



OLD VALUES - NEW HORIZONS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Planning Board Approved Minutes Wednesday, July 9, 2014 at 7pm

Board Members:

Kristi St. Laurent, Chairman – Present
Alan Carpenter, Vice Chair – Excused
Paul Gosselin, Member – Present
Pam Skinner, Member – Excused
Margaret Crisler, Member – Excused
Vanessa Nysten, Member – Present

Bruce Breton, Selectman – Excused
Joel Desilets, Selectman Alternate – Present
Steve Bookless, Alternate – Excused
Jim Fricchione, Alternate – Present
David Oliver, Alternate – Excused
Kathleen DiFruscia, Alternate – Arrived at 8:30pm

Staff:

Laura Scott, Community Development Director
Laura Accaputo, Planning Board Minute Taker

Chair St. Laurent called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, member attendance and a brief synopsis of the agenda.

The Chair sat Mr. Fricchione for Ms. Skinner.

2015 Master Plan Workshop

Discussion Topics with WEDC:

1. What from the previous Master Plan as not been accomplished that you think should be included in this Master Plan
 2. What new ideas, initiative, concerns, etc. that were not in the previous Master Plan that should be included in this Master Plan
- Mr. Ralph Valentine, WEDC Chair, addressed the Board. He stated the town was unable to achieve its goal to reduce the tax burden on the residents. In 2005 residents carried 93% of the tax burden and by 2014 the percentage only decreased to 92%. The goal was 90%. He stated a Cost of Services study completed in 2012 showed that for each non-residential tax dollar collected the town spends only 28 cents and therefore to accomplish avoiding burdensome tax bills the 2015 Master Plan must promote non-residential growth. Ms. Nysten asked if the data used for the study was from 2009 and Mr. Valentine stated it may have been.
 - Mr. Valentine stated the town was unable to attract additional commercial uses in order to offset rising tax rates and believes the lack of a reliable source of water continues to dampen commercial development efforts. He stated the 2015 Master Plan must promote investment in infrastructure which will provide a reliable, long term source of water. He stated the theme of the 2005 Master Plan was the need for growth in valuation to reduce the burden on residential tax payers. Goal ED 1 to increase the commercial and industrial tax base to 10%

of the towns total taxable valuation by 2015 and Goal ED 2 to plan for infrastructure investments to promote desired character and functioning of the Village Center including exploring opportunities for shared wastewater collection and treatment systems to support concentrated development have not been accomplished. The Chair stated she disagrees since they included incentives such as density bonuses for water sharing when they did the zoning for the Village Center District.

- Mr. Valentine stated Goal ED 4.1 to carry out an analysis of nonresidential development potential and associated water/sewer demands in the Route 28 corridor has not been accomplished and the voters were not interested in a study for water demands.
- Mr. Valentine stated Goal ED 5.1 to review existing Neighborhood Business Districts and refine or expand as appropriate and he believes there was pushback from the Planning Board in looking closely at this. The Chair stated they did look at this in a particular area and there was pushback because the citizens at the hearing were not in support of it however if it is looked at more broadly there may be different feedback. She stated if the citizens that come to the hearings are not in favor of changing the zoning it is not appropriate to change it. Ms. Nysten agreed and stated the pushback came from citizens and not the Planning Board. Mr. Gosselin stated for rezoning it is important to consider the abutters concerns and also keep in mind that doesn't mean the majority of the town is not interested; if it is substantial it should be a warrant article. Ms. Nysten stated it did go to Town Meeting at one point and was voted down. The Chair stated she feels this goal was accomplished because a review of existing Neighborhood Business Districts was completed by the Board.
- Mr. Valentine stated Goal ED 5.3 to consider the desirability of the village center type of zoning districts in other areas of town was not accomplished, although attempts were made.
- Mr. Valentine stated they do not feel the goal to provide high quality well maintained public and private utilities, ensure all utilities meet future needs, and coordinate upgrades to minimize road openings were accomplished. He again noted the lack of reliable long term water sources. Ms. Nysten stated she thinks water is a good but expensive proposition and it could bring in higher density, which means more houses and a burden on the school system. Mr. Valentine stated there is no determination as to who would fund the water and it could be a user based system.
- Mr. Valentine stated the goal to reduce automobile trips outside of Windham by supporting existing businesses and attracting new ones to fulfill demands for goods and services has not been accomplished.
- Mr. Valentine stated some new ideas and initiatives are to promote nonresidential growth, which requires a long term, reliable source of water, specifically to the commercial corridors; to review town owned nonresidential parcels and put a policy in place to get un-needed parcels in the hands of the private sector to increase the nonresidential tax base; and look at modifying the zoning ordinances so when a residential land which abuts nonresidential land is developed, there is a protective buffer to protect the nonresidential land.
- Mr. Desilets stated abutter opinions are given a strong preference. He believes zoning changes with a more curated commercial zoning option besides Commercial A would be more amenable to abutters. He also stated education and communication on the intentions behind infrastructure components combined with improving the quality of family life is the focus. He also believes they should distinguish between corridors and sections of corridors when discussing zoning in the Economic Development Chapter.

