

All Boards Meeting - Feb. 10, 2016 – Summary

Meeting convened at 6:00 p.m. Selectboard members Julie Gilman, HDC, Heritage Commission rep. Don Clement, Planning Board Rep, Dan Chartrand, EDC Rep, Anne Surman, Selectboard, Water/Sewer Committee, Swasey Park Rep, Nancy Belanger, Selectboard, Conservation Commission Rep
Planning Board members Lang Plumer, Gwen English
Conservation Commission members Peter Richardson, Ginny Raub, Alyson Eberhardt, Bill Campbell, Andrew Koff,
ZBA members John Haushildt, Martha Pennell, Laura Davies, Bob Prior
HDC members Patrick Gordon, Pam Gjettum
Heritage Commission member Mary Dupre,
Economic Development Commission members John Mueller, Madeleine Hamel
Bob Hall, Exeter Train Station Committee
Staff: Russ Dean, Town Manager
Dave Sharples, Town Planner
Doug Eastman, Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer
Darren Winham, Econ Dev Director
Kristen Murphy, Natural Resources Planner
Barb McEvoy, Deputy Code Enforcement Officer
Resident Justin Archambeault

Vice Chair Clement began the meeting by introducing the meeting's goal. Town Manager Russ Dean introduced Dave Sharples, the new town planner who is beginning on February 22nd. Dave said a few words and introduced himself to the audience.

The town manager went over events since the last all boards meeting. RSA-79e enacted, Economic Revitalization Zone established on Epping Road, Epping Road TIF enacted, Economic Development Director hired, new town planner, wetlands issues discussed/debated, master plan update put on the table, a process review and report written by MRI reflecting input from many different sources. The town manager also reviewed all the topics from the May 2014 meeting and the notes associated with that meeting.

Chairwoman Gilman outlined the goals of this meeting were to emphasize communication and process. She encouraged everyone to read the master plan. This is the main document regarding community development and we each bring different perspectives. The goal is for everyone to communicate in a good and thorough way. Ms. Gilman went through the different documents and suggested all become aware/familiar with them. Includes Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Site and Subdivision Regulations, HDC Preservation Guidelines. She reviewed the example of the HDC going forward with an update of their regulations as an example for what Boards can do.

Discussion regarding Selectboard and Planning Board representatives on boards. Need to take more advantage as it can assist Inter-board communications. Mr. Clement suggested written memos to assist communication. It was suggested the Selectboard and Planning Board set joint

meeting to set mutual goals. Consideration of joint meetings with other Boards to establish understanding of purpose and working towards mutual goals. Question joint meeting or designate representatives.

The topic of board training was discussed. What is needed? Boards are encouraged to develop a training plan for members that can be budgeted. Availability of board members for training needs to be understood. Webinars through NHMA are an option, The Office of Energy and Planning and Local Government Center opportunities was discussed. There is a need to establish training routines with volunteers. The Selectboard is also tasked to deliver expectations of current and new volunteers.

Next it turned to the planning process. The bubble diagram of the planning process was discussed. It has a lot of pieces missing and needs expansion. The CUP process that is required is not measured out in how long it takes. Town Manager states staff is looking for predictability so if an applicant comes to Exeter there is an ‘average understanding’ of how many days it will take to get projects ‘shovel ready.’ This will help us compete. It is understood projects are different but we’d like to develop a basic message. Mr. Campbell suggests a work session on process with the Planning Board and Selectboard. Mr. Hall suggests looking at the Plan NH charrette result as it is still valid and should be used as a tool for development in that area.

Mr. Prior observed concerns regarding renewal of membership on boards. Current alternates feel obligated to stay but suggest limited involvement. There needs to be a broader program of community wide recruitment and a process by which boards are filled. Ms. Eberhardt raised the issue of child care and the problem of younger volunteers limited by this issue. Town manager says it’s a hard one but understands – that Parks/Rec is not in a position to offer this – they are not qualified to care for infants/toddlers as an example. There are also potential liability issues. However outside the box thinking is needed and this should be discussed further. Different meeting times was also a suggestion.

Mr. Haushildt advocated for a return of the Zoning Ordinance Review Committee. It was understood the Planning Board would lead this effort. Mr. Hauschildt feels that when this was active it successfully coordinated input from other boards and assisted the Zoning Board’s work. The town manager stated this is a good idea. Previous concerns were how that committee prioritized items – it hadn’t been well understood. Business performance zoning was mentioned as a specific example of something that did not seem to be on the radar.

