

Minutes—Outreach Steering Committee for Comprehensive Community Plan

Date: Monday, February 11, 2008

Place: Town Hall Faulkner Meeting Room

Attendees: (See sign-in Sheet)

Roland Bartl, the Town Planning Director, reviewed procedures for public meetings. He discussed the need to take minutes, and adherence to the Open Meeting Law (subsequent to the meeting he sent written Open Meeting Law guidelines to all members).

Daphne Politis, our facilitator from Planners Collaborative introduced herself and her fellow staff members of Planners Collaborative, Joe Brevard and Jim Purdy. Daphne explained the community outreach process and timeline, and how it fits into the development of a new Master Plan/Comprehensive Community Plan. We are in the first phase—the outreach. The existing conditions and trends will be studied in the next phase. We are looking at a 10 year plan. Some goals will be further into the future, some will be more short term.

Lauren introduced the need for an executive committee. This committee would be only 5 members and be able to take input from the larger committee and meet more often with the consultants to complete the needed work. Lauren nominated 5 candidates that represented a balance of viewpoints—Jim Snyder-Grant (Conservation/Land Stewards, familiar with open space preservation issues) Dick Calandrella (Public Relations, journalist, “senior”, served on transportation committees in town and is on sidewalk committee) Mary Ann Ashton (Finance Committee, former school committee member, worked on Heritage Landscape and other historic preservation projects in town) Greg Niemyski (Chairman of the Planning Board, worked on previous Master Plan and update), Lauren Rosenzweig (Selectman, former planning board member, liaison to affordable housing corporation, serves on economic development committee).

MOTION TO APPOINT ABOVE MEMBERS—Approved unanimously

Survey—was distributed in very draft form. Members had procedural concerns—For the mailing it is important to note that in some parts of Acton they have a Concord address (Pope Road and streets off Pope Road near the Concord town line). These should be included in Acton mailing. Members were asked to review the draft and send comments by e-mail to the executive committee (Roland will develop a special e-mail “shell” for the executive committee. It is being done this way to catch up on the timeline necessary to get the surveys printed and out on schedule for the rest of the timeline).

Suggestions for survey-

- Ask “how long have you lived in town? How long do you plan to stay?”
- Minimize the open ended questions because they are hard to “score”.

- Will there be online availability? Will it be able to be answered on line or will it have to be printed out and mailed back? Can there be options for both?
- Is there a way to measure the economic and ethnic diversity of the population?
- There is insufficient walkable areas—ask for both municipal and school. Do people walk—if yes, where do they walk? Where do they work? How do they get there?
- Reduce greenhouse gases—are people environmentally aware? Will they commit to supporting town initiatives? Use carbon footprint as a term.
- Prioritize—use an exercise such as “if you had \$100.00 how would you spend it on the following items/priorities for the town?”
- In the introduction add something about the “core values”. Also, state how long the plan is intended for—the next 5 to 10 years....Indicate how long you have lived in town-less than 5 years, 5-10, 10-20, etc.
- Survey is too long, the first 3 are the most important so make them good ones. Open-ended questions often give the most valuable most revealing information. Have some but not too many, and put them early when people are “fresh”.
- Add things about Historic Districts, Cultural Opportunities, and Recreational areas
- Split out commercial development into retail, restaurant, employment

Business Survey

- Only one question on this survey is open ended. We need to ask ourselves “why are we doing this business survey”? what are we trying to get at? We also might want to add, how long has your business been here in Acton? Less than one year? More than 1 year? 5 years? 10 years? Longer? Etc.
- We should ask “how would you like to have the town to evolve?”
- When we do the phone survey we should ask if they have already done the written survey
- Tell people the surveys are also on the web.

BRANDING

Daphne and staff conducted an exercise with the committee to choose some tag lines that Planner's Collaborative had developed. Committee members voted on tag lines they liked or added and changed some. One member suggested "Preserve History—Act on Tomorrow".

Possible Visioning Workshop dates are 3/15, 3/22, and 3/29. Daphne will contact schools to reserve a Saturday date for the workshop.

Next meeting: Feb. 27 (Wednesday) at the Acton Senior Center/Audubon Hill

Agenda:

- Outreach Plan
- Prepare for Visioning Session

Daphne reported progress so far:

2/8 Met with Xuan Kong, Bill Ryan, Kay Steeves, Sue Horn, and Pamela Lynn to talk about student workshop

2/29 there will be a follow-up meeting with school principals, Danny's Place and Boy/Girl Scouts to get youngsters and teens involved Possible survey of peers, "man on the street" type interviews, cable TV?

2/24 Outreach to Acton Chinese Language School (Xuan, Lauren, and Daphne)

Daphne reviewed the timeline in more detail (see attached). Need to meet with newspaper and get articles in newspaper. Need to get out ad for surveys and visioning workshop.

Ann Sussman presented about the Orton Family Foundation Heart and Soul Planning Grant. She will pursue it in greater detail and present to Selectmen.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM

Respectfully submitted:

Lauren Rosenzweig