



City Center Project Steering Committee
Tuesday, October 25, 2011 at 5:00 p.m.
The Visitor's Center
14 North Street, Claremont, NH

Draft Minutes

I. Roll Call

Present: Marty Davis, Jason Farrell, William Greenrose, Tom Rock, David Putnam, Robert Tatro, Victor Bergeron, Kristin Kenniston

Absent: David Messier, Jennifer Brockett, Keith Raymond, Gary Trotter,

Staff: Nancy Merrill, Tracey Thibault, Katrina Spaulding

II. Meeting Minutes

- Approve minutes of August 23, 2011

Motion: Approve the meeting minutes from August 23, 2011 as written.

Made By: Bill Greenrose **Second:** Jason Farrell **Vote:** Unanimous

Abstained: Kristin Kenniston

- Approve minutes of September 27, 2011

Motion: Approve the meeting minutes from September 27, 2011 as written.

Made By: Victor Bergeron **Second:** Bill Greenrose **Vote:** Unanimous

III. Old Business

- Discussion and review of the Community Forum held on October 21, 2011 and review the Realtors Focus group held on October 25, 2011

Notes were given to all committee members as a summary from Deb Maes from the 10/21 public forum. Staff has not seen the original paperwork and no comparisons have been made yet.

There were approximately 50 people present at the forum and overall the interaction was good. The small groups (5) were very manageable and the 5 topic areas generated good conversation.

Nancy mentioned the real estate focus group had special questions sent to them a week in advance. There were notes taken at the meeting and Mike McCrory will transcribe and return to the Planning and Development office. The forum lasted about 40 minutes.

David Putnam suggested there be a point to look at the strengths and weaknesses to see if there was a gap in the data. Nancy mentioned there was nothing surprising between the comments that have been made at the focus groups and those that are being submitted on the survey. There appears to be no apparent gaps. She suggested there be a November meeting to do a check in on this information. Currently there have been 70 surveys returned total. 65 have been submitted electronically and 5 hand written.

Tom Rock asked if there was a common theme. Nancy said the issues are consistent with the issues the steering committee had and the ones being asked on the survey.

David P. said it would be wise to review the content of the data and compare it to the goals of the steering committee.

Bob Tatro asked if the summary sheets have been quantified. The staff hasn't received the sheets back from UNH but most likely each group did not complete the 5 total sheets for the night. It was mentioned it would be beneficial to see how many people in each group had the same suggestions or comments. The group believes many issues were repeated several times.

Tracey said the common themes at the public forum were fire and building codes and parking. The Realtor focus group seemed concerned with foreclosures, appraisals, and length of time on the market.

The realtor's group also used other communities for comparison such as Nashua and Concord. They discussed taxes and school issues as well.

Dave P. would like to see all this information collected, be used to move forward. Building code issues seem to be the most prevalent. Bob Tatro feels this will be the concern with all focus groups to come.

Tom said perception of the City and the City Center need to be further explored. The source needs to be considered to make intelligent decisions and specifics should be researched with examples given. Those that spoke at the Realtor's focus group were mostly speaking from experience and specifics should be collected. Nancy felt the examples need to be Like for Like with the same code to reflect any inconsistency. Building Codes are upgraded every 2 years, NFPA will have changes in 2012. There haven't been any fire code upgrades since 2003.

The Planning and Development office tries to see that every new business or commercial tenant gets a preliminary inspection jointly by the Fire Department and the Building Code Officers. This is in hopes of alleviating any unexpected expenses.

Marty Davis said there has been good feedback about the Planning and Development office during the focus groups.

Jason Farrell said there also seems to be a little confusion with approval by the Claremont Fire Department prior to approval by the Historic District Commission. An example of this would be represented in the size and appearance of egress sized windows.

Nancy mentioned insurance companies frequently call the P&D office to see if permits and approvals have been done for residential.

David P. asked if everyone would support a meeting where a list of concerns could be created and then prioritized. This would allow the committee to rank them and obtain a common thread. Nancy said this is a good idea once all the focus group meetings were completed and then there would be a legitimate list.

David P. asked to have dates for the next Focus Groups emailed to the entire committee. Members would have a chance to attend the meetings if so desired.

Tracey will be holding a streetscape mini training for all volunteers on October 28th. A little over half the streets remain to be picked for survey. Jason F. said it was a good idea for people to put their orientation on the survey in relationship to the street for clarity. For example N.S. E. or West. The goal is to have all the surveys completed by November 14th.

David mentioned the timeline appears to be on track and he requested weekly email to the committee on how many people have taken streets and when new streets have been assigned. With this updated regularly, there will be time for everyone to react accordingly.

Motion: To Adjourn

Made By: Jason Farrell

Second: Robert Tatro

Vote: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM

Respectfully Submitted by, Katrina Spaulding