

Acton 2020 Committee
[DRAFT] Minutes
August 31, 2011 – 7:00 PM
Acton Town Hall

Attending: Kristen Alexander, , Celia Kent (minutes-taker), Paulina Knibbe, Charlie Mercier, Sahana Purohit, Jim Snyder-Grant, Margaret Woolley Busse; Jim Purdy, Daphne Politis (the Collaborative); John Sonner (BoS)

I. Minutes and To-Do's

The minutes from 8-3-11 were approved. Paulina reported that Jamie Eldridge can attend our meeting on Goal 5 September 28th (when we plan to discuss affordable housing).

Margaret referred to Bill Marathias's resignation from the committee and suggested that we not try to replace him as it would be too time-consuming for a new member to get up to speed. She may consider asking someone to handle events. ~~Paulina will shift from associate to full membership status.~~

TODO: Margaret will ask the Board of Selectmen to move Paulina from associate to full membership status.

II. Blog

Jim reviewed recent posts. We agreed that in the future we will each read the blog posts before the meeting and there will be time on the agenda to discuss what we find most relevant. Also, Jim will provide a summary, highlighting comments that are particularly relevant to upcoming agenda items.

III. Publicity

TO DO: Margaret will send out fall schedule to email list.

Municipal Quarterly write up due next Friday – use it to announce November 9th meeting implementation review meeting. Paulina will prepare a draft.

Margaret will apply for a table for Oktoberfest. We should make new postcards. Charlie may be able to staff the table in the morning. Jim offered to staff afternoon.

IV. Review Fall Meetings

Kristen reported that Chris Star has confirmed for September 14th Kelley's Corner meeting. Unfortunately, the representatives for Roche Bros and Not Your Average Joes plazas now have to be out of town. Owner of Quill and Press can't make it. Owner of Sunoco station and one other property told Roland verbally he would come. Kristen has invited every property owner in area. Haven't heard from many. She commented that the large property owners didn't come to earlier events whereas smaller property owners did so she thought it important to invite both large and small owners to the meeting. She sent letter beginning of last week and will send follow up emails tomorrow. John has an informal relationship with the owner of Bowladrome and agreed to reach out to him. Jim S-G is meeting with reps from Water District Sept 8th. Paulina will attend meetings for her contact committees to review strategies and invite them to meeting.

TO DO: Kristen will send follow-up email to Kelley's corner property owners.

John Sonner will touch base with owner of Bowladrome.

Everyone will reach out to their assigned committees to invite them to relevant meetings.

V. Assess ideas for Strategies

The Collaborative will work on organizing the strategies into a consistent and accessible format as well as offer ideas on priorities. The categorization process is a helpful analytical tool as we develop our strategies, but will not be used to organize the final product. So we should think of the current table as input rather than the draft itself. Paulina suggested we should figure out the out the main place a strategy belongs and then just refer to it from other sections when applicable. Daphne added that a master plan is a guide and not everything will be to the same level of detail. That's okay. Some topics are so complicated that they may need more study, and therefore they will have less detail in the master plan. It is important to be clear on priorities so that's what we need to spend time on. Jim P commented that we do want to address resources and costs, but it's not a good thing to apply a cost to all strategies, especially for management tasks. Do need to have a sense of likely capital expenditure and new FTE's, but the most detailed cost analysis will be for the high priority strategy recommendations.

Goal 4. Paulina talked through her draft. She listed the senior/community center first since that is the largest cost item. The goal is that the new proposed building be multi-purpose since the Town won't be able to build two facilities. Margaret asked what should we call it - Senior Center or Community Center? It was pointed out that the current committee working on developing ideas is called the Senior Center Expansion Committee, but there was concern that the concept of a community center has to be explicit in the naming. No decision made. ~~Paulina commented that the rising seniors don't want to be isolated in a separate senior facility and will want it to be integrated with the community.~~ Paulina commented that the current urgent need is to replace the senior center. The current center is inadequate for current needs and the senior population is the fastest growing demographic in town. Current seniors like having a space of their own but rising seniors prefer to be integrated with the rest of the community. The new building should be constructed in a way that allows this change to occur organically. Initially, this could be managed similarly to the way the school buildings are managed: during the school day the schools have exclusive access, after hours the community can schedule spaces for other uses.

4.2 and 4.3 Committee discussion on the language of the objective 4.2. Margaret asks if this is too ambitious. Is it okay to be tinkering with the objectives since the process generated what we have. Charlie commented that it is constructive throwing a dart on the board but perhaps we should soften the language to "that Acton residents can either walk or ride a bike..." Jim commented re strategy 4 that we do have a plan for maintenance of hiking paths and he's not sure that we want more hiking. So shift the language to importance of maintaining hiking paths (main home here, but probably referenced in Goal 6). Rail trails should live in the Connections Goal. Incorporate 4.3 opportunities for active recreation into 4.2. Change "active recreation" to "team sports and playgrounds". There is a group of people working on private fundraising to improve library playground. Jim SG there's a related move for another permanent turf field at high school, so that the space can be used more intensively and we can avoid the creation of more fields.

