

Comprehensive Plan Committee Minutes October 3, 2023

Present: John Maltais, Leticia VanVuuren, Toni Small, Alison Fongemie, Bill Farkas, Jim Balano, and Jane Conrad, Select Board liaison. Dianne and Ken Oelberger attended via Zoom.

For this meeting, Bill Farkas, alternate, served as a voting member.

Minutes of the September 7, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Leticia's education and experience should be listed as "GIS (e.g. mapping and data)". There were no other changes. Upon motion by A. Fongemie, seconded by L. VanVuuren, the minutes were approved unanimously.

We reviewed **census data** provided by Leticia VanVuuren, and discussed other information we felt would be helpful, including labor statistics (how many residents are employed vs. retired or school age; fields within which local residents are employed); who owns a home vs. rents; % of homes which are permanent residences vs. seasonal. Leticia and John Maltais discussed sources of this information. Leticia pointed out that the way in which the census presented data is different in the 2010 and 2020 cycles, so will not be a straight comparison. The American Community Surveys in 2011 and 2021 also provide helpful data.

Interviews of key community members We reviewed and revised the Google Document that lists the open-ended questions we will ask, as well as possible topics with which we might prompt interview subjects if they seem stumped. Interviewees will be asked: What the town should prioritize in the coming 5 – 10 years? What worries you about the town's future? What does the town do well?

We divided up the interviews as follows:

Linda Bean - Van Thompson	Peter Miller – Bill Farkas
Glen Libby - Toni Small	Andy Barstow – Jim Balano
Gerry Cushman – Jane Conrad	Randy Cushman – Bill Farkas
Greg Souteia – Jim Balano	Mike Felton – Alison Fongemie
Alane Kennedy – J. Conrad	Sally Cruzan Toni Small
Wayne Sawyer – Leticia VV	John Falla Van or Jane

Sandra Hall – John Maltais	Mike Smith Van or Jane
Larry Bailey – John Maltais	Ryan LaShane Alison Fongemie
Peta VanVuuren – Leticia VV	Richard Bates - Jane & Van

Interviews will be conducted before the December meeting.

Interviewers may choose to record the meeting (if the interviewee agrees) if helpful. Interviewers will provide a written summary of the priorities shared by the interviewee.

We agreed that it would be helpful to document community members' interviews as an oral history project to highlight current community priorities, but due to the time and complexity of doing so, as well as the risk of less frank responses if interviews were recorded, decided not to do that now.

Committee members will also type up our own thoughts regarding the town's priorities in the next 5 – 10 years, our worries, and what the town does well to share in addition to the interviewees listed above.

Postcard Project We discussed whether asking for community input via postcards would reduce participation in later, more detailed, surveys. The consensus was that it is appropriate to make a first pass at getting people's top 5 priorities, and let them know that we have launched the Comprehensive Plan process. The more people hear about the process, the more likely they will be engaged and provide input.

We decided to have 5 drop boxes for postcards at the following locations: Tenants Harbor, Port Clyde, and Spruce Head post offices, the town hall, and the school. These are government locations and therefore easier to monitor.

Jane suggested having social studies' teachers use the postcard project at the school serve as a Civics lesson – that soliciting community input about priorities can eventually translate to town policy and laws (ordinances).

Postcards will ask What should the Town's priorities be in the next 5 – 10 years? Allowing 5 lines for responses. There will be a line for Name _____, and ask people to circle whether they are full-time or seasonal residents.

Postcards and drop boxes will be available from Nov. 1 to the end of the year.

Discussed options for dropboxes, including those listed on Amazon for \$27. Given time constraints and challenges at the school, we should go for the most expedient means of obtaining boxes (Staples?). Jane will work on this and circulate what the postcards will look like for final approval. If possible, we will include student artwork on the boxes or postcards.

Communication with the public about the Comprehensive Plan process The Town website now notes that the process has launched. Jane will draft a short description of the process for the group's review, which can be posted on the website, as well as on the St. George Message Board on Facebook.

John Maltais suggested that we have a Frequently Asked Questions list on the town website. We should also have a link to the current plan (currently hard to find on the site).

Colby Student Support Jane reported that she spoke with Colby College Government Professor Milan Babik, who confirmed that the college president stressed that the college's relationship with St. George is a priority and he supports having a student assist us with the Comprehensive Plan and receive college credit for this work. Prof. Babik will identify a student (or multiple students, from whom we would choose one) who is currently a junior and could work with us in the Jan – May 2024 semester, and again during the 2024-25 school year.

John Maltais was unanimously elected chair of the committee.

By unanimous vote, the committee agreed to hold its meetings on the first Tuesday of the month. The next meeting is on Nov. 7 (election day) at 7 pm in the downstairs meeting room.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.