

August 6, 2013

7:30, Upper Level Mtg Room

Members Present: Ms. Roberts, Mr. Rimsky, Mr. Frank

Members Absent: Ms. Gager, Ms. Jahnke

Alternates Present: Mr. Carey, Ms. Bishop-Wrabel

Alternates Absent:

Staff Present: Ms. Hill, Ms. White

Also Present: Mr. Bedini

Ms. Roberts, Chair called the Meeting to order at 7:32 pm.

Seated: Ms. Roberts, Mr. Rimsky, Mr. Frank, Mr. Carey, Alt.

Consideration of the Minutes:

The commissioners considered the minutes from the regularly scheduled July 2, Planning Commission Meeting.

Motion:

to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of July 2, 2013 as submitted, by Mr. Frank, seconded by Mr. Carey, passed by 4-0 vote.

The commissioner deferred the consideration of the minutes from the Special Meeting of the Planning Commission on July 24, 2013 until the September 3, 2013 regularly scheduled meeting.

New Applications:

There were no new applications to discuss.

Other Business:

Plan of Conservation and Development

The commissioners scheduled a special meeting for the Planning Commission on August 21, 2013 at 7:30 pm in the Upper Level Meeting Room at Bryan Memorial Town Hall to meet with the Mr. Looney from Milone & MacBroom for further discussion of the draft of the updated POCD.

Ms. Hill stated that she would mail Mr. Looney the commissioners' comments on the most recent draft and he will incorporate them into an updated draft that would be ready for the special meeting on August 21.

Mr. Frank feels that there has to be a statement of the Planning Commission's current guiding principles as well as the guiding principles in the 2003 POCD and whether the specific recommendations in the earlier document were followed or not.

Ms. Roberts stated that she and Ms. Hill would write an introduction and request feedback from the members of the Planning Commission before they submit it to the consultants to incorporate into the updated plan.

Mr. Carey recommended that the draft be submitted to chairman of each municipal agency and that they be requested to read the draft and submit comments to the Planning Commission.

Ms. Bishop-Wrabel agrees with Mr. Carey. She feels that the input from the chairs would be valuable feedback

The commission discussed decreasing the length of the updated POCD by transferring text to the appendices as appropriate or eliminating some material..

Mr. Rimsky feels that the current effort to update the POCD seems to show a shift in priorities when compared to the 2003 POCD. He suggested that the introduction discuss these changes, what has been done and what has not been done, and hone in on why the four areas of emphasis (Housing, Economic Development, Village Centers and Sustainability) are being recommended in the updated POCD.

Ms. Bishop-Wrabel expressed the need for the revised POCD to be concise and identify the uniqueness of our community. She suggested highlighting the areas in which the town has changed in the past 10 years and why the current recommendations are being made.

Mr. Carey suggested removing some of the maps. He recommended that the Commission not speculate in terms of the future in this revision and stated that the plan is a template for the future if everything goes as planned.

Ms. Roberts stated that the updated POCD must include the trends for the future as we see them now.

Mr. Carey responded that the trend in the decreasing school population should be number one on the list.

Mr. Bedini stated that there is no immediate fix for the declining population of the schools. He stated that there are other conceivable options but the school board and the towns are not going to be able to fix the issue immediately.

The commissioners agreed that the issues in the Region 12 school system should be addressed in the updated POCD.

Mr. Rimsky suggested that the plan document be condensed to concentrate on the primary issues in order to bring the facts to the forefront for the public. Mr. Frank stated that the fact and recommendations must be presented in a way to engage the public.

There was a brief discussion regarding the need for affordable housing for educational workers.

Ms. Bishop-Wrabel stated that the revised plan should identify the status of the town as it was 10 years ago, the present status and the changes that have occurred in that time span. She feels that there should be concise information to inform the public of what the trends are and how they could affect the community.

Ms. Roberts asked the commissioners how they think the recommendation of an economic development director/commission should be addressed in the revision.

The commissioners discussed the need for either a part time staff person or a commission that would oversee the economic development of the town. There was discussion of the suggestion that there might be one or more volunteers among town residents with knowledge and experience to perform this function. Mr. Frank suggested that the commission identify what is needed and what we would expect this person or commission to do. Ms. Bishop-Wrabel asked how this position would fit into the municipal government structure. Mr. Frank feels that this recommendation is one of the most important we are making and should be carefully considered and emphasized.

Mr. Bedini asked if the commissioners would consider a small, three-man Economic Development commission. He feels that this would identify the resources that are available in the town.

The commissioners agreed that they would ask Mr. Looney for a reference point as to how other towns manage this component in their municipalities.

There was brief discussion about the possibility of using focus groups to discuss specific areas of the updated POCD. Ms. Hill stated that Ms. Gager has agreed to detail how the focus groups should be utilized if it is decided to do so.

There was a brief discussion regarding other public outreach.

Mr. Carey reiterated that getting input from the heads of the different agencies in town would be invaluable.

Mr. Rimsky agreed with Mr. Carey but said that he feels that the "net should be cast a little wider."

The Commission briefly discussed the timing of the balance of the work on the updated POCD.

The commissioners agreed that they would schedule a time in which there would be area meetings for public input in both New Preston and Marbledale.

Mr. Frank stated that we should ask the consultants Mr. Looney if the appendix portion could be called something else, or referred to as the source of background data, information, and further discussion relating to the principal matters discussed in the main portion of the updated POCD.

Adjournment:

Motion: to adjourn at 9:15 by Mr. Rimsky, seconded by Mr. Frank.

Ms. Roberts adjourned the meeting at 9:15 pm.

SUBMITTED SUBJECT TO APPROVAL:

Shelley White, Land Use Clerk