

WASHINGTON PLANNING BOARD
Town Center Vision Subcommittee – Working meeting Minutes

May 22, 2018

Committee members present: Lolly Gilbert, Roxy Otterson, Jean Kluk, Ron Jager, Bert Bodnar, Jon Gibson, Paul Dulac, Andrew Hatch, Al Krygeris, Kevin Provencher, Jim Crandall and Nan Schwartz.

Visitor: None

1.0 **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Jim Crandall at 8:00 AM, in the Town Hall.

2.0 **Introductions** - Crandall welcomed everyone to the subcommittee and we went around the table and introduced ourselves to the group.

3.0 **Vision Statement** - Crandall spoke briefly about the Vision Statement written by Jean Kluk when we were defining what the subcommittee would be and their objectives. He said it is made up of “Townies” and Planning Board members. He feel it is a fantastic opportunity to set parameters for the future of the town center. He said as a subcommittee everything goes through the PB but together we will bring things to the BoS. He said everyone should review the vision document again before next meeting.

4.0 **Subcommittee & Chair** – Crandall said he would start as chair but he is open to others doing it. He said Gilbert has agreed to be Co-chair with him. Dulac said he thought the Chair and Co-chair should not be on the PB. Provencher said he doesn’t want the subcommittee to look self-serving or have the PB too much in control. He is willing to be out front on some things in a non-confrontational way. We agreed that Gilbert is a good Co-chair and can lead every other meeting. Crandall said there are a few alternates that want to be involved but are too busy to attend all the meetings; Ryan Curran and Noah Chidester; we will keep them in the loop. He said there might be others who want to attend and give input. Otterson asked if we will post the agendas on the website so people can attend if they are interested; we will do this. Crandall hopes to come up with ideas to bring to next Town Meeting. He said we are volunteers and we don’t have any staff so if you have an idea you want to explore please do. Some ideas will take research and perhaps grant writing so he wants us to be “worker bees” and share our ideas. He thinks we should look for consensus on issues and not hold votes. Crandall thinks we need to define the Town Center and would like us to bring ideas for what we would like to see done for next meeting.

5.0 **Public Meetings** - Crandall said we would hold a “charrette” or a public meeting later in the year to help rank our ideas and come up with more ideas and have some give and take with the community.

6.0 **Meeting times & days** – Crandall though meeting once a month would be adequate at first. Jager felt that meeting more than once a month would be better and suggested every other week, all agreed. We decided mornings are best, 8am is good and Wednesday would be good. The next meeting will be June 6th, Wednesday at 8am in the Town Hall. Dulac wants to limit the time of meetings to 1½ hours. Schwartz thinks we will have to be flexible sometimes.

7.0 **Town Center discussion** – Gibson wanted us to define the Town Center. Crandall said he thought it was from the Post Office down Rte 31 to the Historical Society building on Halfmoon Pond Road, also up to the Fire Station on Lempster Mountain Road. Gilbert asked if we should go down Rte 31 to Mill Street. Jager would like to keep it undefined for now. Gilbert asked about East Washington, which also has a town center. Kluk said the business center is up

here so we should focus on the center of town. Crandall said he went to a conference and the talked about town centers and how they are the heart of the town. Dulac said rather than define the center he wants to talk about what the subcommittee is all about. Are we focusing on safety or spurring business and increase people coming to town, he feels the subcommittee has all kinds of tentacles. Kluk said #2 on the handout document is what she thinks we are doing, conceptually. Jager agrees but it is abstract and feels we might do better to identify issues and problems. Ask why is that done that way or exists in that way, come up with a cluster of concrete issues and work from there. Crandall said this all started with a discussion about parking. Hatch thinks we need strategic objectives and we should get a white board and throw up ideas, we should put the ideas into buckets and identify what can be done quickly and other things that are longer-term projects. He said Town Hall is the centerpiece and we are reacting to this project being done and Rte 31 is a big component. Crandall said the crosswalk to the Library is important. Hatch asked when the parking lot/park was put in. Gilbert thought 5 years ago. Gibson thinks a crosswalk is difficult to get, he will contact Kevin Belanger, who works for DOT and ask him.

Kluk asked if we want to do a white board for the next meeting. Provencher thought we should go with words, they may fall in several places, such as lighting, crosswalks, sidewalks, etc. He said he talked with Ruth Ward about the safety issues and the deteriorating of the road; she is responsive and would help us. Schwartz said that DOT is not that hard to deal with. Kluk said representative Steve Smith is on the legislative Transportation Committee (Chair) and will be a good contact.

Jager had an “out of the box” thought about removing the driveway in front of the Town Hall and move parking to a cut in area on the Halfmoon Pond Rd side of the Town Common, adding s walkway and green in front of the building. Gilbert thought there would be problems with the handicap parking and dropping people off in front of the building. Provencher said that there is a problem when you first drive into town there is nothing but confusion with where to drive and park. Schwartz said the Common is on the national historic registry and can’t be messed with very much. Otterson asked if the driveway and parking are staying the way it is now. Crandall said there is a question about that and it could be part of a bigger plan. Hatch said that with the Artisan’s group parking is an issue, also large buses on King Street and in the center of town. Dulac said we should prioritize the problems; a bus across from the store, going to the library, he feels safety priorities are number one. He thinks that consensus doesn’t work because everyone won’t agree on everything. Krygeris thinks that consensus means you talk it out and not just move on if you don’t agree. Kluk thinks consensus means compromising to come to a consensus. Hatch thinks we can do the white board and find consensus. He feels we are servants to the town and we will bring things to Town Meeting for a vote. Otterson thinks we should keep the view of an improved Town Center and it shouldn’t be an issue.

Crandall said our homework is to come back with thoughts and ideas. Krygeris brought up the Main Street USA program and they give up to \$50K. Hatch said that you have to become a Main Street Community and he has history with this program. It requires a 10-year commitment and you pay dues to the national organization. The said it is geared to towns larger than us. Kluk said that #5 on the document lists a bunch of planning and funding resources and we can poke around those. Hatch spoke well of the USDA Rural Development grants and Jager agreed. Kluk said the First Impressions program from UNH Cooperative Extension is a good one to look at.

Note: Our next meeting will be June 6th, Wednesday at 8AM.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nan Schwartz
Planning Board Secretary