

Draft Minutes

Present: Alan Grigsby, Dennis Osgood, Jr., Tom Ford, Lisa Paquette and Steve Picano

The minutes of the December 19 meeting were approved by acclamation.

Committee members who attended last night's Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) updated Lisa about the discussions at that meeting. Alan reported that the next MPAC meeting would be Tuesday, Feb. 10, when the form and substance of a possible survey would be discussed. He said that options to a mailed survey that were brought up included a telephone survey, one done by high school students at stores and on the street, an internet site, and a forum.

Concern about having the same citizens show up at a forum as they do at other public and civic events was mentioned. The views of all elements of the citizenry should be obtained.

Dennis said that not doing a survey disenfranchises the citizenry regarding the Master Plan. Giving citizens an opportunity to give their ideas about transportation, economic development, housing and history creates ownership in the Master Plan. A survey also demonstrates that the city wants their input, ideas and opinions. The opportunity to participate was seen as important.

Tom wondered why more funding wasn't available for the Master Plan. His concern was that in a multi-million dollar budget, an additional amount to do a mailing wouldn't be great and that not funding the Master Plan may be an indication of the value the city places on it.

Rewording the statements the committee proposed last night for a survey took place and followed suggestions made at the MPAC meeting. Since the format of the survey seemed to draw general support, i.e., a statement followed by a checklist showing levels of agreement and then an opportunity to comment, the committee focused on improving the statements.

Following are the new statements:

1. The transportation network in Claremont adds to the quality of life.
2. I am satisfied with the condition of roads, sidewalks, and crosswalks in Claremont.
3. I am satisfied with the recreational and bike trails in Claremont.
4. Traffic flow in Claremont is a strength for our community.
5. The city should pursue a route to remove truck traffic from the center of Claremont.
6. The city needs to address the traffic issues on Washington Street.
7. The city should be involved in developing parking for downtown Claremont.
8. More public transit will be needed in the future.

Responses would provide the committee with a Master Plan section that would guide the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, and planners in setting priorities for the future.

Discussion was held about what the committee would do if no survey was conducted. It was decided that after gathering further information it would be written by Alan and edited by the committee and then submitted to MPAC.

Steve suggested that we meet with DPW Director Bruce Temple to see what he would like to have in this section of the Master Plan and that we do the same thing with the city's Traffic Committee.

Next, discussion of how implementation of the Master Plan might be accomplished focused on the Plan's value. Several members asked rhetorically if we were just fulfilling the requirements of the state RSA (law) or doing an action plan for the future?

The feeling was that the implementation solution needed to be "something that counts." The feeling expressed was that the plan needs to be valid and taken seriously and not a process that gets ignored.

Dennis said perception is reality. How the city moves forward with the Master Plan will be extremely important for its usefulness. He said if implementation is not kept as an issue in the forefront it will die.

Alan said that the Planning Board had been mentioned as the body to oversee the Master Plan's use. He said that the Planning Board did not have a legislative role except to recommend planning and zoning ordinances to the City Council. And, he said, many areas covered by the Master Plan are not in the purview of the Planning Board. He suggested a committee made up of the Mayor, Assistant Mayor, City Manager, Planning Board chairmen, and Zoning Board Chairmen meet several times a year to review progress toward achieving the objectives of the Master Plan. That type of group would provide political and managerial leadership for the development of the city.

The exact course of the committee's work will await the outcome of the next MPAC meeting, Feb. 10.

It was decided to discuss the work flow sheet provided by Eric Giles at the next meeting.

Alan reported he was still waiting for traffic count data for Claremont from the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission.

Adjourned at 10 a.m.

Next Meeting: Friday, February 13, 2009, 8 a.m. in the conference room at:
Community Alliance Transportation Services
940 John Stark Highway
Newport, NH 03773

Respectfully submitted by:
Alan Grigsby, chair