

**Comprehensive Plan Update Committee
Town of Cumberland
East Conference Room
May 16, 2013 - 6:30 p.m.
Minutes**

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call:

Present: Peter Bingham, April Caron, Jim Guidi, Teri Maloney-Kelly, George Turner (Council Liaison), Shirley Storey-King (Council Liaison)

Absent: Peter Sherr

Staff: Carla Nixon, Town Planner, Bill Shane, Town Manager, Pam Bosarge, Administrative Assistant

III. Minutes: This was the first meeting. There were no minutes.

IV. Committee Charge:

Ms. Nixon highlighted the Council Charge: This is the directive from the Town Council on what the Committee is to do: It shall review key elements of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan (specifically, the chapters relating to demographics, housing, land use, and public facilities) and recommend to the Town Council changes to the plan that reflect the current 10 year vision for the town. The Committee shall provide the recommended changes to the Town Council by November 15, 2013.

- **Schedule:** The next tab has the proposed schedule. If something comes up in conversation we can bring it up and discuss it, however; the purpose of the committee is to laser focus on land use, housing, public facilities and infrastructure. We did a tremendous job with the 2009 Comprehensive Plan as you will see when you read the materials. The memo to the Council lists every single goal and action that was created by the Committee. They have all been accomplished. But at a certain cost, a lot has been done through contract zoning; some people think contract zoning is great and some people think it is less great. The important thing is that we as a community are on the same page about our land use planning. A contract zone can only be done by the Town Council if it is consistent with our comprehensive plan. We had a committee that met for years to rezone a proposed commercial vision for the Route 100 corridor. Then we received a good proposal for dense single family housing; which makes sense. There was no market for commercial; there is a market for affordable housing; if the population increases in the area it will drive commercial growth. We need to make sure as we go forward with projects they are consistent with the current comprehensive plan.

Tonight, May 16 we are going to talk about vision and where we want to be in ten years.

Mr. Guidi asked if the state law requires a comprehensive plan be updated every ten years.

Ms. Nixon stated it is a maximum of ten years; we could have this one reviewed by the state and start the clock ticking from this date.

V. Vision Statement:

Ms. Nixon stated she made an attempt at drafting a vision statement. It is important from the beginning to know what it is we want this comp plan to do for our town.

Mr. Bingham stated the key is what this means.

Ms. Nixon stated that is a good point, Community Development is a term that is used a lot in the planning world. There are planners who do just community development, some do economic development, some zoning and land use. To me, community development is what we have been doing for the last five or ten years; where we take a neighborhood such as Main Street, Drowne Road, and Route 100 which are neighborhood communities within the community of Cumberland. And we ask what do we want for this neighborhood, is it great or do we want it changed. Mr. Guidi is opening a restaurant on Main Street; five years ago that was not an option. The opinions changed with the last comprehensive plan and we talked about sustainability and local farms and creating a life style that allows people to get their goods and services in town.

Mr. Turner stated true community development allows us room to mold whatever this meets.

Ms. Nixon stated she stretched to include surrounding communities in the vision statement, stating we do need to consider these communities to the north and south in terms of public facilities and infrastructure. We are totally linked to the Town of Falmouth with sewer.

Mr. Shane stated the neighborhood level gives him a negative reaction; it seems restrictive and isolating as opposed to Town wide. The wording neighborhood level may mean it is good for a neighborhood and not the town.

Ms. Caron asked if the word should be environment or frame work.

Mr. Turner stated Ms. Caron's point is a good one; the last comp plan committee did a great job of creating a framework, an environment sounds like there has been a shift. The use of the word environment acknowledges the shift. The framework suggests there was a good framework and what do we do now.

Mr. Bingham stated we have begun to create these neighborhoods but need to address land use issues outside of the neighborhoods. We have already made the shift in neighborhoods with Main Street, Route 100, and Drowne Road. We still haven't tackled the big issue of lot sizes.

Mr. Turner stated recently he was looking for comparable sales for a house on Farwell Avenue and was astounded the number of lots in the center of town that are a 1/3 or 1/4 of an acre parcels with houses built in the 1950s selling for \$235,000 to \$245,000 dollars. He knew of a house that was purchased in Freeport for \$350,000 had \$50,000 in renovations and was resold for \$325,000. The demand for the new affordable houses in West Cumberland for \$225,000 is high. I am a little skeptical to see the entire town as tiny lots.

