

Approved Minutes from July 30, 2013 Planning Board joint meeting with the CP Ad Hoc Advisory Committee

Comprehensive Plan Discussion (with CP Ad Hoc Advisory Committee)

Planning Director Garber commented that this evening's discussion is based on three pieces of the Comprehensive Plan (CP): **1)** Newly edited Natural and Cultural Resources and Open Space element including the Snapshot. Director Garber noted that the revisions included comments received from participants who attended CP meetings, Workshops, or directly conveyed information to Planning Staff. **2)** Action Matrix for Natural & Cultural Resources & Open Space and **3)** Revised Town-wide Vision.

Director Garber reviewed written responses that were submitted by David Sukoff, Jaci Edwards, John Zupkus, and Stephen Carluccio in conjunction with information that was provided for this evening's CP discussion. Mr. Garber publicly thanked these individuals for sharing their comments and noted that their suggestions are excellent and will be well-noted.

Long Range Town-Wide Vision Comments:

- Sandra Hackman--pg. 3, suggested changing DISCUSSION to EXPLORATION
- Jaci Edward would like fewer street signs to improve the aesthetic appeal of the existing street network to protect and enhance community character
- Amy Lloyd--pg. 2, commented that she agrees with the term historic assets, but was somewhat concerned if the term was clear enough for the lay person. Others thought the term was okay as written.
- Lisa Mustapich--pg. 3, shared concerns regarding why companies leave Bedford for other communities such as Billerica and gave Pharamalucence as an example. Ms. Mustapich commented that Bedford needs to emphasize its strengths of mixed-use and better market itself by sharing information about Bedford that indicates it's a good town to do business because of its history of having a strong tax base, good schools and a variety of housing choices (including many affordable housing options) compared to other surrounding communities. *Amy Lloyd pointed out that there is some language included on the bottom of page 3 & 4 that shares some of Bedford's strengths. A further discussion took place regarding what language should be conveyed or where this language should be found within the discussion session. Participants agreed that some rewording or reordering of the language should be considered.*
- Jaci Edwards--pg. 2, last bullet item, inquired about the use of the word "context" and asked if "character" should replace it. *Participants agreed to this change.*

Natural /Cultural Element Comments:

Amy Lloyd, referring to farmlands/fields, mentioned that there are few remnants of the past; and that we have allowed farmlands and fields to grow into forest that are conservation land, but aren't necessarily maintained. Ms. Lloyd and others suggested promoting the preservation of farmland and fields and to have multiple-use choices when attaining open space and conservation land.

Sandra Hackman agreed with Ms. Lloyd that the town should try to preserve farmland and fields and then she spoke about M.A.G.I.C. (Minuteman Advisory Group on Inter-Local Coordination) role in Agricultural promotion and how Bedford can't join these efforts because they really don't have farmland besides Chip N Farm and a couple other small parcels.

Jaci Edwards mentioned Jordan Conservation Land and Job Lane House as other parcels that have small amounts of land for agriculture use.

Participants agreed to amend the discussion regarding choice of open space uses so that it doesn't automatically come down to choosing only playing fields or conservation. Shawn Hanegan—pg.11, commented that he likes the information about the impact of climate change and mitigation measures used to avoid those impacts.

Shawn Hanegan—pg.12, (Historic/Cultural Assets) said he agrees that there is a lack of information regarding Bedford's historic asset inventory between the 1800's and 1900's and Native American Heritage; and that more information should be added. Mr. Hanegan also commented that; if the open space calculation 26.3% doesn't include Hanscom Air Force Base, then why it is listed under Other Open Space Areas.

Catherine Perry—Map on page 4, pointed out that the lower layers on this map especially the information referring to wildlife, got obscured; and therefore Ms. Perry suggested that a note be added to this map referring people to visit the town website for more details.

Sandra Hackman—page 7 (Summary of Issues); commented that something should be added regarding old existing street trees and a replacement plan for these trees.

