



Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC+)

Thursday, April 22, 2010
Minutes

Attendance

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Rebecca Casey	√	vacancy		Hugh Coxe	-
vacancy		Kurt Klebe	-	Jim Thibodeau	√
Steve Hendry	√	Sandra Lipsey	√	Julie Motherwell	-
Rachel Reed	-	vacancy		Steve Walker	√

Council Liaison: -
Staff present: Theo Holtwijk
Others present: Claudia King, Sam Rudman

1. Welcome and Introductions

Theo started the meeting at 7:04 PM. He reported that several members could not be there as it was school vacation and that he had received two resignations, Jim Vamvakias and David Chase. (Karen Farber had earlier resigned.) The Council will appoint their replacements.

Committee members introduced themselves again.

2. Selection of Committee Chair

The Committee discussed selecting a chair including the idea of rotating chair, as suggested by Claudia, but decided not make any decisions until the next meeting when a full slate of members could be present and Council appointments have been made.

3. Minutes

The draft minutes of April 8th were approved by consensus with the correction of a typo ("High" should be "Hugh").

4. Discussion of Assignment and Update Approach

There was an observation made that the 2000 plan had several consultants involved and the question was how much money there was available for that. Essentially no consulting money is available, Theo responded. In-house staff is prepared to take the consultant role. If there are special tasks that the Committee feels are essential, such as a statistically relevant random phone survey of say 400 households, or to do mapping, then such should be made known, assistance should be sought, and funds for that should be requested.

Sam gave his sense of where the update project came from and what his sense was of the Council's instructions. It seemed to him that a vision statement was deemed important by the Council. He also felt a need to have trend data available. His sense was that the Town had tackled the low hanging fruit in the implementation of the 2000 action plan and did not address the more difficult tasks, such as diversity in housing. The committee generally concurred with his recap and assessment. There was some discussion on what visioning meant.

Sandra stated that she felt it was essential that all members have read by the next meeting the following materials: the 2000 plan (2 documents), appendix 2 of Theo's memo (the implementation status report), and the Council Direction memo. She felt that that would help to create a "shared vocabulary" from which to work.

A question was asked as to the origin of the two 2000 Comprehensive Plans. Theo stated that they were developed in parallel, and that one ultimately served as the official document for review by the State Planning Office, and the other extracted some key trends, was illustrated, and focused on the neighborhood master planning effort, which became a big part of the adopted plan. Claudia felt it was important to be able to contextualize these documents.

Sandra stated that the committee should first work on having agreement on the scope of the work, and after that work on its vision statement.

Becca suggested that an annotated review of the documents that Sandra had suggested by using post-it notes with comments, reactions, or questions, and putting them up on a wall might give the committee a visual sense of where to spend its update efforts.

Sandra commented that a vision statement would help answer why the Town is doing a 10-year plan.

Jim Thibodeau arrived and introduced himself. He is an engineer, has done some local development projects, serves on the Board of Zoning Appeals, and in the past has served on the Planning Board.

Theo passed around three excerpts that he thought might be useful. The first one discusses visioning, what purpose it may serve, and gives an example for Ogunquit, Maine. The second one focuses on the need to take a hard look at a community's current plan and lays out some questions to consider. The last one provides ideas for public engagement beyond the typical approaches. Theo stated that it is recommended that a community's vision statement gets developed not just by the committee, but by the community at large. He cautioned the committee not get totally absorbed by outreach efforts, but not to ignore them either.

Claudia felt that it was important to read not just the 2000 plan, but also the twenty or so plans that were created after that. Sam responded that that was why he felt that creating subgroups to split up that task of distilling the data from those plans was useful. That may give the committee a good sense of what needed to be upgrades or changed.

Theo gave the Committee a quick sense of what Portland, Oregon had done for outreach. It distributed a survey with just four open-ended questions, received 13,000 responses, and, with help of the local university, analyzed and categorized those. Various themes resulted from that which became the backbone of the plan.

Sam envisioned that the group might complete its task in 12 months, and that therefore 26 meetings would be available. He thought that half-way through a rough plan might be available to be shared with for feedback with the Council and the public.

It was acknowledged that categorizing open-ended questions was hard and time-consuming task.

Becca felt that the group should go to the public earlier than half-way through the project. Claudia felt that it was important to get going with the Committee before going out to the public. Jim concurred with the need for all to read the current plan first. There was sense that if all relevant documents were looked at by all committee members together that the group would be in a better position to prioritize.

Sam admitted that he was deadline driven and that perhaps, as the Council suggested, not many changes may be needed to the current plan's format or categories as those still seemed to be relevant and the Council felt that it was not necessary to reinvent the wheel. Sandra commented that she would like the group to have enough flexibility to make changes, if those were needed.

The group went back to how best to put its hands around the update task. Steve suggested a chapter by chapter review of the materials. Theo suggested that Becca's idea of the sticky post-it notes could be combined with Steve's chapter approach. If committee members came in at the start of the next meeting with prepared post-it notes that identified the chapter, the comment or question and their name, those notes could be put on the wall immediately by chapter. Then a fast review could be made of them by the committee members. It was asked if conclusions could be drawn from such a review. That depends on what people might have to say about the current plan. Jim suggested to add a template that said: I agree with this, I disagree with that, I propose this change, etc. Theo suggested that each member should have their own approach and that any comment or question would be fine. Sam felt that two meetings may be needed to complete this assignment and get through a review of it. That would give Theo also an opportunity to take the sheets down with the post-it notes, type it up, and begin to organize the feedback. The group liked the post-it note approach.

5. Next Steps

The group agreed that the following should be communicated to the entire committee:

- a. Schedule of meeting dates (every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at 7 PM),

- b. List of Required Readings (the two 2000 plans, appendix 2 of Theo's memo, the Council Direction memo, and Update Recommendations excerpt #1 concerning taking hard look at one's existing plan);
- c. Description of the homework Post-It Note Assignment; and
- d. Need to select a Chair and Vice-Chair at the next meeting.

Theo will make sticky notes available for pick-up at Town Hall for all who need them. He mentioned that if anyone had any other needs (such as copies of documents) that they should make that known to him.

6. Next Meeting

The committee agreed to meet again on Thursday May 13th at 7 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 PM.

Draft Meeting Notes by Theo Holtwijk, April 23, 2010