

WASHINGTON PLANNING BOARD
Town Center Vision Subcommittee – Working meeting Minutes

February 19, 2019

Members present: Lolly Gilbert, Roxy Otterson, Kevin Provencher, and Nan Schwartz, Jim Crandall attended by phone.

Visitors: Penny Whitman, Jared Reynolds and Steven Meno from Hillsboro County UNH Co-operative Extension.

1.0 **Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Lolly Gilbert at 9:00 AM in the Town Hall. Gilbert asked if there were any changes to the minutes, no one requested changes and the minutes were approved.

2.0 Gilbert opened the meeting and made committee introductions to Steven Meno. Gilbert explained we were here to do the exercise with Penny and Jared. Penny said there are tangible projects that can have an outcome and finite projects that we can do. She said they identified 24 possible projects from the assessment document. Gilbert mentioned that our immediate goal is to have a handout for Town Meeting. Whitman asked us to come up with projects for the priority list. Provencher said that repair and renovation of the Schoolhouse is now in the BoS's hands and it will be on the warrant for Town Meeting. He thinks Phase 2 could be on the list. He thinks that parking, access to Town Hall and landscaping around the town buildings is an item for the list. Schwartz mentioned the playground and park upgrade. Provencher mentioned walkways to the Library, the crosswalk to the parking lot. Otterson mentioned the need for a crosswalk to the store. Gilbert mentioned a walkway to the store from the parking lot to the Town buildings. Otterson mentioned a map of the town showing cultural assets. Gilbert mentioned the Historic Center walking tour and map. Schwartz mentioned the Welcome sign, coordinated center signage and traffic calming. Provencher thinks we need to get our state reps involved to work with DOT and push our needs. He thinks that we need improved drainage (storm drains) and road conditions improved and it will take a concerted effort from the state to get these things done. Jared thinks there could be funds available for this/. Steve said he has worked in Wilton and they are talking to DOT and has found them receptive. He thinks we should speak to the district agent for our district to start. Otterson mentioned enlarging the parking lot (near the Library). Gilbert brought up the red house and the possibility that the town could buy it for cultural use. Schwartz mentioned encouraging town pride. Crandall mentioned considering moving the Gazebo across the road for better use. He mentioned changing and improving the Faxon Hill access onto Rte. 31. He said that an offer was made to paint the red house but the owners did not accept the offer. He also mentioned the Town Pound. Jared asked about recreation. Provencher brought up having a trail map and Schwartz said that Conservation Commission produced one a few years ago (available at Town Hall) and they are now working on a recreation guide. Jared asked about marketing and branding. Schwartz said she sees that as part of the signage (welcome sign) and walking tour piece. Schwartz mentioned benches and trash cans near the common and playground. She mentioned a parking inventory and dealing with access issues. Provencher mentioned appropriate lighting in the center of town. He mentioned community art and the Artisan's annual event. He wants to draw people to the center, engage the artists and get them to use the Town buildings; he suggested we bring them in to talk about their needs. Schwartz said that the Artisan's group has been holding their weekends in East Washington, where they have a walkable venue and provides display space for everyone in several buildings. Otterson said that in Newport they had artists do murals around town, which told the history of the town. Provencher suggested that they could possibly do an arts festival and coordinate it with the Sunapee Crafts Fair. Penny mentioned housing upgrades in the center. Penny wrote all the suggestions on post-its and we then ranked the projects for feasibility and impact for the town. Those ranking high in both were: conducting a parking inventory, investigate walkability,

engaging the local artists and a town pride campaign (beautification) project.
Those with high impact and medium feasibility were traffic calming, investigating walkways, crosswalks and road drainage improvement (all need DOT to approve), phase 2 of the Schoolhouse reno and creating a map of cultural assets.

Those with medium high impact and high feasibility were: work on the playground, adding benches and trashcans.

High impact and medium high feasibility were improvement of the grounds around the Center buildings (includes parking, access, landscaping), develop a walking (historical) tour and a welcome sign at Center entrance on Rte. 31).

Medium impact and medium feasibility were: interpretive signage and coordination of signage in the center and restoration of the Town Pound.

High impact but low feasibility was consideration of moving the bandstand.

Medium impact but low feasibility were: improved lighting, purchase of the red house and enlarging the Library parking lot.

We then grouped related projects; the historic walking tour, interpretive signage and branding, benches, park, trash cans and playground, Parking inventory and improvement of grounds around the center buildings, and all the DOT related Rte. 31 issues.

Penny suggested we start a conversation with DOT and Jared suggested speaking with our district manager in Swanzey. He said that UVLSRPC can help with funding and we should look at the TAP (transportation Alternative Program) through the state, the RPC can help us with the application and scoring. We need to have an idea of costs and possibilities to present to the town's people. Crandall thinks we need to do feasibility first before we present to the town.

The three immediate actions we decided on were:

1. Engage DOT and the RPC on road issues.
2. Engage Parks and Rec and Conservation Commission (and artisans) to talk about coordination of projects.
3. Develop ideas for historic map/tour, signage (branding), town pound restoration and historic experience (engage Historical Society).

Otterson said we should assign jobs. Provencher said he would get in touch with DOT and try to pull a meeting with them and will touch base with the artisan group. Gilbert will reach out to P&R and CC.

Penny and Jared will get the summary report done for Town Meeting. Steve suggested a poster board with projects where people can vote with dots. He suggested we look for focused input on specific things and target our engagement. It was suggested we use boxes to have people vote for projects. Otterson suggested a poster of priorities for Town Meeting.

3.0 **Next meeting** – none set.

Meeting adjourned at 10:50am.

Respectfully submitted,
Nan Schwartz
Planning Board Secretary