

**Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC)
& Focus Group Meeting**

January 5, 2010

Ms. Gibson-Quigley called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

The following members of the Steering Committee were present:

Members Present: Charles Blanchard, Alan Curboy (left at 6:35 p.m.) Sandra Gibson-Quigley, Chair, Steve Dalberth, Penny Dumas, Heather Hart, Heather Hendrick, Chris Rovezzi, Bruce Smith, Maryann Thorpe and Arnold Wilson.

Members Absent: Patrick Babcock, Matt Rousseau

Staff: Jean M. Bubon, Town Planner, Diane Trapasso, Administrative Assistant

Consultant: Ralph Willmer, VHB

FOCUS GROUPS

The following Focus Groups met, with the following members present:

Land Use

James Cunniff
Alan Curboy
Elissa Gelfand
Dave Barnicle
Carol Goodwin
Ginger Peabody
Diane Trapasso

Housing

Heather Hart, MPSC
Bruce Smith, MPSC

Economic Development

Steve Dalberth, MPSC
Chris Rovezzi, MPSC
Patti Affenito

Kristie Pecci

Public Services & Facilities

Charlie Blanchard, MPSC
Maryann Thorpe, MPSC
Arnold Wilson
Russell Chamberland
Mike Kermani

Survey

Penny Dumas, MPSC
Sandra Gibson-Quigley, MPSC
Heather Hendrick, MPSC

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee convened at approximately 6:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Made by Mr. Blanchard to approve the minutes of November 17, 2009.
2nd: Ms. Dumas
Discussion: None
Vote: 7 – 0 – 1 (Mr. Rovezzi)

Motion: Made by Ms. Dumas to approve the minutes of December 15, 2009.
2nd: Ms. Hendrick
Discussion: None
Vote: 7 – 0 – 1 (Ms. Thorpe)

OUTREACH EFFORTS

Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated that she had the opportunity to meet with the Board of Selectmen on January 4th to update them on the Master Planning process. She had provided the members with copies of Mr. Willmer's notes from the Forum. She stated that it was indicated that many of the issues raised at the Forum are issues that have been consistently raised in the past.

Ms. Hendrick stated that the Housing Focus Group was scheduled to meet with developers, students in a Sociology class at Tantasqua, a group of Senior Citizens and a Realtor over the next couple of weeks to gather information.

Mr. Blanchard stated that members of the Public Services Group had met with the Police Chief, Fire Chief, DPW Director, Library Director and Town Planner over the past several weeks. Ms. Thorpe stated that they would also be touring the Public Safety Complex and DPW facility this coming Saturday morning.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley encouraged members to meet with the groups they had volunteered to meet with and report back to the group at future meetings.

FOCUS GROUPS

Mr. Dalberth asked for further clarification for the Focus Groups. Mr. Willmer stated that there were three things that each group should be doing. The first is to identify key issues and concerns related to their topic area, the second was to gather information from various groups and sources and the third would be to review the draft element and provide comment. He suggested that the Focus Groups may wish to prepare a two to four page issues paper to provide to the Consultants and the Steering Committee. He would provide samples to Ms. Bubon for distribution to the members.

Mr. Willmer stated that it is natural for the current economic situation to color what we are doing right now, but he stressed that everyone needed to remember that this was a long-term plan. Therefore everyone should be focusing energy on the long term issues facing the town.

Ms. Gibson-Quigley thought the issue paper was a good way to sum up what the group was thinking and it would be something everyone could review. Mr. Blanchard agreed stating that his group had all prepared summaries from their meetings with various Department Heads so it would be easy for them to draft a paper.

Mr. Dalberth asked when the papers would be due. Mr. Willmer stated that VHB would be gathering additional data and starting to draft the chapters in the next month or so; therefore the groups should try to wrap up in the next month so that the papers can be provided. He stated Economic Development would probably not be completed until March, so they may have a bit more time than the other groups.

Mr. Rovezzi questioned what would be done with the issue papers. Mr. Willmer stated that VHB would use the papers to validate what they have heard; or the papers may raise an issue they had not yet heard about.

Mr. Willmer stated that VHB would be starting to prepare some draft goals and objectives as well.

SURVEY

Ms. Gibson-Quigley stated that the Survey Focus Group had met four times including this evening. They had reviewed other surveys and the questions provided to them by the Focus Groups. They were trying to be as clear as possible with the questions and they were trying

to break things down so that the question was understandable. For example, they were trying to explain what commercial means within a question. They were also trying to ask questions that you could do something about rather than ask a question for the sake of asking. They would be completing their draft and providing that to Mr. Willmer who would then send that on to UNH.

Mr. Willmer stated that UNH would make sure that the questions were neutrally worded in a way that would provide the type of answers the groups was looking for. They would also be sure that the questions were asked in a way that would insure that the results would be scientifically and statistically valid. There would also be basic demographic questions asked so that the information could be broken down in a variety of ways.

The questions would be provided to the Steering Committee prior to the next meeting for review at the February 9th meeting. It would then take two weeks to complete the mailing. Each residence would receive three pieces of mail. The first would be a notice that the survey would be coming, the second would be the survey and the third would be a reminder to complete the survey. There would be a four week period to complete and return the survey and then it would take 2-3 weeks to compile the data. He anticipated that someone from UNH would be present at the April meeting to present the findings.

Mr. Rovezzi asked what could be expected for a return rate. Mr. Willmer stated that they should expect about 1,000 to 1,500 to be returned. That would be about a 1/4 to 1/3 return rate.

Mr. Willmer stated that he had also been in discussion with Ms. Bubon about the Open Space update that is being done now. He stated that they planned to have a six to seven questions on the survey related to the open space update; this would save funding for the town and also people would not get overwhelmed with surveys.

Mr. Blanchard questioned the business survey that went out this week. He was concerned that the business owners were not being asked the same type of questions as the residents would be asked. He stated that he believed that business owners really wanted to be included in this effort the same way that residents were. Ms. Dumas stated that if the regular surveys went to business owners she would certainly want to be sure that those results were coded differently than the residential responses. She also questioned how many other towns would actually send the residential surveys to all the businesses. Mr. Willmer stated that he would speak to UNH about this issue.

There was some discussion on precise wording of questions and the use of other questions such as would you still like to have a particular type of shop if it were located one mile from your home, or if it would cause congestion, etc. It was generally agreed that this type of clarification could be helpful and yet could be problematic with the responses. Mr. Willmer assured the group that this is the exact type of thing that UNH would be helping us with.

NEXT STEPS

- ❖ The survey questions will be finalized by the Survey Group to be sent to UNH.
- ❖ Sample issue papers will be sent to Ms. Bubon by Mr. Willmer for distribution.
- ❖ VHB will begin to draft goals and objectives.
- ❖ VHB will continue data collection and analysis.
- ❖ Chapters will be drafted.

NEXT MEETING

February 9, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. at the Senior Center

Focus Groups should contact the Planning Department with meeting dates so that they can be posted.

On a motion made by Ms. Dumas, seconded by Mr. Blanchard and voted 10-0 the meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.