Ms. Nixon stated that was her reason for neighborhood, there are communities who view their community different, and the people of Farwell Avenue have different values from someone on 10 acre lots.

Mr. Turner stated years ago being in the Center of Town was not a big deal, but now there is a demand for locating in the center of town.

Mr. Bingham stated that is what happened with the last comprehensive plan; there was a definite shift from the 1988 comp plan to the 2009 plan. The 80% vote on the credit union was one of the most significant votes in the last twenty years, and the second one was when the school budget failed.

Mr. Guidi stated fuel prices had a lot to do with the change, he used to live on the Foreside, and now lives in the Center, and he couldn't wait to be close to the schools.

The Committee discussed changing quality of life needs and the shift for smaller houses and wanting close proximity to the center for services.

Mr. Bingham stated when we had the mandate in 1988 we controlled growth through soils studies; but now with vacancies in the school the total demographics have changed. He is thankful the Town is willing to shift gears and listen to current needs.

Mr. Turner stated we have to be careful to maintain a balance; we want more young families to move into town.

VI. Population and Demographic Update:

Ms. Nixon passed out the most recent demographic and housing estimates for Cumberland Town. When this was reviewed there was not a lot of change from the last comprehensive plan. It is interesting that there is a classification for female led households, and male led households; I don't remember it being classified like this before. That is precisely the type of thing we need to zero in on, people go through divorces, empty nesters, and is housing available. I think Rebecca Williams apartments at Doc's Café is a great example; the units were filled by word of mouth. Emerald Commons on Route 100 is very similar.

Ms. Caron stated they just rented their prior home on Gray Road, and people are looking for precisely that type of housing.

Ms. Nixon stated staff toured the Drowne Road apartments and they are phenomenal, they are great. The demographics haven't changed we need to stay the course of fostering smaller housing units in the center of town. We received a request from Cumberland Meadows for a bus service for residents. Mr. Shane contacted RTP Regional Transportation; we ran a bus once a week to the Falmouth shopping center. There were not enough tenants using the service for it to continue; perhaps when the Village Green Senior Housing at Drowne Road School is open we may look again at this type of service.

Ms. Caron asked if this would change the demographics of town; and stated we need more services for senior citizens.

Ms. Nixon stated the Village Green Apartments are going to have a beautiful library and meeting room.

Mr. Bingham asked if our demographics like the rest of the state were trending older.

Ms. Nixon stated yes.

VII. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair:

Ms. Nixon stated she is doing a lot of talking, but stated we need to determine who wants to lead this group.

Mr. Bingham nominated April Caron as Chair.
Mr. Guidi seconded.

VOTE: Unanimous

Ms. Caron nominated Peter Sherr as Vice-Chair.
Mr. Bingham seconded.

VOTE: Unanimous

Ms. Nixon reviewed the Vision Statement which Ms. Storey-King has been working on.

Ms. Storey-King read the draft statement as follows:

The Town of Cumberland's vision for the next 5-10 year planning period is to create an environment that encourages ~~true~~ community development with respects for the needs of neighborhoods, the town, business, and surrounding communities.

The Committee discussed the statement, Ms. Caron asked about adding business, and Mr. Bingham asked if we need the word true.

The Committee agreed the Vision Statement will be:

The Town of Cumberland's vision for the next 5-10 year planning period is to create an environment that encourages community development with respects for the needs of neighborhoods, the town, business, and surrounding communities.

Mr. Bingham asked what the key things are that should be taken from the demographics.

Ms. Nixon stated the key thing is we continue to age and we are not attracting the 18 – 24 year olds. If we have a desire to attract that demographic how is that achieved? Where do we want growth to occur, how do we allow people to age in place. The next thing we might want to think about is assisted living such as a smaller Ocean View project. We have people in Cumberland Meadows, they move in and are independent, and as they age, fall, or have a stroke they need to move.

Mr. Bingham asked if there is land for this type of use, and area that is serviceable, the ideal place would be the center with utilities and amenities.

Mr. Shane stated yes there are some lots.

Mr. Bingham agreed this is the thing Cumberland lacks, remember when we did the growth control in the 90's one of the things we wanted to encourage was the 55+ market so we exempted that housing from the Growth Permit, and the Rockwood was built. Is there still a market for 55+?

