

Natick 360
Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



Strategic Planning Oversight Committee
Minutes * January 17, 2007

Present

Rosemary Driscoll, designated by School Committee
Terri Evans, at-large member
John Heerwagen, at-large member
Craig Ross, Co-Chair, designated by the Finance Committee
Harlee Strauss, at-large member
Fred Witte, at-large member

Absent

Matthew Gardner, designated by the Conservation Commission
David Parish Co-Chair, designated by the Board of Selectmen
George Richards, designated by the Planning Board

Consultants Present

Phillip Blackerby, Blackerby Associates (by telephone)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. EST by the Co-Chair, Mr. Ross, in the Ed Dlott Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, Town Hall, Natick, MA 01760. A quorum was present.

Item 1. Approval of Minutes: No minutes were submitted to the Committee.

Item 2. Coordination with Sponsoring Boards: Phase 1 Yesterday and Today report was sent to sponsoring Boards and Committees on December 22; Phase 2 Vision and Values report is also in the hands of the committee, since earlier this month. Committee members should be working toward ensuring these reports get on the agendas, and are considered for vote.

Mr. Ross reported that Board of Selectmen have both reports on agenda for January 22; Mr. Ross will represent Mr. Parish at the Board of Selectmen meeting.

Mr. Ross reported that Finance Committee Chair has reports, but Mr. Ross has not been able to discuss the process with him.

Ms. Driscoll noted that the School Committee has the Phase 1 report on its agenda, but is not sure they will vote on it. Some School Committee members have expressed concern that education receives relatively little attention in the report. Mr. Ross noted that the Phase 1 report and the contract with MAPC for that report have been completed. If the School Committee wants things added, we have to consider how to do it; whether to go back to MAPC, as it is their report. Liaisons should keep focus on process; content was fixed before process started; table of contents was included in

the approval process involving all five sponsoring Boards and Committees; if something is omitted, it was never planned to be in the report; the RFP was specific in terms of what should be in report.

Ms. Evans noted that Planning Committee voted to approve Ph 1 report on Jan 10. Phase 2 report is being circulated to committee members, and is expected to be considered at the next meeting. Mr. Ross noted it will be difficult to consider it in February, as the focus then will be on Ph 3, and it assumes that Ph 2 has been approved.

Mr. Ross reported that the Conservation Committee will take up both reports tomorrow, Thursday, January 18.

Item 3. Invoices:

Blackerby Associates invoice of January 3, 2007 for \$137.18 for supplies from the October event. Ms. Strauss moved approval of the invoice, Ms. Evans seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 6-0-0 to approve the invoice.

Invoice from the Frame Shop for maps from Phase 1 report; 2 sets were paid for by Library; 3rd set has been mounted and coated with a laminate for protection. Eight mounted 50”X40” maps, \$391.68. Ms. Driscoll moved to approve the invoice, Ms. Strauss seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 6-0-0 to approve the invoice.

January 4, 2007 expense budget showed that the Committee had expended \$2,696.98 against revenue of about \$12,000, prior to most recent receipts from MetroWest Subaru and Belkin Lookout Farm. With approximately \$550 approved today, about \$3,250 has been spent so far.

Mr. Heerwagen asked about survey costs. Mr. Ross replied that we can probably come close to covering the survey costs with what has been raised so far. Two contributors have split their contributions over two years, and we have not yet received the second installments of \$7,500, which will give us about \$20,000, which will be about what the survey will cost. We will incur some more expenses in the spring public meetings, but not as much as in the October meeting.

Action Item (a): The Committee requested that the next meeting’s agenda have an item on a pro-forma budget for the balance of the project (assigned to Mr. Ross).

Item 4. Fundraising: The committee expressed gratitude to all the sponsors. A couple of payments were split, and the Committee looks forward to receiving those contributions. *Action Item (b):* The Committee will write a letter to the NFSB and Middlesex Bank thanking them for their generosity and requesting the second installment (assigned to Mr. Ross and Mr. Richards).

Mr. Ross reported that a grant opportunity has arisen; he will submit an application soon; the grant cycle is continuous, hence, no deadline.

A general solicitation to smaller businesses for smaller contributions was considered, and may be revisited by the fundraising subcommittee; the Committee decided to focus on large donors first.

Item 5. Phase 2 Values and Vision report update: Not everyone was at Jan 10 meeting, but copies of final report have been distributed. No discussion ensued.

The Committee has considered creating a speakers bureau, and now it has maps to support such an effort.

Item 6. Phase 3 Process Overview: Mr. Ross reported that he, Mr. Parish and Mr. Blackerby worked to try to refine the process. Mr. Blackerby reviewed the proposed Ph 3 process.

Ms. Evans asked about the February joint meetings; two meetings are proposed; post for all five Boards and Committees in case a quorum is present. She thought it very helpful to have joint meetings. Mr. Ross asked Committee members please to get feedback from chairpersons whether joint meetings are feasible, and under what conditions they should be accomplished. Compartmentalization makes it difficult to reach consensus; need cross-functional meetings. Give chairpersons a heads-up on this process. They may choose not to do this, but we hope they will approve.

Mr. Heerwagen asked about technology to solicit public input. Mr. Ross noted that he is considering some blogging technology, but it is very time-consuming. Ms. Strauss thought blogging is not a good medium for population over 25 years old. Mr. Ross noted that previous use of Survey Monkey was successful, and the Committee may use that approach again. A difficulty is to extract input regularly, and post it to the web; not sure what is best means to get public input.

The Committee appointed a subcommittee for the Phase 3 public input process, consisting of Mr. Ross, Ms. Strauss and Mr. Heerwagen.

Ms. Driscoll raised a concern about the March meetings, with elections on the 27th. It may be difficult to get peoples' attention. Mr. Ross noted that it is difficult to change the March meeting dates because of Town Meeting and school vacations; if we miss the March meetings, we lose April as well.

Ms. Driscoll suggested not using the detailed examples. The Rail Trail is controversial. Mr. Ross suggested using non-Natick examples.

Ms. Strauss asked if we really going to go into that much detail Mr. Blackerby said, yes, the choices need to be fairly explicit. Little, medium or large actions.

Mr. Ross asked Committee members to begin having conversations with sponsoring boards. *Action Item (c):* The Committee will consider final schedule on the January 31, 2007 SPOC meeting (assigned to the five Board and Committee liaisons, Ms. Driscoll, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Parish, Mr. Richards and Mr. Ross).

Item 7. Publicity Update:

The committee discussed setting up a display of the signed print at Town Hall. Ms. Evans is going to write a placard to go with the display. Mr. Witte will coordinate getting the display set up in Town Hall. As no one volunteered to help with coordinating displays at the libraries or the Senior Center, the Committee decided to table the issue until the meeting of January 31, 2007.

Item 8. Other Business: No other business was raised.

Mr. Heerwagen moved to adjourn, Ms. Strauss seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 6-0-0 to adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

Summary of Action Items noted above:

- (a) The Committee requested that the next meeting's agenda have an item on a pro-forma budget for the balance of the project (assigned to Mr. Ross).
- (b) The Committee will write a letter to the NFSB and Middlesex Bank thanking them for their generosity and requesting the second installment (assigned to Mr. Ross and Mr. Richards).
- (c) The Committee will consider final schedule on the January 31, 2007 SPOC meeting (assigned to the five Board and Committee liaisons, Ms. Driscoll, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Parish, Mr. Richards and Mr. Ross).