

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CPAC)
REGULAR MEETING**

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2007

(As approved March 12, 2008)

Present:

Members: Kate Bedard, Connie Clancy, Lucia Foley, Bob Gelinas, Martha Johnson, Dale Johnston, Jeremy King, Jeff Labrecque, Dan Luis, Jesse Lytle, Melissa O'Brien, Kurt Schenker, Nathan Therien, Linda Young (Excused: Martha Terry)

Consultant: VHB – Ralph Wilmer

Staff: Richard Harris, Town Planner

Liaisons: Helen Fantini (Planning Board), Richard Constant (Selectboard)

Mr. Harris called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. He noted that it was very impressive that all but one member (who had to miss the meeting due to a death in the family) were present for this meeting even though there was a relatively short notice given. This suggests a high level of commitment to this effort.

1. Advisory Committee introductions

All members introduced themselves and gave a little background and their motivation for being involved in this effort.

Mr. Harris noted that the consultant was not present, therefore, he suggested that the committee proceed to with the agenda beginning with item #3. Members concurred.

3. Elect Chair and Vice-Chair

Mr. Harris suggested that the Committee should elect their own Chair and Vice-Chair to conduct the meetings and carry out the activities of the committee. He reviewed his perception of the roles of these two positions.

Ms. Clancy nominated Ms. Young for Chair.

Ms. Young expressed some reservations about being chair, principally out of concern that she has taken strong positions on various issues in the community and that could have an adverse reflection on the committee's work. Several other members expressed similar concerns about their possible service as Chair or Vice-Chair.

Mr. Harris noted that all 15 members were appointed by the Planning Board, not because they have not taken positions, but because they are interested and, in most cases, have been very active in the community and taken positions on various issues. That should be considered a positive trait, not a negative one.

Mr. King stated he would be willing to serve as Vice-Chair.

After considerable discussion, the consensus of the committee was to consider this matter at the next meeting.

4. Review Mission Statement

Mr. Harris distributed a copy of the Mission Statement approved by the Planning Board. He and the members reviewed the Mission Statement and members indicated they understood the overall purpose. Mr. Harris clarified the Committee's role in some of the aspects of the Mission Statement.

Mr. Harris also noted that member Martha Johnson had provided the Planning Board with some ideals for selecting the Committee members. The Planning Board and he converted some of these ideals into "Operating Principles" which he distributed. He noted that the Board and he believe that if these principles are followed, it will not matter who is chair, the Committee will be successful and viewed positively.

5. Establish regular meeting schedule

Mr. Harris suggested that the Committee establish a regular meeting schedule. This will enable the public to know when the Committee will meet and allow members to adjust their schedules to attend. After considerable discussion as to good and bad days for meetings, the consensus of the committee was to schedule the next meeting for the last Wednesday in January and to schedule future meetings at that time.

(Mr. Ralph Willmer of VHB, Inc. arrived.)

2. Introduce consultant team

Mr. Harris introduced Mr. Ralph Willmer of VHB, Inc. Mr. Willmer apologized for the delay; unfortunately he got caught up in an exceptional amount of traffic.

6. Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Willmer reviewed the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan. He noted that the scope of the plan is outlined in the contract between the Planning Board and VHB, Inc. (At the request of several committee members, Mr. Harris stated he would email the contract to the various committee members.)

This process is envisioned to take place over a 18 month period which began in October, 2007. The plan is to be comprehensive, covering Housing, Land Use and Community Design, Transportation, Infrastructure, Recreation, Open Space, and Economic Development. Each element is to address implementation and some of the work will involve developing tools for implementation of the plan.

Public Participation is critical to the success of this effort. That is a primary role of the Committee. He described some of the previous efforts that he and VHB, Inc. have undertaken. (At the request of several committee members, Mr. Willmer stated he will provide copies of some of the plans which VHB has worked on.) To further public participation, a series of community forums will be conducted. He suggested that the first one should be held in late February or early Spring.

7. Summary of Consultant Immersion Day

Mr. Willmer noted that the consultant team from VHB, Inc. engaged in an “immersion day” on October 22, 2007. They interviewed some 20 officials and community members from South Hadley and developed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats assessment based on those interviews. Subsequently, the team met with the Planning Board that evening and engaged in a similar discussion while reviewing the results of the interviews.

8. Public participation

As he noted previously, Mr. Willmer stated that public participation is critical to the success of this effort and is central to one of the roles of the committee. He reviewed different means that he and VHB, Inc. team members have utilized to promote and facilitate public participation.

9. General Discussion – Comprehensive Plan issues, concerns, opportunities, etc.

Committee members raised a number of questions as to what the plan will entail and concerns in the community. They offered suggestions on how the committee and consultant can function to carry out this effort.

10. Adjournment

Motion – Mr. Gelinas moved and Ms. Bedard seconded the motion to adjourn. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Harris, Recorder