Master planning was discussed and the role of schools. Mr. Richardson said schools should be invited to be involved in this process as there are many school issues like full day kindergarten and middle school expansion being discussed. John Mueller indicated most of our tax dollars go to education so they should be part of the planning process. Exeter Hospital was also recommended for participation. Will these groups share their plans?

Application forms were discussed and how to improve them, to make it easier for applicants and staff to “check the box” to ensure applications are complete and more “user friendly”. Discussion centered around the 65 day window of the Planning Board and the issue of length of approvals. The town had an issue with requiring waiver of timelines of approval not in concert

with the RSA's. Ms. English reminded the Boards that the process works well when applicants are well prepared. Difficult process happens when applicants are poorly prepared. Several Board members remarked on similar experiences.

Mr. Gordon mentioned the Town does not celebrate positive outcomes. There is much good work that doesn't get reported on, just problems in the headlines. It's up to each board in his view to carry that message forward. Mr. Prior mentioned technology fixes. Mr. Dean mentioned the idea of requiring CAD submittals and shared project drives to increase staff understanding of the "left foot/right foot." Mr. Prior suggested to rename "All Boards" to "land use community" for future meetings. It's a positive representation of the community efforts by all Boards. The ZBA and where they are in the process was discussed as it pertained to the Planning Board. Further topics discussed were developing a framework for a board like an orientation for new members. Ms. Gjetton discussed her mentoring. There should be an understanding of workload and what is required reading prior to a board member committing. Board members have a learning curve. Suggested to use a person to introduce someone don't just hand them a book. The system should support this orientation process. Chairwoman Gilman suggests there is a difficulty in understanding the role of the EDC and where it fits in. Recommended it visit each Board.

Selectman Chartrand added it was a good point to celebrate the successes. This needs to be done more frequently with a more positive view of town government, staff, etc. The town manager suggested he is a resource and wants to hear from board members who have ideas of how we can improve our process to meet their needs, so everyone is on the same page.

The staff made comments. Mr. Eastman commented that the Zoning Ordinance is a good document, works well and is well organized. Mr. Winham discussed the Economic Development Strategic Plan SWOT analysis. There is a public meeting on February 24th and he encourages participation. Mr. Winham was encouraged to offer a wide advertisement of this meeting on the website, and social media.

The next meeting was discussed. Scheduled for June 15th as it will give boards 2-3 meetings to get recommendations on training and process diagram developed. At the next meeting we can work to complete it and the Master Plan warrant article for funding updates will be settled by then. Members present were charged with discussing this meeting with their boards.

Meeting adjourned 8:45pm.

- **Action Items for Land Use Boards:**

Add the following to your agendas in the next three months of meetings:

- review the planning process flow chart - how does your board fit in - who should see the application first
- review and discuss revisions to your application - reference the new HDC applications – recognize options to support preparedness of applicants that make meetings successful or problematic
- discuss pertinent information to successfully train a new member
- designate a mentor to each new board member

- **Action Item for individual board members:**

- Please read the Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, HDC Guidelines, Site & Subdivision Regulations and the Plan NH Lincoln St. Charette - documents are available on-line and in the Exeter Town Library.

- **Discussion topics for Boards and Commissions:**

- recognize the advantage of joint board meetings
- schedule meetings with other boards
- seek out education opportunities for boards – NH Office of Energy and Planning, Local Government Center, NH Division of Historical Resources hold conventions or seminars in the Fall and Spring- webinars are also available
- Seek out memberships to related organizations
- review goals achieved from the Master Plan - set new goals

- **Research and Bright Ideas:**

- we need a quarterback to guide the planning projects
- add to the Master Plan a section(s) for Education, what are plans at SAU 16, Exeter School District, Institutions (PEA), Exeter Hospital
- Master Plan revision and visioning - Where do we want to go as a Town? What do we want to be? What's the Big Picture?
- Restart Zoning Ordinance Review Committee - it needs more structure, regular meetings
- Need to push Board project status information out to all through email not just Chairs
- Research providing childcare for volunteers of Boards
- How do we make the Town Boards and Commissions more attractive to potential volunteers?
- Bad press will come and go. Let's start celebrating the successes of the Town to help change the public perspective of the Town Government.
- review the use of electronic submittals by developers
- review the use of GIS for the Town

- **Other:**
 - All future meetings should be titled Land Use Community Meetings
 - Russ is a resource. Please go to him with recommendations regarding the planning process.
 - Please designate spokesperson from your Board or Commission to speak with Russ.
 - Darren is hosting a public meeting on Feb. 24th to administer a SWOT on the Strategic Plan.
 - Selectmen create Community ---- Board to hold quarterly meetings.

- **Next meeting 15 June 2016**
 - Planning process flow chart
 - Pertinent information to successfully train a new member