

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
South Hadley Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee  
Wednesday, February 27, 2008 at 6:30 PM  
Police Station Conference Room**

*(As Approved on March 12, 2008 and Reaffirmed on March 26, 2008)*

**Present:** Martha Johnson, Connie Clancy, Kate Bedard, Jeff Labreque, Martha Terry, Linda Young, Dan Luis, Lucia Foley, Dale Johnston, Melissa O'Brien, Jesse Lytle, Kurt Schenker,  
**Planning Board:** Helen Fantini, Joann Rosner

**1. Community Gathering Preparations: Survey**

The survey was mailed to 3000 households through the Council on Aging newsletter. It is available at both libraries, fire departments, the Council on Aging, and the Town Hall. It was sent home with all school children. At the high school, students were introduced to the survey in English classes.

**2. Update on the website:** This information was not available.

**3. Presentation by VHB Comprehensive Plans**

Ken Schwarts and Darlene Wynne discussed preparations for the March 5 meeting, 6:30 PM at the High School cafeteria. Five people from VHB, all trained by the National Charette (?) Institute in facilitating these kinds of community meetings, will attend. About 50-100 attendees are anticipated. They will set up the room about an hour before the meeting starts. There will be signs posted at the building to direct people to the cafeteria. There will be a sign-in table for people to give their name, address, and phone number. There will also be an aerial photo where participants will use one push pin to locate their residence and a differently colored pin to indicate their place of employment. The map and pins will show the areas of town represented.

**The meeting will begin** with an introduction by a community representative who will also introduce the VHP team. VHP will give an overview of the nature of a master plan and the value of doing it. They will do a snapshot of South Hadley via a Power Point presentation that includes data and statistics on the town including census data, land use, initial observations, demographic information, and a comparison of data to other surrounding towns. This information will not be handed out but will be posted on the website. This portion of the meeting will take about 15-20 minutes.

**The next half hour will be devoted to SWAT:** Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. There will be a large wipe off board or easel with paper and the VHB team will record people's input. Each attendee will then place a sticker next to one item in team category so that the group can see which items are the most prominent and important.

**The attendees will then gather into “breakout groups”** of about 8-10 people per table. Each table is topical (open space, housing, municipal services) and will have a series of questions. Each group will designate a spokesperson and a note taker. There will be wipe off boards for responses to the questions. About one hour will be devoted to this portion of the program. The tables will be labeled as follows: land use, natural resources (open space and recreation), historical and cultural resources, housing, public facilities and infrastructure, transportation, and economic development. There will be some flexibility in the manner in which attendees are assigned to tables. One member asked if several tables can be devoted to one hot issue.

**At the end of the hour, each table will report back to the group at large.**

The remainder of the time will be left to other discussion about such topics as “What comes next?” and any other issues or information deemed worthy of discussion.

Advertising for the meeting will be via newspapers, Channel 15, the survey, and the resending of press releases.

Members of the Advisory Committee can assist as facilitators.

HVP will have a list of ground rules (such as no grandstanding, etc.).

Linda will do name tags for committee members.

Advisory Committee members are asked to bring five people each and to ask each of those five to bring several friends to guarantee a good sized number of participants.

#### **4. Guest Speaker: Alexandra Dawson, Environmental Lawyer, Member of the Conservation Commission, Hadley.**

Linda introduced Attorney Dawson and asked her to speak about how the Community Preservation Act folds into the process of a Master Plan in Hadley.

Att. Dawson reported that an ad hoc committee of 6-8 citizens of Hadley sent out a questionnaire of 15 -20 pages to Hadley residents and 43% of the surveys were returned. This document gave Hadley a basis for planning. The #1 priority indicated was the preservation of farmland. The remainder of the items indicated a wide range of priorities and opinions.

She reported that a town wide mailing on the Community Preservation Act was very important to its eventual adoption by the town. Hadley spends about 1/3 of its CPAct funds on land conservation. Hadley cares about the preservation of drinking water quality, and keeping land in agriculture is good for water quality.

## **5. Guest Speaker: Andrew Beaudry, Chamber of Commerce:**

Mr. Beaudry discussed business involvement in the community, that businesses want to work for the good of the community, and are committed to the town. The Chamber also wants to involve Granby in the survey. Technology and innovation are also offered by the chamber. It was suggested that a link to the Master Plan website could be posted on the Chamber's web site.

Mr. Beaudry then discussed roadblocks/incentives to businesses in South Hadley. He stated that there is limited space for businesses and that zoning is good. Businesses have to be creative with the spaces available. The tax rate is fine. It is inexpensive to do business in South Hadley. The town has a younger, involved community that needs to communicate with the older, involved voices in town. When asked about how to make creative use of the space currently available, he set the following criteria: What do you want the space to look like? Does it fit in with the ambience of the town? Does it protect the image of the town?

He discussed economic development in the Falls area and stated that the Chamber has been "shut out" of involvement in this process. An overall strategy is needed as the Falls is an underutilized area with much potential.

Discussion continued with Advisory Committee Members asking many questions and making many comments:

The area by the Big Y on Route 33 is not immediately accessible to major roads and exit ramps.

Smaller businesses are looking to attract local people.

Wal-Mart has developed the concept of smaller shopping centers. Do we want this in town. What would be acceptable in the Big Y area?

A hotel would be a highly desirable asset to South Hadley.

The Chamber should do a survey on which new businesses people want in town.

Which businesses fit into the character of the town?

Between the Big Y and the Center Commons, there should be no new business areas designated. Any new businesses should locate in the Big Y area.

There is funding available at the State level for the Smart Growth Community Concept.

People prefer “Mom & Pop” type businesses in town.

Routes 202 and 33 could become pedestrian friendly.

A traffic light on Route 202 in the area of the Raymond Center is not feasible according to the State.

**6. Refreshments for the Meeting:** Kate Bedard will approach Big Y for cookies and bottled water. There will be no break for refreshments. They will be available during the entire meeting.

**7. The next regular meeting** of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee will be on March 12, 6:30 PM in the Community meeting room at the police station. Guest speakers will be Wayne Doerpholz of SHELD, John Bryant, Mt. Holyoke College and Ron Michalski of Tighe & Bond. After an hour of conversation with them we will focus on what transpired at our March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, review of the surveys, and “where do we go from here”.

**8. Adjournment:** Members adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Young, Recorder