



Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC+)

Thursday, May 23, 2013 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 7:00 PM.

1. Review of Draft Minutes

The draft minutes of April 25 and May 9 meetings were approved as written.

2. Follow-Up from Feedback Sessions

Sam reviewed what he anticipates the committee's work to be for the next six weeks. The main charge is to decide on any changes, seek some additional public feedback and get the plan ready for submission to the Council.

Sam reviewed the May 21 feedback session with the Council. He noted that the Councilors were upbeat the plan and that nothing controversial came up. The Councilors got the themes of the plan, found the plan informative, and noted the amount of work that the committee had done.

Sam then reviewed some of the specific comments made by the Councilors.

- The introduction was a bit chatty for some.
- Paul noted that there was a comment that the introduction should be linked to the vision and should make note of the public input received throughout the process. He agreed with that.
- The sources used should be noted up front.
- Listing specific assets increases the odds of missing one that someone is attached to.

- Many documents lead with the school and sports assets. Maybe don't do that in this plan?
- Paul noted that the introduction sets up how the rest of the plan is viewed.
- Becca noted that the Councilors wanted the community recreation center issue revisited by the committee.
- Paul stated that the introduction should not attempt to address everything. There is a danger of the plan trying to do too much.
- Sam stated that the introduction could be more generalized.
- Councilors also felt that some tables could use titles and should be immediately grasped.
- The purpose statements in the zoning district tables were deemed too long. Sam felt that these statements served a helpful purpose.
- Councilors noted that in the policy chapter there were no issues and implications section for some of the topics. Sam thought that these should be reviewed for consistency.
- The numbering of goals and policies (as opposed to bulleting) led some councilors to think that these were stated in order of importance. Sam went back to that and felt that priorities seemed to have been incorporated.
- The graying of Falmouth was discussed, but to some Councilors that meant 75 years or older. The committee's sense was that that begins at an earlier age. Paul suggested that this should be clarified. The suggestion was made to change the term "graying" to "aging."

Sam noted various "hot topics" that came up during the discussion with Councilors.

- Councilor Payne's comment that there was a disconnect between sidewalks and trails and density that would be needed to support them. A discussion followed by the Councilors about the difference between sidewalks and trails. Paul noted that the sidewalk aspect seemed key. He noted that it was important to connect a few areas that way. Jim stressed the importance of community-wide connectivity and that the Planning Board should be given flexibility to accomplish that. Sam wondered how one can gauge what a cost-effective trail was. Jim noted that a lot of trails have been established and are being maintained by community volunteers. He felt the plan should emphasize the importance of maximizing these grassroots efforts (and grants) and minimizing local tax impacts. He asked if the committee felt the plan was flexible enough. Becca noted that she thought so. She compared pedestrian-bicycle connections to the quality of open space in the growth areas that was important, not the quantity.
- The Councilors seemed sensitive to the responsibility column in the implementation strategy chapter and wanted more flexibility. Paul noted that by giving responsibility to a variety of groups more people would be brought together in the plan, and that that was a goal of the plan.
- Councilors also seemed to have questions about the priority rankings. It was true that the committee did not rank all high priorities from different topics against each other. Jim suggested that the committee rank all high priorities 1-5 relative to the plan as a whole. The committee discussed whether organizing the actions in a different manner instead of one long list might help to convey the plan's intent better. Becca suggested that "umbrella" themes could be used to organize the actions. One grouping could be all zoning amendment actions. Another could be

- connectivity. Julie suggested that the actions could be organized by the four bullets in the vision statement. Paul felt that the three paragraphs in the vision gave good headings: business, life stage, and connectivity. Theo said that there should be a distinction between theme (say: connectivity) and tool (say: zoning amendments or capital investments). Steve W. noted that a medium ranking of a land use action may be more important than a high ranking of a marine resources action. Jim explained his 1-5 ranking suggestion. This would be done for each action in each topic by relative importance to the overall vision of the plan. Becca came with another suggestion to organize the actions to reinforce the themes. If the vision is to strengthen community, then the five themes could be: clarity (relative to zoning amendments), coordination/communication, connectivity, conservation, and commercial. The 5 C's. A combination of Jim's and Becca's proposal will be further considered.
- Sam noted that the homogeneous population characterization by the committee was challenged by the Councilors. They noted increases in subsidized lunches in the schools, increases in ESL (English as Second Language programs), and less preparedness for kindergarten as indicators. Paul felt this was a small subset of the overall population. Sam wondered if this nuance could be addressed in a footnote. Some did not want to do that as it was not a school plan. Paul commented that the homogeneous population does have implication for density and housing choices. Theo will get some school data and then the committee will decide how to handle this issue.
 - The word "smart" in the vision was also discussed by Councilors. They wondered what it referred to.
 - The omission of a recommendation on the community recreation center was mentioned. The committee agreed to revisit this issue. Jim wondered if the same should be done relative to the library. Meeting spaces there are at a premium. As the library process at its current location is well underway, the committee decided to leave that as is. Hugh noted that the use of school facilities is being maxed out and that another facility may be needed. The use of school space after hours and during the day was discussed.
 - Whether or not to let developers recoup utility costs was also a hot topic. There was some impression that the committee thought this was a foregone conclusion.
 - Studying existing METRO bus service was also mentioned, rather than evaluating commuter rail or express bus service (see action 73).

Sam suggested that a smaller committee take up all these suggestions as well as the ones from the other two sessions and make recommendations how the draft should be revised. The revised draft will then be brought back to the full committee. Paul, Julie, Becca, and Sam agreed to serve on this committee. The committee will meet Tuesday May 28 at 5:00 PM. Anyone is invited to join in.

The Town manager had suggested that small LPAC delegation meet with him, Amanda, Theo, and two or so Councilors to work out the Implementation Strategies section. That idea seemed good to the committee.

Jim stated he had some other feedback to discuss.

Regarding action 47 Jim stated he disagreed that setbacks should be increased because in some cases that would not make any sense. He suggested that an evaluation be done first, and that any recommendations for change would be made as necessary. The committee agreed with that.

Regarding action 41 Jim wondered where the notion of 1/3 of total permits in the rural area came from and why that was recommended. The fiscal impact of spread out developments in the rural area was discussed and the mechanism of a so-called differential growth cap was discussed. Jim felt that, while this may constitute a delay for someone building in the rural area may result, it would not take away any property value. He agreed that development in the growth area should be incentivized. He stated he was OK with the 1/3 recommendation as a disincentive in the rural area.

Regarding the fifth policy of the land use topic (page 39), Jim recommended to change that to direct development away from critical rural areas, as he was not sure what “protect” meant. The committee was OK with that.

Jim suggested adding a 3.d to the proposed land use strategies (page 39) that addressed flexibility in the development review process. The committee felt that this was already addressed in 3.b. Jim suggested adding the word “flexibility” to that section. Hugh pointed out that flexibility comes at a cost of predictability, which was also valued by the architects and developers that the committee spoke with last fall.

Sam thanked Jim for his comments.

3. Discuss Public Outreach

Sam proposed that once the plan was updated an e-mail blast would be done, an ad would be placed in The Forecaster, and the material would be posted on the Town’s website. Anyone with any questions or comments would be asked to submit them to staff or the committee by a date TBD.

The committee was OK with that approach.

Sam noted that he was gratified with the Council’s interest. They had really read the material and want to follow the plan once it is adopted.

4. Next Meetings

The committee agreed to meet again on June 13 at 7:00 PM for its regular meeting. The editing subcommittee will meet on May 28 at 5:00 PM

The meeting was adjourned around 9:06 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, May 24, 2013