- The Board agreed the results of the survey and input from the July 16th meeting will help determine future goals and vision for the Economic Development Chapter. They also discussed the traffic study done on the Route 111/Wall St Corridor by the state and giving it more visibility. Ms. Scott stated a copy of the study can be found on the town website on the Community Development page under other initiatives.

Ms. Nysten asked Ms. Scott to schedule the Energy Committee and School Board for a Master Plan Workshop. The Chair agreed and will work with Ms. Scott to find time in the schedule.

The Chair took a 2 minute recess at 8:58pm and called the meeting back to order at 9:00pm.

Prioritization of Ideas

- Recreation Committee
 - The Chair stated the Recreation Committee discussed a need for additional recreational resources and maintaining existing resources.
- Historic District Commission/Heritage Committee
 - The Board discussed offering density bonuses to developers that preserve historic resources and Ms. Betty Dunn stated at the Historic District Commission/Heritage Committee meeting she discussed her intent to work on an incentive ordinance for Town Meeting which was well received. The Board also discussed State and Federal incentives and instructed Ms. Scott to have the Community Development Department provide any information on incentives to developers so they are aware of the value in preserving properties.
- Conservation Commission
 - Ms. Scott stated they are working on combining the Conservation Map with a trails map that will describe allowed uses and management information for each parcel and Mr. Desilets suggested highlighting the attributes of each parcel. The Board discussed looking at expanding conservation land with the conveyance of open space land and potential uses for existing properties such as Campbell Farm and agreed to get additional feedback from the Conservation Commission.
- Windham Economic Development Committee
 - The Board discussed infrastructure needs, balancing quality of life with the tax burden, and attracting and keeping businesses. Mr. Desilets stated cohesive, clear communication by the Economic Development Committee is important so everybody knows the true vision. Mr. Gosselin stated critical components of the long term vision is infrastructure (water/sewer), attracting viable businesses that fit with the spirit and need of the community, and a tax balance goal. Ms. Nysten cautioned of the exponential density difference with sewer. Mr. Desilets stated this was on the survey and they will soon have the public opinion on it.
 - Mr. Desilets also suggested highlighting the cultural activities of the library in the Master Plan and Ms. DiFruscia suggested asking the library if they wanted to attend a Master Plan Workshop and incorporating other non-profits.

Old/New Business (Not to include discussion of pending applications or decisions on matters requiring public notice)

Mr. Desilets reminded everyone of the Windham Helping Hands back to school drive and encouraged everyone to choose an “apple” from the schoolhouse set up at the library and make a donation. For more information please visit their website at www.windhamshelpinghands.org.

Ms. Scott asked if the Board had a CIP item to submit and they did not. Ms. Nysten asked about the cost for Phase 2 of the Master Plan and Ms. Scott stated it would not be a CIP item and that she was whittling it down and it would be paid for out of the Community Development budget. Ms. Nysten asked her to let the Planning Board decide what is in Phase 2 and Ms. Scott agreed to provide the Board with the original proposal from SNHPC and her recommended proposal. She also noted the regional Master Plan data can be used for different chapters in the towns Master Plan.

Ms. DiFruscia motioned to adjourn the July 9, 2014 Planning Board Meeting at 9:55pm, seconded by Mr. Gosselin. Motion passed: 6-0.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by Laura Accaputo, Planning Board Minute Taker.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

July 16th - Master Plan Visioning Workshop

July 30th – Master Plan Workshop