



Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC+)

Thursday, June 9, 2011 Minutes

Attendance:

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Rebecca Casey	√	Bud French	-	Hugh Coxe	√
Paul Bergkamp	-	Kurt Klebe	-	Jim Thibodeau	-
Steve Hendry	√	Sandra Lipsey	√	Julie Motherwell	-
Rachel Reed	-	Sam Rudman	√	Steve Walker	√
Claudia King	√				

Council Liaison: -
Staff present: Theo Holtwijk
Others present: -

The meeting was called to order by Sam at 7:02 PM.

1. Survey Update

Theo handed out a written update from Market Decisions from 4:08 PM that day. The current count of completed surveys is 530 and in progress surveys are 179. MDI stated that this response is enough to consider the results “valid.”

Sandra reported on the promotion she did as part of the Chamber’s council candidate debate the previous night.

Theo passed out a handout with survey comments that he had received via e-mail. All senders had been responded to by him.

The group discussed its various outreach activities, such as at the Lion’s Club Auction and Farewell to the Schools event, and felt that the one-on-one outreach was most effective.

The length of the survey was considered an obstacle by some and the estimates of time to complete it have been too low. These estimates also depend whether people write in comments or not.

Sam commented that he felt the entire committee had done a fabulous job in the outreach.

The group discussed if, despite the good results, the deadline for the survey should be extended. Sandra felt that that was important as the survey had landed during election and graduation time, which was not the originally planned survey month. Many people are distracted by other matters and/or are out of town. Claudia supported this idea and stated that that would give the committee an opportunity to have a presence on Election Day. Theo stated that, despite the fact that statistically-valid result was in hand, an extension would provide goodwill from the Council and the public, that it was OK with Market Decisions, and that it had little downside. Survey processing will still take one month, so these results would be delayed, but that seemed OK as it would be summer.

Sandra added that an extension outreach effort would allow the committee to emphasize to the public that not every question needed to be answered, but that doing the demographics section at the end was important. Sam added that that some people thought this was a one per household survey and not one per person and that that could then be clarified. In addition, Sandra noted that it could serve to emphasize that the group wanted to hear from business owners in town. Some owners were not aware of that and were pleased to be asked their opinion.

The group decided that an extension should not be announced until after the election as that message would get lost otherwise. Sandra will contact Emily Parkhurst of The Forecaster to let her know about this, so as not to miss the newspaper's deadline.

The group felt that the extension message should include the following points:

- One response per resident, not per household
- Encourage business owner responses
- Survey sections can be skipped
- Encourage for all to complete demographic section at the end.

Upon a motion by Sandra and second by Sam, the group voted 7-0 on June 30th as the new deadline date.

The group discussed three upcoming events that provide opportunities for more in-person outreach:

- Election Day at the polls (Claudia will be in touch with Ellen Planer),
- Falmouth's volunteers recognition banquet (Theo will talk with Nathan), and
- Chamber's Annual Meeting (Sandra will take care of that).

In addition, there will be committee presence at the Transfer Station this Saturday.

2. Review of Draft Minutes of May 26, 2011

The group unanimously voted to approve the draft Minutes of May 26, 2011.

3. Discussion of Final Plan Product

Sam stated that the next items for the group to discuss were what the plan would look like and when it would be done. He asked which of those items the group wanted to discuss first. Hugh suggested that the work load be discussed first.

Sam stated that he had met the Yarmouth planner who lives in Falmouth and that the Yarmouth Comp Plan took 5 years and that it had a paid consultant to do the work; by contrast, LPAC+ had Theo to help with the work. Sam stated that he saw two major pieces. On the one hand there was the data piece, which could be assigned to Theo, and then there is the implementation strategy that the committee could focus on.

Hugh felt that it made sense to rely a lot on the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. He believed that the group should also pay attention to the elements put forth by the Maine State Planning Office (SPO), but not be beholden to them. Important SPO elements were: vision statement and policy recommendations. Perhaps the inventory and analysis could be done by Theo, Hugh suggested.

Sandra felt that there was an opportunity to reconvene the subcommittees over the summer. They could have conversations about their topics, build on their previous work and come back with proposed recommendations. As the survey results would become available, they would inform that work.

