

Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting

February 6, 2017

Members present: Mark Blier, Mark Libby, Cliff Thomas, Jere Ross, Penny Booker

Guests: Julie Gamelson, Kelly Weymouth, Therese Morin, Henry Huntley, Paul Baresel, Rich Streeter, Galen Cuning, Bob Gorham

Jere presented cost estimates from SMPDC to update data (\$5700), inventory (\$13,650), maps (\$2500) and work on goals, policies and strategies (\$13,650). Short discussion on whether we could do a lot of this ourselves. Krystal is getting some data updates from State. Should be in our next packet.

Task was to read Chapters 11 and 12. Group was asked if they had any questions or comments. Discussion on historic districts and buildings. What does "preserve and protect" actually mean as used in Plan. What is in here that we can implement? Do we need more statistics and data? Is there any teeth in it? There is a historic district in town on the comp plan but not on town maps. Should we be working with the historical society? Encourage recognition without infringing on personal property rights? Decision that this is too detailed to get into yet. Will focus on details later in the process.

Comp Plan looks pretty good but needs updates. Chapter 11 discusses community desires. We will distribute copies of 2011 survey done by comp plan committee. It primarily reflects the same desires as in 2003. Maintaining rural character is a big issue.

Shared the ten issues that the State Planning Office had with the 2003 Plan. Will refer to these comments as we go through our updates.

Will go through Chapter 11 (using 12 as needed) and decide which areas are more important to address at this time.

11. 1 Community theme: Buxton wants to keep rural character. How do we keep rural character now that land is not farmed as it used to be?

- Land Trust

- Town funded land trust

- Impact fees from subdivisions to be used for open space

- Town easements across open space in cluster subdivisions

- Tax acquired property retained for public use, paid for through higher taxes on taxable properties.

- Development rights, similar to tree growth perhaps. Rights would dictate what is or is not allowed on the property.

Perhaps put land into a trust and lease for farming.

Some issues are stewardship of any plan; open space in cluster subdivisions is typically the wetland or least desirable areas. Receiving no tax from a public space may be less costly than costs associated with a subdivision on same land versus taxes received. Who decides which tax acquired properties to keep, or how much to keep or which areas of town? Maybe run through code enforcement. Town could work with Maine Farmland Trust or Land for Maine's Future, for instance. Some methods would be costly: appraisals, lawyers, taxes, deeds. Also, many landowners are land rich and cash poor. The land is their retirement plan.

11.2 Review and regulate large projects. Do we want to adopt changes to Village zone or change physical boundaries of some zones? If current Commercial zone requirements are adopted for Village zone, buildings would have better resale value. Define changes or consider other methods. Important to look at current conditional uses in all zones to see if changes are needed.

11.3 Adopt regulations in village areas which are in keeping with existing architectural styles. Does that mean housing or business or both? Do we want to change zoning? Designate targeted spots for cluster development? Think most new business will be service related. How to attract small business to Buxton? Limit square feet?

Can't find a mission statement. Use state's criteria and add to it if we want. Use goals in Chapter 11 to create statement. Work on goals, step by step, to get more information to create mission statement.

Need the survey to move forward. Ask Krystal to print off some copies. Also, state is giving us some data. Ask Krystal to make up packets.

Going forward:

Need to stay more focused in meetings. Set up an agenda. Next agenda will be from Chapter 11:

1. Public Facilities and Public Services
2. Natural Resources
3. Growth and Development

Review and approve minutes from prior meeting

Explained to guests that if they wanted to actually be on committee, they have to request to be appointed by the Selectmen and be sworn in. Everyone encouraged to get a copy of the 2003 plan and the 2011 survey so they can get up to speed with the current members.

Briefly discussed whether to limit number of people on actual committee. Don't want to discourage anyone from coming but may limit opportunities for guests to speak during last ten minutes of meeting, for instance. Did not come to solid decision. Will see how many have applied to be on committee by next meeting date.

Meetings will be from 6:30 to 8:00 on first and third Mondays of the month. Will not meet on most holidays.

Next meeting date: Monday, February 20 at 6:30 PM.