

**FOSP Survey Subcommittee
February 3, 2012
Meeting Minutes
ACP Conference Room, Town Hall**

Attending: Jessica Sullivan, Chair, Chris Franklin, Frank Governali, John Greene, Mary Ellen FitzGerald, Critical Insights

Staff: Maureen O'Meara, Town Planner

The meeting began at 8:10 a.m. No members of the public attended and no public comment was received.

Mr. Governali made a motion to accept the January 30, 2012 subcommittee minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Franklin. The minutes were approved.

Ms. Sullivan began by reviewing the FOSP Committee charge from the Town Council that directs a telephone survey to be conducted that includes questions about key parcels and funding.

General discussion concluded that the FOSP committee will be recommending to the Town Council that the charge be amended to delete a requirement for an actual list of key parcels in favor of priority parcel criteria. The subcommittee agreed to proceed with the survey on the assumption that FOSP would decide at the February 29th meeting to make this request of the Town Council and that Town Council will consider the request at the March meeting. If the charge is not amended, the subcommittee will need to revise the survey.

Ms. Sullivan then reiterated the three bullets identified by Mr. Governali from the last meeting for the survey:

- Re-establish open space as a priority;
- test the open space priority criteria;
- measure the strength of support for open space funding.

Ms. FitzGerald explained that she had reviewed the comp plan survey she performed in 2005 and noted that a survey is an excellent tool for reviewing trends. In the comp plan survey, rural character is highly rated, but rural character is not the same for everybody. The benefit of the proposed survey is testing values, not parsing out rural character. She would hope this survey

would be less than 18 minutes long, as was the last survey, although there was very good participation last time.

Mr. Governali said we will use one of the same questions asked last time and then add questions that get at the cost element. He noted the spreadsheet developed that generated the cost to the median value house for a 5 million dollar land bond.

Ms. FitzGerald said that testing willingness to support can be tricky. Respondents will vary in their support for a range of funding mechanisms, for example funding from local, state or federal government, even though all of that funding is coming from them as taxpayers. People also detach between private payment and public funding.

Mr. Franklin suggested that surveys conducted by the Trust for Public Land (TPL) include model language to test tolerance for land bonds. Generally, once the average annual cost exceeds \$40, you lose support. The spreadsheet indicates that a 5 million dollar bond exceeds \$40, so maybe we should test support for a 2 million dollar bond, or some other amount.

Ms. FitzGerald noted that TPL is a client and part of her work will be a literature search. She will research how to get at your ideas with survey questions, then prepare a draft survey and bring that to you for review.

Mr. Governali said he wants to use the survey as a policy tool and a land bond is the most actionable tool.

Mr. Franklin asked if we will include in the survey questions about proactive land use strategies. Should we try some new proposals? If there is no appetite, then we do not need to pursue those strategies.

Ms. Sullivan noted that the subcommittee had agreed to keep this survey straight-forward. Land use strategies is not one of the bullets and will be hard to capture in questions.

There was agreement to keep the survey focused on the 3 bullets.

Ms. FitzGerald said we can prepare the survey to identify the high and low points of support and what the tolerance point is. There are also other prevailing sentiments. Demographically, we usually see a divide between households with and without kids. There are different attitudes with families and their attitudes to future planning and investment are different. Then, there are also breaks by income. We can also test utilization of the land by asking how much you enjoy it.

That is complicated by the different ways people enjoy it, such as using it or by just seeing it as they drive by.

Mr. Franklin would like to test that our focal point is agricultural lands now. This is beyond the traditional concept of open space.

Mr. Governali concurred that how much you use it can be tricky. You may appreciate its existence, but not use it.

Ms. FitzGerald noted that support for open space may also be related to its enhancement of property values, like support for schools. What point of interface with open space gives you what level of satisfaction?

Ms. Sullivan would like to test not just bonding, but partnering with a private entity. She does not want to specifically reference CELT, but query how important it is to respondents to have private funds for open space.

Ms. FitzGerald said she would do a literature search and look at comparable efforts in other towns.

Mr. Franklin said we want to test our open space priority criteria.

Ms. FitzGerald summarized that we will test with an open-ended question, then gauge your criteria, and also work on funding support.

Mr. Greene, Chair of the FOSP Committee and attending as an interested member, asked how the current economy comes into play?

Ms. FitzGerald said we will get a sense of how people feel about the economy and that will play out in the initial priorities question.

