

Planning Board Master Plan Vision Discussion
April 9, 2014
Minutes

Richard Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Present:

P/Z Office: Richard Lewis and Angela Carey.

PB Members: Brian Sullivan, Jo Brown, Ted Starkweather, Mayor Merrifield, and Tim Flaherty.

City Council: Mayor Merrifield, Councilor Starkweather and Councilor George Dzujna.

State Rep's: Leigh Webb and Scott Burns.

School Board: Al Warner.

Others: Wayne Ives, Jim Aberg (FBIDC), Sarah Dunham, and Dan Darling.

Mr. Lewis stated tonight the discussion will revolve around the Vision Statement of the Master Plan and where to go with the Master Plan. He stated some key issues from the 2005 Master Plan have been achieved.

At this time, Richard Lewis had all those present introduce themselves.

Mr. Lewis then began to go through the PowerPoint presentation. He stated RSA 674:2 sets up the framework for the Master Plan, which outlines the best and most appropriate future development choices for the Planning Board, assists the Board in the creation of Ordinances and Land Use Regulations to guide development and supports the duties of the Board. The Master Plan is created and adopted by the Planning Board, but is useful for other boards.

The approach of the Planning Board in 2005 was to keep it simple, as he has seen some Master Plan documents that are 300 pages or more that are not used as often. He stated the Planning Board looks for and appreciates a simple approach, as this makes the Plan more useful.

Mr. Lewis stated the required sections are the Vision and the Land Use Section. The Plan is a Planning Board document and is the primary key for assisting of and drafting land use ordinances.

Mr. Lewis then went through the proposed chapters of the 2014 update are:

- Chapter 1: **Introduction**
- Chapter 2: **Franklin at a Glance** [capsule summary of key statistics]
- Chapter 3: **Summary of Accomplishments since the 2005 Plan**
- Chapter 4: **The Vision**
- Chapter 5: **Economic and Business Development**
- Chapter 6: **Historic Preservation and Downtown Franklin**

- Chapter 7: **Public Infrastructure, Utilities, and Capital Project**
- Chapter 8: **Land use and Zoning**
- Chapter 9: **Open Space and Natural Resource Protection**
- Chapter 10: **Hazard & Mitigation Planning, Regional Issues, & Energy**
- Chapter 11: **Summary**

Mr. Lewis stated there were many accomplishments from the 2005 Plan and it continues to make Franklin a better place. Regarding Chapter 10, the City of Franklin just completed its Hazard Mitigation Plan and Emergency Operations Plan.

There will be a more Master Plan meetings of the Planning Board, one in early/late June and one in September. He stated he will put together the Vision section, get the approval of the board and then it will be placed on the website.

Mr. Lewis then read RSA 674:2.II(a), which reads as follows: A vision section that serves to direct the other sections of the plan. This section shall contain a set of statements which articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the Master Plan, not only for their locality but for the region and the whole state. It shall contain a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision. He stated this is the big picture. He stated the 2006 Plan NH Charrette and the 2013 Permaculture Charrette show what the downtown can be.

The 2005 Vision statements were:

1. *Retain the small town feeling present in the City and the neighborhoods.* This is a fairly common vision statement, and is what makes New Hampshire Communities special.
2. *Guide and manage growth to protect natural resources and drinking water.* Mr. Lewis has worked with Brian Sullivan on stormwater projects up at the lake since the last Master Plan.
3. *Preserve & protect the historical, architectural, and cultural assets downtown and throughout the whole City.* This continues to be a Vision for the City.
4. *Encourage the retention and expansion of downtown businesses, especially in the mill buildings .* Todd Workman has been working on this and Richard stated he is in regular contact with Mr. Workman regarding this.
5. *Use the rivers to best serve the economic and recreation interests of the City.* Some of the accomplishments of this are the fishing pier down by the Proulx Center and the walking trail and fencing around the Odell Park and the constant expansion of the Trails in the area.
6. *Advocate the expansion of existing, and the establishment of new, industries in the City.* The City is keeping the industrial process moving.
7. *Provide adequate funding to maintain the roadways and associated infrastructure, and the City owned buildings, schools, and recreational facilities.* There are lots of ongoing successes. Due to this last winter, there are definitely numerous problems with the City infrastructure that will need to be looked at.

