

**Minutes
Hampden Town Council
Community Services Committee
March 04, 2008 @ 6:30pm**

The meeting of the Hampden Town Council Community Services Committee was called to order at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 04, 2008, at the Hampden Municipal Building by Chairperson Shannon Cox.

Bob Osborne, Town Planner
Gretchen Heldmann, GIS/IT Specialist
John Mahoney
Don Katnik, Conservation Commission
Councilor Tom Brann
Councilor Shannon Cox
Councilor Matt Arnett
Gene Weldon
Jim Feverston
Chris Shrum, EMDC
Councilor Andre Cushing
Dean Bennett, Economic Development Specialist

1. Introductions of new people.

No introductions necessary.

2. Business

A. Minutes Acceptance

All minutes were motioned to be approved, seconded, and passed by all present.

B. Mission Statement

Discussion ensued about the current mission statement on the website in comparison with the purpose statement Councilor Arnett sent around from previous Council literature. Questions were raised as to if it's appropriate for this committee to take on the task of coordinating and leading other committees in their ventures. It was decided that it was appropriate to reach out to other committees and groups, such as the pool, library, recreation, etc- but not to try to direct their efforts. That is to say, if a need arises and is recognized by ComServ, then ComServ will bring it to the attention of the appropriate committee if need be. Quarterly meetings or something of that nature was suggested as a way to keep in touch with the various groups to make sure we are all coordinated and on the same page.

It was suggested that we perhaps add a phrase to the mission statement to include language about organizing public awareness and education events about

various issues. While this was a notable suggestion, it was not approved because people felt that ALL committees were entitled to do this as a way to educate the community about that committee's particular efforts, and that could be seen as a control method whereby all committees would have to get their efforts approved by ComServ.

It was suggested and approved that language be added at the end of the comp plan planning period, to indicate that ComServ should be the keeper and manager of the Comp Plan, to ensure it doesn't become another dusty shelf document, but a live document that we constantly use as reference.

C. Role & Scope of Council Committees

This item was not explicitly discussed, but was encompassed somewhat in the previous discussion.

D. Newsletter/TV Show Initiatives

Councilor Cox asked for suggestions of what should be highlighted in the newsletter or on TV, and asked people to email her further suggestions. Items mentioned included: stream clean-up and Tree City USA/Arbor Day celebration.

E. Misc Other

It was unanimously agreed that the next meeting needed to be at 6pm in order to cover items not covered in this meeting or previous meetings that are important and need attention. Councilor Arnett also requested we try to think of any potential capital expenses over the next five years.

3. Comp Plan Discussion

Chris stated he would draft outlines (but with more detail) of the action plans for all sections discussed thus far and would have them to us by Wednesday the 12th.

Discussion tonight was about Critical Natural Resources. Please see document uploaded on website for reference. The document was created through a collaborative effort of Chris and the Conservation Commission. Don spoke to most of the points in the document throughout the course of the evening.

- It was argued that smaller size developments also need to go through an environmental checklist assessment similar to site law requirements, but on a smaller scale. It was then argued that this development assessment checklist should be looked at from multiple perspectives, including historical resources, etc. Most present agreed this was appropriate.

- Another point made was that developments should have to include a bigger-picture trails network plan, open space connectivity plan as it relates to adjacent and nearby parcels. This is important for truly creating connectivity and not a series of lollipop subdivisions with their own respective open space pieces- attempts should be made to link open space through developments on a larger scale not just for trail purposes but also habitat connectivity.

- A suggestion was made to incorporate a point system for developments rather than minimum standards. That way, a development can gain or lose points for certain activities, but they must meet a certain score in order to be approved. This would encourage developers to go above and beyond in some areas in order to meet the score.

- An argument was made that we need to consider zoning and density as two different things. Rural areas can be maintained if development is clustered tightly in a lollipop development closer to the main road, and the back half of the development is maintained as woods. Visual buffers can be put in place along the main road to hide the development. The large patch of woods seems more rural than widely-spaced two acre plans. An argument was made against this, in that if done incorrectly, lollipop developments coming in from opposite sides of two parallel roads may eliminate the woods and cause a divide of a habitat block.

Chris and Dean were charged with coming up with actual, solid, specific examples of:

How to protect rural areas?

What are the tools to accomplish that task?

How do we get people to support the effort? And want it?

This was requested because concern was expressed that at the end of the comp planning period if we have nothing in place to implement this, then in order to get there we may have to put a moratorium on building, so we should try to avoid that by getting the ordinance committee going to draft new concepts into policy. It was noted that they still had to be in line with the old comp plan until the new one is in effect; it was noted that there was plenty one could do to improve ordinances and still be in line with the old plan.

The next meeting is *March 18th* at **6:00pm for ComServ** and 7pm for Comp Plan discussion.

4. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned around 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Heldmann
GIS/IT Specialist