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MINUTES
OF THE
LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
July 28, 2021

This meeting was held remotely via Zoom Video Conferencing.

Present: Jonathan Finn (Chair), Jonathan Fitch, Jeffrey Picard, Roy Anderson, Nanette Perkins; Lisa Hassler

Staff: Ralph Vitacco, Director of Planning and Development; Alexis Sangeleer; Planning Intern

Meeting called to order at 5 p.m. by Jonathan Finn.

Review of Categories

Mr. Vitacco recaps what the committee had asked staff to do at the last meeting. He explains that it was not the easiest task to do, a lot of the categories were interchangeable. He asks the committee to look at the intent of this exercise and how we can use this for the future. He also explains that none of these issues, opinion or action items taken from the survey are weighted. When Roy went through the process he attached weights to them. Mr. Finn explains that he emailed Ralph earlier explaining that this was a tricky task. At the end of the day everything we got in the visioning survey is an opinion. I think we have to put our own wording around the issues, with actions based upon those issues that are derived from the opinions set forth in the visioning survey. Mr. Finn calls upon committee members for their input. Ms. Hassler initially thought that historic preservation of the town is a difficult one to categorize. She agrees with Jonathan regarding the opinions; all those are opinions. Mr. Anderson likes the idea of having issues and options but looking through it there doesn't seem to be much in here regarding conservation lands and the growth of conservation lands. For example, we are currently working on a conservation plan that would need to be incorporated into this more effectively. Mr. Anderson details some of what will be in the plan. The concept of what we have done is good; it gets you done to the actionable things. Mr. Picard states that he reviewed the document and overall he like the format. It's a good starting point, I think as Roy said we need to be careful. There is more information that needs to be collected. What is most important is that a topic is captured. It's a great working/starting document. Mr. Fitch states that he was pleased to see the format and the layout. He supports everybody else. It is a great launch pad to start adding to each of the headings.

Nanette Perkins joins the meeting at 5:12pm.

Mr. Vitacco asks if the committee would like staff to go through it again, weed out duplication and add in the weighting system. We have a more granular survey that we can review next time. We need to look at how we are going to approach this with public outreach. Mr. Vitacco voices concerns regarding the rise in Covid cases and how it may affect our efforts moving forward. A lot of the ground work is done for a follow up survey. Mr. Anderson states that the work we have here is a nice format but it's not even a third of the data we need to collect. I don't want to boil all this down to a near finished document and then have to go back and collect the next two-thirds of data. Let's go figure out who else we need to talk to. Mr. Picard agrees. He shares the concerns with Covid, we need to move quickly here for September





October maybe in case we can't meet in person again. Ms. Perkins asks if we will be breaking down the focus groups by category. The committee is in agreement. Mr. Finn states that if you look at the 5 categories and we identify who are experts and stakeholders we can ask for input and do a focus group on these 5 areas alone. Should we go ahead and schedule these in hope they would be live but if not we can try to adapt it to a zoom format. Mr. Vitacco asks if the group would look at each category and come up with a list of invitees while of course keeping it open to the public. Ms. Perkins explains that we need to be careful not to skew it. We need to format it properly. Mr. Finn states that he thinks everything is input that can be discussed in the focus group. The committee discusses experts and what that means. Mr. Picard explains that it's important that we also start getting actionable information. Mr. Anderson states that he wants as many people as possible to have their input. He would also supports getting experts in but only in synergy with getting everyone's input. Mr. Vitacco asks for clarification on next steps. Ms. Perkins suggests taking one category at a time and start brainstorming experts to reach out to. Mr. Vitacco states that the committee should spend the next two weeks focusing on who might be fit into these categories and then using the focus group we sharpen the categories and test the ideas at larger public forums. When we come together again we should be able to start creating a list of people. Mr. Fitch would like to take the first category, take a look at the old Comprehensive Plan and see what issues are still relevant and lingering. Ralph could contact the Commission also and see if there are materials on our topics or categories. Mr. Finn thinks that would be great, but we should be careful not to base the new document off of the old document. Mr. Finn asks Ralph to ask Martha to come to our next meeting. Mr. Vitacco states that we will bring her in when we are focused. Mr. Finn states that the one thing in this document that still bothers me is that the issues aren't really issues. We can take these opinions and put words around them so it's easier. Mr. Vitacco states that they will change those.

Timeline

Mr. Vitacco details the timeline. We are ahead of schedule for August. The boiler plate stuff we have complied. Next 30-days we should finalize categories and subsets. 60-days out plan for future survey and input. 6 Months begin to have our public hearings and start looking for a consultant. Ms. Hassler asks if Ralph if he needs any help with the write up of the history of the town. Mr. Vitacco states that we will present this to the committee once we have it completed. The committee is ok with Ralph's proposed timeline.

Ms. Hassler motions to adjourn, Ms. Perkins seconds; all approve 6-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5.50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leanne Drake, Town Planner and Special Projects Administrator