8. *Promote and emphasize, for both current and prospective residents, the positive aspects of the City.* Mr. Lewis stated that Choose Franklin is a huge advocate in promoting the City of Franklin.

At this time, there was a discussion with the public and the ideas and information they wanted to see in the Master Plan Vision section included:

1. Access through the City, without having to take the main street in cases of emergencies or parades or other events.
2. Building Code Enforcement- primarily in the downtown area.
3. Getting people to STOP downtown and not just drive through.
4. Ecology, Economy and Community- as explained in the Permaculture Charrette.
5. Improvements in downtown and the core of Franklin are needed in order to bring in Industry and make people want to invest in the City of Franklin.
6. Make the City a DESTINATION. Give them a reason to come here and then also give them a reason to stay here.
7. Infrastructure improvements.
8. Recreation Promotion- a reason to come to the City.
9. Trails- walking and biking trails. It was stated that this is being improved all the time, as last year the trails were extended to Boscawen.
10. Impacts of the Northern Pass.
11. Bonding for infrastructure improvements.
12. Prioritizing expenditures when the Northern Pass comes to Franklin. Mr. Lewis stated this is done by the City Council and as the Master Plan can address needs the Council would have to approve what the money is utilized for.
13. CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) Funding.
14. High Speed and Broadband Internet.
15. Absentee Landlords on North Main Street, South Main Street, Franklin Street, Bow Streets and other areas of Franklin. Code enforcement for these buildings and the absentee landlords are the key to improve the image of Franklin.
16. Infrastructure- The Urban core area has the infrastructure to support an inflow of people or businesses.
17. Attracting the RIGHT businesses. It was indicated that the problem with a lot of businesses that have come and gone is that the owners do not have a good business plan.
18. Viable Business- goes along with the above. Must have a good business plan to be viable.
19. Loitering Problems need to be addressed in the downtown area and other public areas of Franklin. This plays a part in improving the image of Franklin.
20. Ball Fields are a resource, but when people come for the ball fields they need places to go.
21. Need to have a Store in Franklin for recreation such as: biking, kayaking, spring sports that utilize the ball fields.
22. Not having a local Newspaper is very detrimental to Franklin.
23. Need web broadcasting to attract people to the positive of Franklin.
24. Preserving the Historic Aspects of Franklin, including the preservation of buildings.
25. Restoring, adapting and reusing the vestiges of Franklin's past.

Mr. Lewis then continued through the PowerPoint Presentation, with the Vision chapter ideas he has collected. The highlights were as follows:

1. The downtown is and needs to be a critical component of the vitality and economic engine of the City.
2. Taking advantage of the resources of the Rivers, Odell Park and the historic downtown buildings to promote future development.
3. Ordinances to maximize Industrial development.
4. Partnering with owners of downtown buildings to encourage revitalization efforts. It was indicated that a letter is going to be sent out by the City Manager to downtown business owners about meeting regarding the fixing up of their buildings. It was indicated that Code Enforcement in the downtown is necessary.
5. That, as previously indicated during the discussion with the public, the CIP needs to become more active and funded, allowing for appropriate maintenance and improvements to the roadways, buildings, utilities and recreational facilities.
6. Protecting the integrity of the neighborhoods.
7. Retaining the Rural Character of the City.
8. Providing long term protection for the lake.
9. Encouraging and supporting the continued development of the trails.
10. Protecting the Conservation Lands and working to expand these land holdings.
11. Providing support to first responders. Again the Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Emergency Operations Plan have been recently done and approved.
12. Working cooperatively with surrounding communities, regional groups and the State.

Mr. Lewis stated the board will hold more meetings, as he already indicated. He stated either two or three, with the most recent to be held in early or late June. He stated that the individual draft chapters will be put on the website for comments to be submitted.

Dan Darling indicated that Odell Park is a fantastic resource and his first time down there when he moved to Franklin was for Community Day; however, he it was very intimidating passing the rundown buildings to get there.

Richard Lewis thanked the public for their input. A sign up sheet was passed around collecting email addresses for future Master Plan updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Carey
Planning and Zoning Assistant