Hugh was concerned that these conversations would not have a written product. He said it was important to put any ideas in writing. He agreed that some issues were becoming clear from the subcommittee reports. By having written reports, the recommendations that begin to be prioritized and picked apart. He felt the committee needed to produce tangible products.

Claudia stated that the SPO material contained some really good, worthwhile and probing questions on each of the topics, and recommended that they be used to stimulate discussion.

There was mention by Hugh that it was important to back up any recommendations with cited studies or survey data.

Sandra felt it was important that the committee do “heavy lifting” regarding the formulation of the plan as this would prepare committee members better to have conversations with Councilors. She mentioned that Falmouth needed to play with others and have more of an outward perspective. There were regional choices to be made that involved some sacrifices, but that that was important to do. Staff may already be convinced of the need for sacrifices, but the councilors less so. The committee needs to be able to have those kinds of conversations with councilors.

The group discussed what the subcommittees would be asked to do. They would be asked to formulate proposed policies for their topics, provide data support for the policies, and come up with recommended actions. These would then be submitted to Theo for collating. The

group felt that it would be rewarding to have a work product and that it was important for all groups to use the same format.

Sandra felt that the subcommittees were still viable. Hugh stated that if the subcommittees did analysis of the data, had discussions on policies, and worked to find the right language, that that would be the heavy lifting for the plan.

Sandra stated that the committee had more to do than write the plan. It had to advocate for the plan, it had to say what things were “urgently important” to do.

It was stated that some ideas may not get full subcommittee agreement and those should be brought to the full committee for further discussion. Sandra stated that not much time should be devoted to the easy topics, but that instead time should be spent on those topics where there is vocal disagreement.

Theo passed out several handouts. He said that using the 2000 Plan as a jumping off point made sense. The large plan from 2000 could be the piece for him to work on, while the people addressed the top issues, much like the small document in 2000 did.

The first handout was the implementation status chart from the 2000 Plan. Theo suggested that each subcommittee could readily decide if there were any actions that should be carried over in the new plan. Similarly, the group could see which new issues had emerged which were not yet covered. Forcing everyone to address specifics can be very helpful to get a plan together.

The second handout covered the goals, objectives, and policies of the 2000 Plan. Again, some of these may still be perfectly valid. It would put the group into an editing mode which may help it in articulating its ideas, instead writing them from scratch.

The third handout covered SPO’s ideas on the Future Land Use Plan. Again, this handout can help to shape the committee’s ideas on that topic which is deemed most important by SPO. Theo suggested that the future land use discussion be done by the committee as a whole.

The fourth handout covered the required elements of the comprehensive plan. Theo suggested that the committee could be most helpful in tackling items 1. Vision Statement, item 3. Regional Coordination Program, item 5. Implementation Strategies, and item 7. Future Land Use Plan. Items 2 and 6 would be relatively easy to write and Theo could focus on item 4. Required analyses, condition and trend data, with committee input.

Sandra felt it was important to the absent committee members to get these documents as well as the two Comp Plan documents.

It was suggested that each subcommittee begin with the topics for which there were no survey questions. For the other topics, the hypotheses could be tested with the survey data that would come back.

Steve asked what to do with the housing topic. Should the committee keep pushing the affordable housing issue, or let it drop? There was no ready answer for that. It is anticipated that each subcommittee will only have one or two “chewable” topic or issue to deal with.

Sam noted that there are three available meetings before the survey results come back.

Claudia wondered if the group should its work in narrative form or in bullets. It would likely be a combination of both.

It was agreed to use an Excel format as the template for the subcommittee work, and to use the SPO questions to help stimulate discussion on each topic. The spreadsheet will have column for “last revised” dates, as some material may need to be updated more frequently than some other.

4. Next Meeting

The group agreed to have a short business meeting on June 23rd and use the remainder of the time for work by the three subcommittees on each topic. That way the absent members could be brought up to speed and the proposed approach could be tested to see how well it worked.

Subcommittees will help each other if one of them does not have enough members present.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, June 10, 2011