4.4 Question whether restaurants belong here. Committee agreed restaurants can live in VII financial well being, but be referred to here as an important informal gathering space.

4.5 Good suggestions to encourage use of existing gathering space. Should be referred to in VI. Paulina suggested we should evaluate which buildings the Town should own. John Sonner suggested it would also be helpful if there were a one-stop calendar for all events (not just meetings). Should be under connections. Paulina expressed concern about public/private distinctions – are there separate organizations that don't want their events shown? Committee agreed a centralized calendar could be offered as a service – an opt in. Margaret asked whether we should merge 4.4 and 4.5.

4.6 Movie theater belongs in Goal VII, but should be referenced here (same as restaurants). Jim S – given new technology, don't need a purpose built space to show movies. Paulina – there are rules about showing first run movies or any movie that would charge money for so it's helpful if the facility is run by an organization familiar with those rules. Shift library strategy to VI and refer to here. At moment, the two libraries are separately administered – there are opportunities to streamline. Margaret suggested we make some reference to multi-cultural support strategies from Goal V.

Goal 5: Support Inclusion and Diversity

5.2 Paulina made comments which are not reflected in the version in the packet. She suggested shift affordable housing to 5.1. Committee discussion but no final agreement as we decided to wait until after the September 14th meeting. It is important to distinguish between strategies which support Acton's affordable-inexpensive housing needs (for people who live and work here) and strategies which aim to meet the legal requirements of 40B because they are not the same thing. We may re-frame the objective to be about providing a wide range of housing types for all ages, and for people of different incomes and at different stages of life cycle. The strategy of meeting the 40B requirement of 10% affordable housing should be a strategy in service of the objective. Paulina commented that Jamie Eldridge is working on legislation that would give towns more control over how affordable housing is done within a town and what is considered "affordable" as opposed to just inexpensive. Creates more tools to get to 10% without town losing control

5.1 Support all ages.

For teens – consider appointing a youth representative to Town.

5.3 Embrace cultural diversity. Re ESL support – Paulina argued that it is not a town responsibility. Daphne suggest that town could still provide information – point to resources available even if the ESL services are offered by other organizations. Several strategies here may belong other places.

5.4 Support citizens with disabilities. Suggest universal design principles for new buildings but don't call for retrofitting every existing town building to that standard, which is higher than ADA requires [we still need to explain what universal design means]. The Town meets ADA regulations for the most part. Could add a regulation about new developments making a unit fully accessible (beyond just elevators). ADA doesn't require it but we could. Paving trails could be in Goal 3 Connections with a pointer from here. Not about paving per se, but about making some paths wheel chair accessible.

Goal 6: Preserve and Enhance Town-Owned Assets.

Paulina prepared a version which added some objectives and reorganized some of the text. In the meeting, we reviewed Sahana's version. Sahana will send a combined version to the Collaborative to include sections on open space, two objectives on schools services and facilities, town services and facilities.

6.1 like addition of reference to Morrison Farm. Don't say preserve and acquire - just preserve. Sahana points out there are a lot of education strategies – maybe combine them in one overarching section? Paulina commented that we need to make sure we don't step on School Ctee toes. Our document should emphasize partnering; we are not trying to interfere with the curriculum.

6.2 Put balance financial burden comment in Goal 7. Acknowledge that we should look for opportunities to improve school services (like reduced class size) as funding is available (so both schools and town should benefit from increased funds).

6.3 Re-word fire station text. Evaluate the location and size of the fire stations... (see suggested text per

Paulina). Jim P. commented that the master plan should suggest a planning committee to study what should be done. No agreement on what the solution is. Change wording of senior center reference. Community education doesn't belong in 6.3 which is labeled more as a facilities topic. Community education could go in recreation and community gathering section. Move it to Goal 4 Community Gathering but acknowledge it in the schools section of Goal VI. We should take out the reference to 1998 Master plan but plan to reference that document more broadly in a kind of introductory section, indicating that we have reviewed it.

6.4 Reference to energy audit – this is already done and should be part of Goal 2 Sustainability and simply referenced here. Similarly, strategies relating to water. Libraries, however, should have their primary strategies in this section.

Can explore regionalization opportunities (fire, ambulance, etc) Should say we should examine – but can be in goal 7 and referenced here.

Goal 7: Maintain and Improve Financial Well-being of the Town.

We postponed discussion of this goal to the next meeting. Margaret observed that the order of strategies had gotten jumbled. So she will restructure it before next meeting.

VI. Next Steps

The Collaborative will work on re-write to bring a consistent format to all Goals. Margaret will send adjusted Goal 7 text to Jim and Daphne. John confirmed that we are on the agenda for the December 5 BoS meeting. Agenda for next meeting September 8 will include:

- Review Goal 7 and 3.
- Decide what questions we want to send to Kelley's corner participants.
- Other logistical planning. Daphne indicated we should have a format for each meeting and she will prepare suggestions for committee discussion. They are also working on a document they are calling Precedents Pages which they will share for discussion. Daphne and Jim distributed 3 documents we should all review and be prepared to discuss (Draft Key Underlying Themes, Report Outline, sample page Recommended Implementation Program). John – confirmed Dec 5 BoS meeting.