

Town Council Strategic Planning Workshop Minutes
2/5/2011

Attending:

Mayor Matthew Arnett	Councilor William Shakespeare
Councilor Thomas Brann	Councilor Kristen Hornbrook
Councilor Jean Lawlis	Town Manager Sue Lessard
Councilor Andre Cushing	Walt Cupples - Facilitator
Councilor Janet Hughes	Deb Cupples – Facilitator
Michelle Blosser	Al Valcourt
Linda Valcourt	Mark Cormier
Annette Cormier	Jack Forbush
Kristin Forbush	Roscoe Witham
Rich Armstrong	Ed Armstrong
Don Pelletier	Roger Goode
Jim Kiser	Bruce Trundy
Sally Leete	Paul Philbrick
Cindy Philbrick	Joe Goudreau
Paula Goudreau	Dan Wiswell
Cash Webb	Scott Carter
Lisa Carter	

The meeting was opened by the Mayor. He introduced the Facilitators, Deb and Walt Cupples who outlined the norms of expected behavior for the session.

Those were posted as:

- Open sharing of ideas
- All ideas are valuable
- Stay on task
- Straw polls to 'see where we are'
- No binding decision-making/voting
- Have some fun
- Have to be done by 2 p.m.
- Part of an ongoing process

The Mayor then recognized the group of citizens who were attended the meeting. Primary concerns of the group, as stated, centered around the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, its process, and in particular, a land use map that is part of the plan. The Mayor invited attendees to introduce themselves and state their concerns. All concerns were listed on newsprint posted around the room. Those concerns, verbatim from the list posted on the wall are as follows:

1. Have seen Proposed Land Use Map and are concerned.
2. How beaver flowage affects my rights over my land?

3. It is our land – we want to retain the rights to our land – including passing it on to our kids.
4. Our land will be worthless if the Comprehensive Plan goes through.
5. How can land be redistricted without landowners input?
6. What restrictions of Hampden Rifle and Pistol Club on its property?
7. Constitutionality can't be taken lightly.
8. Concern with Randall Arendt's role.
9. We allow the community to use our property for Fire Dept. training may be other land owner's usage in community.
10. Suggest we have a meeting just for this issue.
11. What about land in Tree Growth?
12. Consider not implementing the new map without input from landowners.
13. In 1941 Japan "Awoke Sleeping Giant" – that has happened now in Hampden.
14. How many people were involved in creating current Comprehensive Plan? I was not contacted (& I own 53/43 acres).
15. Misinformation was going on in communicating with constituents.
16. Is CLUP Map a working document?
17. Dev. Of SCLU: Doesn't include input from residents & doesn't recognize my rights.
18. We are stewards of our land. We don't want gov't intervention.
19. My land, if this happens, will be worthless.
20. Question the "process" whereby Council adopts/votes on map without input – suggest contacting ahead of decision.
21. Suggest a great deal more input & effort.
22. Strong push for less gov't is better.
23. Reconsider getting rid of new plan – keep the old or start over.

24. Need to improve communication.
25. Would appreciate heightened level of contact when issues affect my property.
26. A lot of people made input to Shoreline Zoning & it was not acted on.
27. Oath Councilors took is to uphold people's right to own land.
28. Is lack of communication from Town Councilors to residents – need to improve – consider new ideas
29. Why can't I cut firewood on my own land?
30. I believe in property rights – we trusted you.
31. To improve communication: Twitter, Facebook, RSS feed. Cannot be just on website.
32. Can we get detailed land use items?

The Council discussed the idea of setting a special date for meeting to discuss the concerns expressed. A straw poll was taken to determine if March 1, 2011 would work for such a meeting. The majority of the Council agreed to that date in the straw poll. Also discussed was the idea of cancelling the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee meeting scheduled for February 16th. A straw poll indicated that the majority of the Council was in favor of that action. Final decisions on those issues will be decided at the Town Council meeting on February 7th.

The Town Manager was instructed to send out a mailer to all residents notifying them of the March 1st meeting and the subject matter involved.

After residents expressed their concerns and the straw polls were taken to help determine a 'what next' plan, the Council took a break to allow residents who wished to leave to do so.

Facilitators presented an organizational 'relationship' chart that defined the ways in which boards/groups interact. The steps are as follows:

1. Polite – the relationship between members to start
2. Why We're Here – the relationship that begins to explore the purpose of the relationship
3. Bid for Power – the way in which members seek to exert their influence
4. Constructive- the relationship that is defined when members work together for common goals

5. esprit – The relationship when members come to trust each other and the group and develop a 'one for all' approach that is highly constructive

It was explained that all groups follow this pattern of behavior – and that it is not possible to skip steps – each one is a necessary component of coming to effective group behavior. It was also explained that every time a new member is introduced to the group, the group starts over at step 1. The Council was encouraged to use this list as a touchstone when it encountered difficulty in moving forward with its decision-making process.

Next the Facilitators asked Councilors what they felt the Council needed to do as a Council going forward. The following is the list that was posted on newsprint by the Facilitators:

- Be open with each other
- Come to agreement about our role as Councilors
- Inventory where we have evolved over the past ten years
- Then identify tools to communicate
- Determine where we are going
- Explore social media communication tools – consider restrictions
- Want Community to be comfortable coming to the Council
- Should we consider a second session to complete the agenda that was not addressed?

The decision was made to continue with the meeting for the purpose of discussing the upcoming budget and for the purpose of discussing the Hamlin Marina land swap project because both are time sensitive and the Manager cannot prepare a budget without guidance from the Council and an idea of what work plan that they want for the coming year.

The Hamlin Marine discussion involved an assessment of the pluses and minuses of the Council trading land with Hamlin Marine. The two parcels in question, one owned by Hamlin and the other owned by the Town are virtually identical in appraised value. Pluses were identified as equal value, expanded riverfront access to the general public, conservation of a potential park area, retaining the boat launch, the new property is more scenic than the marina site which is covered with buildings, returns the Marina to general taxation, revenue could be generated for town use by selling/raffling boats donated to the Town by Hamlin Marine. Negatives identified included the loss of \$4300 in annual revenue from the marina lease, appearance of favoritism to a business, difficult to explain to the public, selling/raffling boats not the business of the Town.

The Council examined the pluses and minuses and the Town Manager was directed to provide information for this item for the Finance and Administration meeting on Monday, February 7th.

The next item discussed was the upcoming budget. Due to the very limited time left in the meeting, Facilitators asked each Councilor to identify budget parameters that they felt were important. The list identified is as follows:

- Maintain mil rate at or near current mil rate
- Maintain town mil rate at current mil rate – independent of school impact
- Put pressure on school to keep their budget down
- Municipal budget should show modest reduction
- Assess Town Services – see where cuts may be made
- Try and be creative in looking at service provision – i.e. trash collection, etc.
- Don't raise taxes and put pressure on school
- Maintain current level of services
- Work our hardest with the school to keep their budget down
- Maintain the town mil rate

Next Steps identified as:

- Town Manager will present budget showing different mil rate impact scenarios
- Meet with the other two SAD 22 communities to discuss joint strategy for controlling expenses
- Survey the community to see what the community wants
- Make sure that it is clear that these are preliminary discussions and nothing is set in stone
- Communicate our concerns regarding the potential increase in the School Board's budget
- Communicate to the School Administration that we need a budget figure by the first of March – this should come from the Council and not just the Manager

It was cited that the Council needs to schedule another planning session to hold discussion on the agenda items that were not addressed on 2/5/2011. A taped copy of the meeting was made and converted to DVD.

The meeting was adjourned at 2 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lessard
Town Manager