Mr. Shane stated Drowne Road is hoping to start Phase II as early as this fall. The Drowne Road project is doing really well with 20% of the houses built.

Mr. Turner stated the condos next to the school didn't sell quickly.

Mr. Shane stated we have some challenges ahead of us, there will be a lot of pressure to make Phase II happen, the realtors are already getting requests for reservations, and a plan hasn't been approved. This phase will be denser development with townhouses, apartments; the development will have a real community feel.

Mr. Bingham stated we still need to address the town garage.

Mr. Shane stated the pay back for that is so quick; we are talking about a potential 25 to 30 million dollars in new real estate value. It is amazing to think less than ten acres can yield that much value. Our Public Works department is also aging; we have two retirements this summer which will not be replaced; the

Town will use contract services for two plow routes. The department will be downsizing as well; and will be a maintenance model not a construction model.

Ms. Nixon asked Mr. Shane if this committee should recommend establishing a subcommittee similar to Main Street and the Doane Property. Do you want this group to come out of committee with a recommendation to Council?

Mr. Shane stated the Council has said let's wait and see if Phase I is successful, and Phase III the Drowne Road School is very successful. I think by next summer 2014 we are going to start the neighborhood, community meetings, with the Council to find out what citizens want to do with the facility. Mr. Shane confirmed that North Yarmouth is also looking to relocate its public works department as it is located on its prime commercial land.

Mr. Bingham asked what the key thing on demographics is, is it the aging, and mixed housing.

Mr. Shane stated in less than a year all of the 17 units at Morrison's Hill will be sold out. There are 7 or 8 with reservations. Castlerock is a little slower starting; they have one house being built.

Mr. Turner stated he has had some clients who have stated they like the cottage styles on Castlerock, but when push comes to shove they like the lay of the land better on the other side of the street. It will have easier access to the playground.

Mr. Shane stated this fall we will connect the sidewalk from the bottom of the hill up to the top, all of those things will give the feel of building a community. And David Chase wants to build 80 affordable housing units in the gravel park. He will bring public water into the facility, and John Sevee says housing is the best use for the aquifer.

Mr. Turner stated the housing inventory is considered low, but the number of new listings has been dramatic from week to week. The average buyer is not impressed with the inventory.

Ms. Caron stated there is an attorney she works with in Auburn, and they are desperate to get to Cumberland for the schools.

Mr. Shane stated Cumberland is in a bubble, it is amazing the interest we have in this town.

Mr. Turner stated the economy dictates what makes sense for development, and developers are always ready to make decisions when the time is right economically. We should be fostering those moves in ways we see as beneficial to the overall town.

Mr. Shane stated we can be a catalyst, we have changed ordinances and postured ourselves to go forward. Mr. Longley the Code Enforcement Officer is working late this evening to issue three new house permits, one is a million dollar modular house on Chet's Way. The adding of water lines in West Cumberland has made that area easier to develop because of the amenities of public water and fire safety. The Council has worked hard over the last three years, changing Ordinances. I am excited to see 20 million dollars of growth this year.

Mr. Turner stated he too is enthusiastic, but there are also a lot of towns who are busy.

Ms. Nixon stated we don't want to dictate what is going to happen; we need to remove barriers to prevent things from happening, whether they were outdated zoning provisions, or lot size constraints. We have amended the Site Plan review process for quicker more efficient reviews and added a level of staff review

for small projects. The important thing for this committee to think about is what we want to see happen and what we don't want to happen. We will not have the benefit of a community survey; we need to be intuitive in a sense of where the community is going; we can't dictate it, but need to have foresight to anticipate what is going to happen demographically and socially and prepare for it.

Mr. Bingham, who prefaced this discussion as a large land owner, stated we have to address the RR1 & RR2 zones, with clustering and sewer the days of artificial zoning where one side of the road is RR1 and the other is RR2 needs to be reviewed. John Sevee gave us a lot of guidance with the Comprehensive Plan; we discussed this at the Planning Board with the Wilson's request. It is exciting that natural gas will be available; we still need look at the rural areas to preserve open space.

Ms. Caron stated she thinks change is inevitable and demographics are interesting, we know what makes communities desirable to people. A lot of the open space in West Cumberland is enjoyed by all, but they don't own the land.

