

TOWN OF CAPE ELIZABETH
MINUTES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

August 18, 2005

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

Members present: Jay Chatmas
David Griffin
Mary Ann Lynch
Skip Murray
Barbara Schenkel
Anne Swift-Kayatta

Robert Dodd
John Herrick
Elaine Moloney
Marybeth Richardson
Frank Strout

Absent: Julia Beckett

Also present was Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner.

Ms. Schenkel called the meeting to order and asked for comments on the minutes. With one correction noted, she asked for a motion.

Mr. Griffin made a motion to accept the amended minutes. Ms. Swift-Kayatta seconded motion. 11 in favor, 0 opposed.

Presentation by Town Manager Michael McGovern

Mr. McGovern stated that in 1972, it was projected that the population in 2000 would be 15,000, when in actuality, it is only 9,000. This is partly due to the fact that there are fewer people per household now. He described changes that have occurred including, the recycling center, changes in the school, open space, transfer station, police station, fire station, and the community center.

Mr. McGovern gave an overview of Town demographics and home construction rates, the greatest amount occurring in the late 60's and during the early 80's. He stated there was access to a website called neighborhood profiles on the Town website with this information.

Mr. McGovern discussed the property tax increases over the years. He also discussed the mil rate, and why it is lowered after a revaluation of the properties in town. He stated that Cape Elizabeth has low tax spending per capita.

Mr. McGovern asked the Board to consider Open Space; should the Town continue to obtain Open Space and for what purpose. He asked if the Greenbelt trail should stay a priority as it is near completion but needs to have continued maintenance. He asked the members to think about regionalism and what needs could be met locally versus what should be handled regionally. He asked that the Committee look at issues such as the land next to the Inn by the Sea and should it continue to be zoned as business, and how should government services be financed, like impact fees or taxes. He asked the Committee to

think about the Cape Elizabeth to be known for, whether it be schools, trails, open space, etc.

There was discussion concerning the migration of families moving in later in life and skewing the numbers for school enrollment.

Mrs. Schenkel thanked Mr. McGovern for his presentation.

SURVEY PROPOSALS

Curt Milder, Market Decisions, has been with the company since 1977 and gave a list of communities in which they have performed surveys for. He gave an overview of the variety of options that included: random telephone, mail survey to all residents, random mail survey. He stated that telephone surveys are fairly accurate for the overall opinion of the public. He discussed mail surveys, which typically have a response of 40%. Marketing Decisions would send out a large white business reply envelope with a letter that describes why the survey is important. It is well laid out and easy to fill out. A computer would scan the survey and handwritten responses are typed in manually. He stated that the advantages of a mail survey are that all citizens may participate and it allows more questions than on a phone survey. The disadvantages of a mail survey are the responses may be biased and research experts may be skeptical about the results. He appreciates the fact the mail survey allows people to participate and creates an awareness and opportunity to those it will affect. Random telephone surveys provide statistically valid results, however, the answers to questions are less thoughtful. There are people that don't believe in the science of a random survey because they might not know anyone that responded. Scarborough had a mailed survey to all residents; followed up with a random survey of non-respondents. Brunswick did a random survey of 1500 people and they used the survey not too make decisions, but as a guide for ideas.

Ms. Swift-Kayatta asked if they were to do the telephone survey, would that be contracted out.

Mr. Milder stated no, it would be done by Market decisions.

Ms. Schenkel asked what he would recommend for a survey.

Mr. Milder stated a mail survey would identify what issues that have overwhelming support. It will also show demographics and the difference in how people think who have been here 20 years or 5 years. He stated there would be a greater response in this community because of the well-educated people who live here and care about the community.

Mr. Herrick asked if there were an optimum number of questions that would give the best response.

Mr. Milder stated he believed the phone survey should be 15-18 minutes at the longest, which could be approximately 80 questions.

There was discussion concerning other Towns and the surveys they provided to community and their validity.

Mrs. Schenkel thanked Mr. Milder for his presentation.

Mrs. Schenkel introduced MaryEllen Fitzgerald from Critical Insights.

Mrs. Fitzgerald gave an overview of the company's history and the different surveys it had provided for clients. She stated there were 10 full time employees, 48 part time employees and that the staff had a lengthy tenure. She stated that all information would be gathered in-house and would have stringent quality control.

Mrs. Fitzgerald gave an overview of the telephone survey and thought this would be best suited for the Town. The surveyors have a rigorous call back schedule if people are not at home to make sure they get results from all aspects of the community.

Mrs. Fitzgerald stated that with mail surveys people tend to have a "couched" perspective whereas a phone survey has unaided responses and are able to get a person's true perspective. The objectives through this phone survey should be to get overall attitudes, community values and mindset of the respondents. It is also important to see where people will make allocations for resources or make trade offs in light of cost considerations. She gave an overview of the survey process, which would include collecting data, randomly selecting adults over the age of 25, report findings, and develop recommendations. She is recommending 400 completed phone interviews with a margin of error at 5%, and will include a detailed subgroup analysis.

Mrs. Lynch asked if town and school employees would be excluded.

Mrs. Fitzgerald stated no.

There was discussion amongst the Committee about making sure all members of the community are able to participate.

Mrs. Fitzgerald stated that there were always those that would not participate even with every opportunity. She said it was also important that people are encouraged to write letters or have a web address that they may respond to.

Mrs. Schenkel thinks it is very important to have the biggest article possible in the Cape Courier to let citizens know that there will be a phone survey and not everyone will be participating in it.

Mrs. Fitzgerald stated that they do a pilot test with the phone survey as well. After the first 15% of phone calls, they will analyze the results of what people answered. This will verify

that people felt comfortable with the questions asked, that there are not a lot of terminates, and that the survey itself will be reliable and is measuring what it is intended to measure.

Mrs. Schenkel thanked Mrs. Fitzgerald for her application.

Mrs. Lynch made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss hiring personnel for the survey at 9:07 p.m.

Ms. Swift-Kayatta seconded the motion.

The Committee exited out of executive session at 9:50 p.m. There was a unanimous vote for a mail survey to be conducted by Critical Insights.

The Committee also decided to ask the Planning Board for extra funds to help with survey costs.

Mrs. Schenkel asked if anyone had any other topics.

Ms. O'Meara stated she would be distributing a new schedule to the Committee.

Mrs. Schenkel thanked the Committee and stated that the next meeting would be September 22, 2005.

Mr. Griffin made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Murray seconded the motion and was unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Palanza

