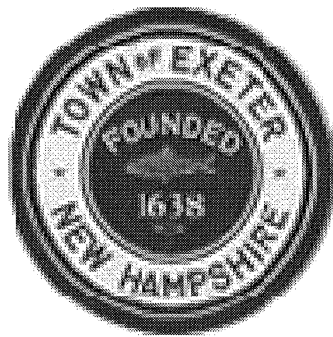


Town of Exeter



Long Range Planning Session Summary Report

May 18, 2012

Primex³
NH Public Risk Management Exchange

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Introduction

At the invitation of the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen, Primex³ was asked to facilitate a long-range planning session for the Town of Exeter. Primex³ was pleased to be a part of this process to assist the Town in this important endeavor.

Purpose and Intended Result

The purpose of the session was for the Board and Town Manager to come together to lay the horizon for the Town and establish goals and strategies that will help guide the Town over the next twelve (12) months, three (3) years and five (5) years.

Participants

Russ Dean, Town Manager
Matthew Quandt, Chairman
Donald Clement, Vice-Chairman
Dan Chartrand, Clerk
Julie Gilman, Board of Selectmen
Frank Ferraro, Board of Selectmen

The exercise was facilitated by:

Rick Alpers, Primex³ Member Services Consultant

Goals

Goal #1: Economic Development

The group had discussion on what areas to review and how to bring economic development to additional areas for the Town of Exeter. The areas that are currently in review include the following:

- Epping Road
- Holland Way
- Portsmouth Ave
- Hampton Road

Other areas that are also being considered include the following areas:

- Downtown
- West Exeter

Zoning will need to be reviewed for all locations to ensure that it is development friendly. It was noted though that portions of Epping Road and Portsmouth Avenue will need zoning revisions in order to meet the needs of future development. In addition to reviewing the zoning, the Town is currently working on an Economic Revitalization Zone Tax Credit (ERZ) for Epping Road.

Goal #2: Regionalization

The Manager and Board had discussion regarding regionalization and what the Town should be concentrating on to begin these efforts and where they can easily expand. The group noted that the Town of Exeter has begun regionalizing its efforts around the potential treatment plant upgrades being desired by the EPA. The regional group that formed out of opposition is Exeter and its neighboring communities have been named The Great Bay Coalition.

In addition, the Board and Manager believe there is a need to develop a plan on how to begin regionalizing town services as long as it benefits both sides of the effort. For example, are there services that could be shared with a neighboring community to help save dollars and become more efficient? The topic of sharing police and fire dispatch services was discussed as a place to start. The Town Manager was assigned the task of reaching out to neighboring communities to see if they would be interested in exploring ways to share town services regionally.

Goal #3: Purchasing Process and Policy

The Board and Manager discussed the possibility of the Town implementing a town-wide purchasing policy for all departments. The Manager stated that efforts are underway and being practiced in the area of central purchasing, specifically office supplies. The Manager's Assistant regularly purchases office supplies for most, if not all, departments at this time. The Manager noted his intent to have the summer Intern focus on this issue and bring recommendations on how to enhance the process.

Goal #4: Communication Plan

The Board and Manager discussed the need for a town-wide Media Policy. A policy that would deal with employees and departments using social media and look at how the administration could push information to its residents at a minimal cost. The Primex³ representative mentioned that he has a template from another community and will forward the policy to the Manager.

There was great discussion on how information could be given to the Manager and Board without being overwhelming. The Board is open to all mediums, including but not limited to, email, memos, and phone calls. The community has many committees, commissions, and boards that meet regularly and the need to stay up-to-date to on all happening is ever important and constantly evolving. The Manger and his staff will continue to share all pertinent information regarding the Town to the Board on a monthly basis by written report.

The Board and Manager discussed the need to complete the upgrade to the town website since it is generally the first medium any visitor or resident encounters when looking for pertinent information. The Manager discussed that the process has begun and will keep the board up-to-date in all upgrades as the process moves forward.

Goal #5: Sidewalk Plan

Discussion was also held regarding maintenance, replacement, and expansion of all the sidewalks in the community. Over the years, Exeter has been deemed a "walk-able community" by its residents and visitors. The group believes they could do a better job at creating additional sidewalks and repairing the ones they have. Over the year's, sidewalk maintenance, repair, and expansion has been poorly funded. Board members would like to find new revenues to help fund these projects. One revenue generating option that was briefly discussed would be installing parking meters throughout the town. It was mentioned that this is how Portsmouth has been so successful in the quest to keep their sidewalks well maintained.

The group decided that there was a need for an Intermodal Summit. This would entail bringing together the community, business owners, Board and Manager to discuss the future of our sidewalks and remaining a walk-able community.

Goal #6: 2013 Budget

The Board and Manager discussed goals and strategy for budget year 2013. The group believes that this is a year that they should begin to focus on improving the operating budget rather than capital projects, which has been the focus of funding over the last few years. Capital projects have been approved while the operating budget has continued to shrink. The group feels that the operating budget could not sustain another year of cutting and still continue to provide the services that are desired and expected for its residents. There were a couple of capital project discussed that met the level of importance to be included in the 2013 budget or warrant. They are as follows:

- Sidewalks
- Lincoln Street water line

The Board and Manager discussed the need to educate the voters about the 2013 budget and the articles that will be on the warrant along with it. Limiting the overall number of articles on the warrant should be explored in order to keep the voters from being overwhelmed at the booth. This seemed to work well for the voters last year and all major articles passed including the operating budget.

Goal Overview

The Town prioritized the goals for 2012 -2013 into three categories:

- 1 year
- 3 years
- 5 years

One-Year Goals

- 2013 budget expectations
- Meet with Planning Board and Economic Development Commission
 - Possible zoning rewrite
 - Discussion with DPW Direction regarding infrastructure expansions in future economic development
 - Steve Norton (NH Policy)
- Meet with Heron
- Explore revenue streams outside of property taxes
- Need for volunteers

- Town Manager to have discussion with area towns about regionalization by September 1, 2012
- Street lights
 - How many
 - Where do we need them?
- Intern to review purchasing policy
- Monthly department report to Board – Strengthening communications to the Board and Manager.

Three-Year Goals

- Communications town-wide
- Sidewalk replacement and repairs

Five-Year Goals

- Expansion in economic development areas
- Downtown revitalization

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this goal setting session for the Town of Exeter.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Alpers