Lisa Mustapich spoke about DPW maintaining stonewalls covered in poison ivy and have developers try to save as many trees as possible when stripping/clearing lots.

Amy Lloyd mentioned that ongoing tree education (by Conservation and Arbor Resources) could be an Action.

Catherine Perry shared 29A Chelmsford Road Subdivision as an example of a development under the Subdivision Rules and Regulations where the developer has shown a "cut to" line indicating the preservation of many trees. In this situation the Board has the opportunity to review the extent of tree cutting. Ms. Perry also observed that the fate of existing trees can be reviewed during site plan and special permit reviews, but that Bedford does not require site plan review for single family dwellings.

Director Garber suggested adding tree education to page 13 under Challenges.

Amy Lloyd stated that the town's bylaws do not define how sidewalks and easements can be acquired; and then asked if more can be done.

Lisa Mustapich commented that when deciding on location and need of sidewalks it should depend on the neighborhood. Bedford is not a one size fits all community, and we should try our best to be eco-friendly and minimize the amount of asphalt used.

Amy Lloyd said she is trying to figure out the problems related to achieving sidewalk connections and noted that it helps if doing the right thing is the easier path; and therefore, she wonders how we can encourage developers and others through our bylaws to go in that direction.

Director Garber stated that Ms. Lloyd's concerns/comments could go under Strategies and Goals.

Catherine Perry mentioned that she has been reviewing action items for the transportation chapter which will propose a sidewalk plan and prioritization of links, and some ways of achieving them.

Director Garber suggested improving the capital investment process to include a direct budget for town-wide connectivity.

Mike Oleksinski said he supports prioritizing connectivity because in doing so, many goals are achieved.

ACTION PLAN/Matrix (Natural & Cultural Resources & Open Space) Comments:

Director Garber reviewed the column headings in the matrix and spoke about scheduling and ranking the action items.

Sandra Hackman spoke about the proposed list of consortiums and suggested consolidating them. Ms. Hackman also suggested adding the word "effort" in the column that highlights the level of effort.

Jeffrey Cohen whether moving forward with amending zoning in the Mixed Use Overlay Districts could be acted upon sooner than Spring 2015 Town Meeting.

Sandra Hackman suggested combining the first two *action items on page 4, as the information appears to overlap. *Revisit mixed use overlay district zoning provisions and Provide greater incentives to the market

Suzy Enos asked how the actions were determined.

Director Garber explained that he and Catherine Perry had extracted ideas received from participants of past discussions, workshops, and meeting minutes to compose the list.

Jaci Edwards asked if there will be more public sessions that will include additional specific action items; Ms. Edwards gave sidewalks and rain gardens as examples of specific action items.

Catherine Perry reviewed the varying level of action items and agreed that a few more details or examples could be added, but also noted that in some cases the details will be defined during implementation.

Amy Lloyd suggested that the responsible groups to implement the action items could assist with fleshing them out.

Jaci Edwards voiced it's important that town volunteers know that their input counts during this process.

Brian O'Donnell asked if a comprehensive plan ever evaluates issues such as whether the town has the right volunteer committees and staff to achieve the goals and objectives outlined. Mr. O'Donnell shared that he sees a lack of ownership regarding some of the issues; and that could be why there may have been limited progress.

Glenn Garber shared that we don't have resources to cover this as a specific topic; however we could try to add some discussion within the existing elements. Mr. Garber suggested possibly establishing an Implementation Committee once the Comprehensive Plan is adopted to review if there are any barriers to overcome.

Sandra Hackman mentioned that she doesn't believe the final Comprehensive Plan will be ready for upcoming Special Fall Town Meeting; and then asked Director Garber about what will be presented.

Planning Director Garber shared that Planning Staff and the Consultants will have a PowerPoint update, and possibly a rough draft of the CP prepared in time for Special Fall Town Meeting; and at that time we will request public feedback. Background materials will be made available online.