Mr. Franklin said the challenge is that the survey establishes criteria for open space, and then also asks them to fund the open space. Respondents need to understand that funding will be spent on priorities.

Ms. FitzGerald agreed that it is tricky. Some of the answers will be straightforward from the question responses, and some will be derived.

Mr. Governali asked how you prepare people to address the questions and inform folks?

Ms. FitzGerald said that you don't want to prepare respondents. You want to learn their level of awareness. We don't want to do a lot of preparation because

we want them to represent voters. The questions will be structured and in an order from general to winnowing down. If you front-load a question, it is propaganda, not a survey.

Mr. Governali asked if you can ask if they are familiar with the town and private open space preservation efforts? Ms. FitzGerald said yes.

Mr. Franklin said other surveys have asked about partnering with others, but the opportunity to partner with the state and federal level for funding is very limited.

Ms. FitzGerald reviewed some of the mechanics of a telephone survey. The sample size for the comp plan survey was 300 and she would recommend 400, to enhance precision. Probability sampling is more challenging with cell phones, so she would recommend including a cell phone only cohort. Now that folks have "cut the cord," she can obtain list of cell phone numbers and recommend that 10%-12% of respondents be cell phone only.

Mr. Governali asked if the cell phone only list is truly random or excludes cell phone users who have opted out of surveys. Ms. FitzGerald said it is truly random.

Ms. FitzGerald said that with a 300 sample, the answers have a range of $\pm 5.7\%$ and with a 400 sample, a range of $\pm 4.9\%$. The range can be an issue on close questions. She would recommend a survey length of less than 15 minutes. Tolerance for surveys is less than it used to be. With cell phones, you also have to ask if they can talk, if they are driving, and if so, you need to call them back later. She also described how cell phone only users are demographically different and, in larger cities, tend to be more heavily weighted to the lower income range and people of color. In some places, 1/3rd of the population is cell phone only. In Maine, there is no good information of the degree of cell phone only and the PUC data is 2 years old. In her company, they have collected data and estimate 10%-13% cell phone only in Maine. This is influenced by the lack of cell towers in the state, contributing to poor cell phone service. We would use 10%-12% in Cape Elizabeth.

Mr. Governali said they he would expect the percentage of use to be on the lower end of the range due to the poor cell phone coverage in town and demographics.

Ms. FitzGerald said she expects Cape would have a lot of residents still retaining their land line. Her company does interviews for other states and would be aware that the interviewers sound like people from Maine.

Mr. Governali asked how you promote randomness.

Ms. FitzGerald said they would generate lists by birthdate and weight by population. Typically women answer the phone, so we also have to consider that.

Mr. Greene noted the desire to not specifically state CELT, but using “private partnership” may be too vague. Would it be possible to say “like a land trust” in Cape?

Ms. FitzGerald said we can look at terminology literacy levels. She also asked about the timeline.

Ms. Sullivan said we need to take back the final survey draft to the full committee for approval. Time was also factored in for the Town Council to consider a revision to the charge.

Mr. Franklin also mentioned the scheduled public forum. We should look for crossovers. We should be consistent in how we frame questions and reinforce each other. Mr. Franklin said the term “open space” is not used as much by conservation organizations, in part because it is perceived as no value, a vacant thing. For our purposes, using our criteria may be better.

Ms. FitzGerald said we will define open space.

Mr. Greene said we should use our criteria to define it.

The subcommittee discussed next steps and timeline.

Ms. FitzGerald said she would send Maureen a proposal next week. Once that is acceptable, she will do a literature search and suggest a timeline.

Mr. Franklin asked how are we incorporating the range of tools into the survey.

The subcommittee concluded that we are not using the range of tools.

Ms. Sullivan said she does not want to make the survey complicated and posing questions about clustering, etc will be too hard on respondents. Mr. Governali, Mr. Greene and Ms. FitzGerald agreed. Mr. Franklin concurred that this is the right approach.

Mr. Governali asked how many calls you would need to make to get 400 respondents?

Ms. FitzGerald said they will do analysis on this to maintain randomness. If you get an answering machine, you need to call back 5-7 times before you can move to someone else. The response varies by topic and this topic could be considered interesting.

Mr. Governali said that if the survey includes an introduction that says it is on behalf of the Town, it may generate a higher response rate. Ms. FitzGerald said they can include an introduction.

The subcommittee agreed to meet next on **March 5, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.** The draft will be provided to the subcommittee to review 4-5 days before the meeting.