Ms. Storey-King stated she was complaining about Route One and being able to see some roof tops, and her brother said to her if you don't like it buy it.

Ms. Caron stated we need to know what is in our town.

Mr. Turner stated in the 1988 Comprehensive Plan one of the questions was Open Space, and the way the question was framed, there was no illusion of paying for open space; just do you want open space. The answer was a resounding yes. If the question was worded do you want to pay for open space the answer may have been no.

Mr. Bingham stated in April he witnessed a very interesting phenomenon. In a three week period I went to three different events; one was Barbara Garsoe's funeral. That was the old Cumberland; about a week later I attended an event for Glenn Hutchins with 200 people in attendance; which included people who moved here in the 1960s and 70s. The Foundation 51 event attendance included parents of kindergarten children. There are sub-groups in Town and all like Cumberland for different reasons.

Ms. Caron stated people's reasons change, we moved here because my husband doesn't want it in his town, and I am all about bringing the market to my town.

Ms. Nixon stated one of the unfortunate things is the young people are too busy, we don't hear a lot from them. We need to remember they are out there, and think about public participation.

Ms. Nixon suggested a Survey Monkey through the Cumberland Family network.

Mr. Shane stated demographics are important, we had more public transportation 70 years ago in this Town, than we do today. When you look at the historical photos at the library it is amazing how much access was available to other towns. I have been meeting with the metro off and on, and I think who would come down to Route One to ride the bus, but the CTC has buses that sit all day long at the lot; maybe they could drive up and down Tuttle Road to pick up riders. We need to look for opportunities to get connected. I think the biggest challenge we are going to have in the next ten years is transportation for our elderly population.

Ms. Shirley Storey-King stated it is not just the elderly, her son Josh will never drive and he has limited freedom. He would not thrive in Portland, it would be so foreign. I am limited to how much independence I can encourage; because it is not available.

Mr. Guidi stated 31% of the community is between 31 and 55 years old, and it drops drastically; after high school kids are gone.

Mr. Shane stated as a developer you had problems with Cottage Farms with the units, it took a while to take off.

Mr. Guidi stated he had the wrong units; he had to drop his price on the larger unit.

Mr. Bingham asked other than the younger people who have children in school what about the young person out of college.

Mr. Guidi stated he isn't sure Cumberland has everything a twenty year old would want.

Mr. Bingham asked if people who run facilities such as the Highlands or Ocean View would be interested in Cumberland.

Mr. Shane stated the demographics work; it is a matter of where it would fit best. There are places in the downtown area that would be large enough to facilitate that type of facility. I think assisted living is a serious consideration.

Mr. Turner stated at one time the Chandler property was considered on Middle Road.

Ms. Storey-King stated she thought that property was in trust.

Ms. Nixon passed out more 2010 census information.

Ms. Nixon asked Ms. Maloney-Kelly if she knew of any funding or support for communities to provide lower cost assisted living.

Ms. Storey-King stated her son Josh has been on the waiting list for services officially two years last Saturday, there is no funding. If I made him homeless and it was an emergency; there would be something.

Mr. Guidi stated the answer might just be that HUD has money for development.

Ms. Nixon stated the sheet she just handed out talks about male household there are 88, and 266 women households. She handed out several economic / census sheets for the committee to review, and if they had questions to e-mail her.

Ms. Nixon stated the purpose of this evening's meeting was to establish a Vision Statement, meet the members, and talk about goals. Is there anything anyone would like her to do prior to the June meeting?

Ms. Caron asked if they adopted the Vision Statement.

Ms. Nixon stated we will type up the minutes which will include the Vision Statement.

Ms. Storey-King re-read the Vision Statement as follows: **The Town of Cumberland's vision for the next 5-10 year planning period is to create an environment that encourages community development with respect for the needs of neighborhoods, the town, business, and surrounding communities.**

The Committee agreed with the Vision Statement.

VIII. Next Meeting: Thursday, June 27, 2013

Ms. Nixon stated at the next meeting on June 27th, Bill Shane will discuss Infrastructure, and Public Facilities.

Mr. Shane stated one thing we don't have on the agenda, and should add is a task list or action items for the next meeting.

IX. Adjournment:

Mr. Bingham moved to adjourn.

Ms. Caron seconded.

VOTE: Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam Bosarge
Administrative Assistant