

DRAFT.
Minutes - Acton 2020 Committee Meeting
October 5th
7 pm – 10:30 pm
Acton Memorial Library

Attendees:

- Members: Margaret Woolley Busse, Sahana Purohit, , Jim Snyder-Grant, Celia Kent, Charles Mercier, Paulina Knibbe
- Staff: Kristin Alexander, Roland Bartl
- Planners Collaborative: Daphne Politis, Brian Barber
- Observers: Mohammed and Paul (high school Poli Sci students)

Chair Margaret Woolley Busse called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Agenda Item I: Approve Minutes from 9-21-2011.

Jim Snyder Grant moved to approve minutes as amended. Sahana Purohit second. Unanimous vote with one abstention due to non-attendance at meeting in question.

Minutes from 9-28-11 not available yet.

Agenda Item II: Review Fall Meeting Schedule

Oct 12th – Section IV and Section III

Oct 19th - at Senior Center

Oct 26th – Section I and Section VI

Nov 2nd – Prep for Public Forum

Nov 9th – Public Forum. Materials will be posted on Nov 4th.

Nov 16th – Debrief from the public forum

Dec 5th – Present to BoS

Dec 14th – next regular meeting

Agenda Item III: Refine Objectives

Committee members discussed each goal and objective briefly and tightened up the wording on specific objectives.

Jim Snyder Grant moved to approve revised objectives. Charlie Mercier seconded. Motion passed unanimously. (Committee will come back to look again at the wording of some of the objectives).

Agenda Item IV: Debrief recent meetings

Sept 14th.

Margaret Woolley Busse led this part of debrief.

- We should do some ‘quick hits’: (more liquor licenses, timing of traffic light, improve crosswalks, attractive signage)

- Encourage formation of a business association. Question: who is responsible for this. Answer: the businesses themselves but perhaps we can encourage them ? A leader needs to emerge from the business community.

*****Action Item:** Margaret to draft a letter to the business owners thanking them for participating in our forum and encouraging them to start up a business association. Kristin to send the letter to all Kelley's Corner businesses regardless of whether or not they came to the meeting.

- Need Entertainment opportunities at Kelley's corner to help make it a destination. Encourage businesses to sponsor an event.
- Investigate setting up street parking on Route 111 between Freeway and intersection. This would require Mass Highway involvement.

*****Action Item:** Roland will ask Mass Highway engineer about the feasibility of this idea.

Sept 21st. Review of Goal II and VII

Jim Snyder Grant led this part of debrief

- We need to make sure that 'stop production of toxics' ('Refuse') is one of the strategies for Goal VII. Also need to have a narrative to connect strategies with objectives.
- Too many strategies (perhaps move the on-going strategies to inventories or mark them in some way in the text to distinguish between existing work and new initiatives).

*****Action Item:** Planner's Collaborative will work on visually identifying which strategies are ongoing and which are new.

- How should we prioritize competing capital initiatives ? Daphne – this is a long range strategic plan – not a capital/financial plan. Once it is in place it can be used to help arrange financing from the state and to negotiate with developers to influence future plans. Jim – this plan can be used to determine how to stage projects as funding becomes available.
- But – it should have a financial component.
*****Action Item:** Paulina to last year's 3 year ALG model, the debt service schedule, and FinCom's cost savings plan to Planner's Collaborative.
- FinCom asked about the demographic projection chart in the 2020 plan. (It appears to show family size increasing in the outyears). Brian Barber – numbers came from MAPC. not all families are counted in the 'family

formation' number. Many families are in the younger age group (20 – 30). In addition, single head of household families are not counted in the 'family formation' number. This group has been growing and is expected to continue to grow. When those numbers are taken into account, family size remains relatively constant.

Sept 28th. Affordable Housing Meeting

- Jim: Creating a housing production plan is more complicated than we had thought. Creating 42 units a year is a daunting challenge. It isn't worth creating a production plan if we can't actually produce the units in a given year. But it is important to have a proactive plan to provide affordable housing. 'To Live In Action' is a good start and should probably be updated.
- Celia: Should we be trying to get to 10% or do we give that up as an achievable goal? It would be great to have be able to control the development of 40B units better than we do now. Perhaps we focus on creating tools (design guidelines, etc) to help us avoid 'bad' affordable housing options and encourage 'good' affordable housing options.
- Roland: Inclusionary Zoning (requiring the production of affordable units as part of developments in Acton). Problem: Acton isn't big enough to make this work effectively. Need to have 'escape clauses' for this to pass legal scrutiny. The escape clauses (developments below a certain size) and the incentives (generally increased density) make these projects unattractive to either the developers or citizens or both.
- Regional approach sounds very promising. [Working with other towns in the area to create or attract a nonprofit developer to construct affordable units in the towns in the region.] This would probably require some town funding which would be complicated – how do the towns know that the funding they are providing is being used to produce units in their towns? CPC funding must be used locally.

Funding could be increased by increasing the CPC surcharge. (Acton currently has a 1.5% surcharge. Could go up to 3.0% with voter approval. However, MA has been reducing the match rate for CPC funds as the financial climate worsens).

- Idea: when the town purchases Open Space, consider developing a portion of the purchase as an Affordable Housing project, if the location makes sense, etc. (Lincoln model).
- Margaret: It's important that we use town money efficiently when trying to produce Affordable Housing. Perhaps we should focus on rental units since

that is where the demand is.

Paulina: Rental housing is attractive in the 40B context. BUT Acton does have a lot of rental housing and it isn't clear that adding more helps achieve the other goals of this plan (creating community and improving sustainability).

Agenda Item V. Next Step on Prioritization:

*****Action Item:** Daphne will send out the current draft of the strategies with the proposed priorities.

*****Action Item:** Everyone. Focus on the items that are proposed as 'Highest Priorities'. There are too many of them. Decide which ones you consider most important and which could move down to second priority. Also – look at the items that didn't make the highest priority list to see if some of those should have their priority elevated. Send your input to Daphne by Oct 19th.

*****Action Item:** Jim will begin work on a prototype for an online feedback system for the plan. Questions: when do we cut off comments ? Two answers: need a cut off date to be included in the official plan BUT can continue to accept comments forever as this plan will be used in the implementation phase.

Agenda Item VI. Plan for Nov 9th meeting

Daphne outlined how the meeting will work.

Publicity. We will use our email contact lists. We will use sandwich boards, the blinky light and a banner. Perhaps hand out flyers at the transfer station ??

Agenda Item VII. Postponed to later meeting.

Jim Snyder Grant moved to adjourn the meeting. Paulina Knibbe seconded. Unanimous approval.

Minutes submitted by Paulina Knibbe