey and believes that a new survey should be done by professionals. He would like to see if the public is in favor of the Town doing more traffic studies to verify the need for traffic lights and if there is the desire for more soft businesses in the Town.

Mrs. Richardson wants to know how the citizens feel about the Town buying land to preserve.

Mrs. Schenkel since it appeared that all members were in agreement for the need of a survey, and should discuss the different opportunities that would yield the best results.

Mrs. Swift-Kayatta gave an overview of the contact Mrs. Lynch made with Maryellen Fitzgerald, Principal of Critical Insights. Mrs. Fitzgerald thought that doing a mail survey was less effective than doing nothing, as they are unreliable. She encouraged a professional phone survey and was willing to donate to the Town the analysis of any phone survey performed.

Ms. O'Meara stated that Mr. Becker, referred from Mr. Griffin, echoed the same ideas as Mrs. Fitzgerald in hiring professionals to do a phone survey and was willing to donate his time as well.

The Committee discussed different ideas concerning focus groups, public forums, and having the survey available to everyone in Town.

Ms. O'Meara reported for Mrs. Lynch that if the Committee determines that a survey is crucial, and it is essential that it be accurate, and that there is an opportunity request special funds from the Town Council.

The group discussed the importance of having the survey available to all citizens of the Town.

Ms. O'Meara stated that it would be prudent to set aside time at the next meeting, invite the professionals to come and speak, and then the Committee would be able to make a more educated decision concerning spending funds to get valid data.

The Committee discussed the importance of the way the questions are formatted, the validity of the questions posed and that the questions were not leading.

Ms. O'Meara confirmed that she would call Market Decisions, and Critical Insights, and Mr. Becker for a proposal and costs for the survey. She had asked Department Heads in the Town to refer any questions they would like to see in the survey.

The Committee discussed what they liked and disliked about the sample surveys that they received in their packets.

There was discussion about having a presurvey in the Courier to find out what the community would like to see for questions posed in the survey.

Mrs. Schenkel asked that they do a roundtable to get ideas from the Committee concerning the survey.

Mr. Chatmas asked about services regarding commercial and retail development. He wanted to know if less than 1% of the land area of the town is the appropriate number for retail, restaurants or other commercial development and what type of growth, if any, the community would like to see.

Mr. Griffin wanted to know how many people see the importance of the Town Center. He stated that there has been a change in demographics; a person used to move in with kids for the schools, and now it is becoming a more aged community.

Mr. Murray would like to see what type of business the community would like to see in the Town Center. He supports questions on the traffic lights proposed at the High School and the intersection of Rt. 77/ Shore Rd/Scott Dyer Rd. He would also would like to know the public's opinion on privatizing the transfer station to save on taxes.

Mr. Strout is interested in questions concerning open space, and he thinks that farmland should be looked at as commercial enterprise. He would like to see some good questions concerning education as he sees a real need for increased funding for programs for the kids.

Mrs. Moloney stated she is interested in how much the commitment there is from the community to the schools. With the changes in technology there is a definite need for dedicated funds for the schools to move forward. She would like to see a separate category in the survey for school questions. There should also be questions about regionalization.

Mr. Dodd thought that the list of 12 areas that Scarborough used may be beneficial for the Committee to look at using. He would like to see more hiking and biking trails, and to make the Town more non-car friendly. He stated he would like to see creating a larger business zone for more ma & pa type stores. He would also like to see monies spent on maintaining structures and roads in town.

Mrs. Swift-Kayatta echoed Mrs. Moloney on looking at regionalization cooperation and the possibility of breaking it up into categories. She liked the Pike County survey as it gave explicit options towards what the Towns resources would be spent on. People would be able to determine issues are most important to them.

Mrs. Lynch echoed what Mrs. Swift-Kayatta said. She thinks that it is important to have the survey read are you willing to pay more taxes for "X" items. She liked the question from the Naples survey on restricting certain types of businesses. She thought it would be important to pose the question on historic preservation as well as questioning if there is a need for public transportation. Regionalization cooperation should also be placed on this survey.

Mrs. Beckett would like to see questions on Open Space. She would like to see if there are specific areas in the town that people would like to see preservation and used Oakhurst Road as an example. She would also want to see what types of development are desired and where located.

Mrs. Franklin did not like the ranking questions as it seemed long. She would like to see opinions of the services. Questions should be specific and not leading. She would like to see information that would be comparing this Town with South Portland, Cumberland, Falmouth, and Yarmouth. The data gathered may sway people's opinions after seeing comparisons.

Mrs. Schenkel stated that her items were like many others already covered. She would like to see citizen's opinions on affordable housing, housing on small lots. She would like questions concerning the Greenbelt and asking private property owners for easement connections. She is interested in the community's vision for the Town in the next 10 years. There should be a distinction for primary vs. summer residents and maybe income levels. She would like to see questions concerning extending the sewer line and if citizens plan to stay in this Town once their children have graduated from school.

Mrs. Lynch thought it prudent to ask why people moved here, why do they stay here.

Mr. Chatmas stated that he thought asking about architectural design could be a potentially explosive issue, as the Zoning Ordinance does not address design standards. The school's facilities are not on the same level as some of the surrounding communities, and those costs should be looked at. He believes the questions asked in the survey should also state if it's at a tax savings or increase to the individual.

Mrs. Schenkel stated that a lot was accomplished, and that the timeline for the Comprehensive Plan will be changed a little.

The next meeting is August 18th, with the presentations from three professionals for survey determination. Michael McGovern, Town Manager, will also be making a presentation at that meeting.

The February meeting will be changed to February 16th, due to school vacation.

Meeting adjourned at 08:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Palanza

