

Minutes of the Comprehensive Plan Committee December 5, 2023

Present: John Maltais, Toni Small, Greg Soutiea, Leticia VanVuuren, Alison Fongemie, Jim Balano (alternate), Bill Farkas (alternate), Jane Conrad (Select Board liaison) and Van Thompson (Select Board chair).

Also in attendance: Fred Morrill.

The minutes of the November 7, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously.

Postcard Project and Interview update

Ms. Conrad has checked the dropboxes and there have been few responses to the survey. Ms. Fongemie created a Google Doc version of the survey which can be completed online. Hopefully this will encourage more public participation. There was a discussion about creating a shortcut link to the survey using Bitly.com Ms. Conrad will provide the link to town staff to get this on the website a.s.a.p.

Ms. VanVuuren asked that each interviewer create a Google Doc in the Raw Data file and summarize the data collected from those interviewed, without naming them specifically. If the data is organized by topic, it will be easier to compile later for analysis.

Comprehensive Plan Process Budget

The town will prepare its budget for the July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 budget early next year. This Committee should make a recommendation as to what amount should be set aside for the Comprehensive Plan process. It is hoped that the efforts of this committee, plus Colby College students and a possible Island Institute Fellow might obviate the need for a consultant throughout the process. The estimate for a consultant from the Mid-Coast Council of Governments was approximately \$18,000. We should ask for an allocation, then hope that, depending on the college student and fellow possibilities, we will use considerably less.

Ms. VanVuuren moved, and Mr. Soutiea seconded, a motion to ask the town to set aside \$20,000 from the upcoming budget for the entire Comprehensive Plan process (this might span more than one budgetary cycle). The motion passed unanimously.

Data Management

Mr. Maltais explained that the Committee has its own Google Drive set aside for the purpose of managing data and documents related to the planning process. Folders include raw data; resources; committee matters (minutes, interview assignments, etc.); the 2018 Plan; the 2025 Plan (at this point only the State Checklist is in this folder).

Ms. Conrad noted that she obtained the Table of Contents for the 2018 Plan from Tara Elwell, but the Table of Contents is not part of the pdf of the 2018 Plan. She obtained all chapters of the 2018 Plan in Word format from Ms. Elwell. Mr. Maltais said he would consolidate it into one Word document since we may wish to use Chapter headings in the 2025 Plan.

The group briefly discussed the 2018 Table of Contents and the fact that it is not organized in the most logical outline. It would be helpful to decide upon a Table of Contents/Outline for the 2025 Plan, and ensure that it is aligned with the State of Maine Comprehensive Plan Checklist, then use that outline for the organization of our data.

Ms. Conrad volunteered to talk to Tom Miragliulo of the State Municipal Planning Program to ask whether we must track the State checklist in that order, or can modify it as we see fit. She will also ask him about the timeline we can expect for the State's review of our draft plan.

Workshop

The Committee decided to hold a workshop from 9 – 12 on Saturday January 20th for the purpose of holding in-depth discussions about data management, and input we wish to seek from Town Committees. The workshop will be held at the Craignair. Although all of our meetings are open to the public, we will not be entertaining public input during the workshop (although the public can always attend and observe).

Public comment: Mr. Morrill suggested that the Comprehensive Plan include a recommendation that property taxes be abated in exchange for work for the town. Van Thompson indicated that this suggestion would be taken under consideration.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.