

From: [Margaret Woolley Busse](#)
To: [Board of Selectmen](#)
Cc: [Acton 2020 Committee](#); ["Daphne Politis"](#); [Jim Purdy](#)
Subject: Follow up on Dave's question
Date: Wednesday, December 07, 2011 11:01:47 AM

Board of Selectmen/women—

It was great to be able to meet with you on Monday night. Thank you for giving our committee the opportunity. And I as said that night, we as a committee really appreciate all the support you've given us as a committee—John as a committed liaison, coming out to 2020 public meetings, and just generally being supportive in our efforts in your language about it to others and in the resources committed.

I wanted to follow up on Dave's very interesting question re: what we would recommend taking away as a town service/asset in order to pay for the things we are recommending in the 2020 plan.

I think the broader question is really, how does the town pay for all of the things on our "wish list," as it were. So I wanted to point out to you a few features of the plan:

--First, one of the key assumptions of the plan is that school enrollment will decline, thus eventually (although not immediately) freeing up some tax revenue to go toward town priorities. As I said Monday that although fewer school children and more seniors is seen as a trend regionally (and even nationally, to some degree), there is no guarantee that this will happen. But this is what the experts predict, and indeed, Acton already saw lower enrollment this year; obviously it remains to be seen if this is part of an overall trend.

--Second, one of the key themes of our plan in addition to simply relying on an expected trend of lower school enrollment is to actively recruit more empty-nester/seniors to stay in town, by making the town more attractive and feasible to stay in. If this strategy works, this will also help towards the town's finances.

--Third, another of the objectives in the plan is to promote more economic development, both by making our villages/Kelley's Corner more vibrant, but also in proactively recruiting more employment-oriented businesses. We hope that this will also help both reduce the residential tax burden as well as infuse more cash for the town to use on its priorities.

Obviously, it will take awhile for the above things to happen, but I did want to point out that there is a "method to the madness." But we as a committee also understand that money may not be available right away to fund some of our recommended priorities. All of that said, I think it is still a very interesting question as to what the town might be willing to forego in order to invest in some of these proposed priorities. So while it's not necessarily in the scope of the plan to be recommending budget cuts, I'm thinking we'll do a quick brainstorm in our next meeting to see what things we come up with that may be able to be cut. I think it should be a very interesting conversation!

Furthermore, another thing I'd really like our committee to work on before the plan is finalized is to develop a highest-priority list of all the action items that are low-hanging fruit and/or don't cost any money to implement. As I said on Monday night, our committee wants to make sure we get the ball running on implementation of the plan as soon as possible so we don't lose momentum, and so we need to have a clear timeline of what needs to happen first.

Again, thanks for your support, your questions, and your feedback.
Margaret