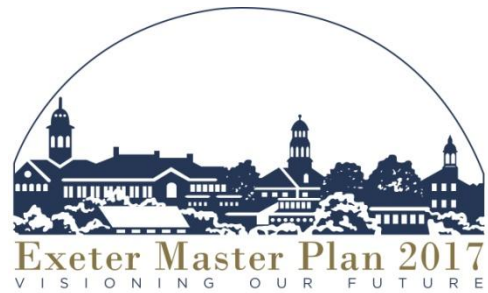


Exeter Master Plan Update Steering Committee Meeting Meeting Summary



March 9, 2017

Attendance

Steering Committee Members

Kathy Corson (Co-Chair)	Sean Sullivan	Gwen English	Ginny Raub
Lang Plumer (Co-Chair)	Barry Sandberg	Madeleine Hamel	
Jen Martel	Ian Smith	Don Clement (for Julie Gilman)	

Dave Sharples, Town Planner
Kristen Murphy, Natural Resources Planner
Russell Dean, Town Manager
Krista Moravec, Horsley Witten Group (HW)
Nate Kelly, HW

Public Workshop Summary

The Steering Committee received a draft summary of the public workshop, which included a list of all the Participant Worksheets as an attachment. Krista Moravec provided a high-level overview with some PowerPoint slides (attached). Please refer to the [document found on the project website](#) for the summary. Comments from the Steering Committee are provided in this document.

The Steering Committee commented that the workshop was well planned and executed. Everyone contributed and made the evening a success. Steering Committee members assisted at the sign-in table, as note takers and facilitators, and with overall help in managing the large turnout. RPC also helped facilitate tables.

Approximately 175 signed in that evening, but it was agreed that at least 200 people were in attendance. Nearly 160 Participant Worksheets were collected and tabulated. There were 18 small groups, 12 of which had a designated facilitator and the remaining groups were self-organized. HW had a concern that these “spill over” groups would not feel part of the process, but that does not appear to have been the case. As already noted, they self-organized and documented their ideas on the Participant Worksheets. Some of the HW staff facilitating adjacent tables and Dave Sharples periodically checked in on these groups. Kathy Corson noted that her husband and Mark Leighton facilitated a table and had a lively discussion.

Other committee members noted that there was a mix of ages and felt that should be documented in the summary. Many felt that providing child care was a large part of getting younger families to the workshop. SST students and chaperons provided child care to about 20+ kids. Because it was so popular, the Town is considering how child care can be offered for other town meetings. Specifically, the

Conservation Commission is looking into it. Food was also provided by the Town (organized by Dave Sharples) and cookies/desserts were prepared and donated by SST (organized by Lang Plumer along with child care).

Steering Committee members commented that several tables were inter-generational and made for a very rich conversation. The Town should look for more opportunities to mix age groups. Participants at the workshop wanted to know when other meetings would occur in the future. The Town doesn't have enough opportunities for participation. Committee members also noted that they recognized individuals from the mobile home park, and were happy to reach them and they were able to participate. They were hoping for an inclusive process.

In the Public Workshop Summary, Participant Worksheet comments were grouped into common themes to identify and organize common issues and ideas. While the themes appear as a "laundry list," it provided a baseline to develop the document outline (discussed later) and other materials.

Comments from the Steering Committee on the Public Workshop Summary document and overall findings were:

- "Attracting Young Families" as the future vision of Exeter – the consultant should look at the number of annual births in Exeter to understand if the numbers are decreasing or increasing.
- Mobility appears to be a "watch point" based on the aggregated graph. It had a high number of comments for the future of Exeter, compared to low positive things happening in Exeter. This might be an indication that more work needs to be done to address transportation issues.
- Social Networks had the opposite finding of Mobility, in that positive happenings were very high and future ideas were low, indicating that many might not see the need to improve the social aspects of the community because they are satisfied with what is already taking place.
- Fire and police were not specifically mentioned in the highlights.
- Under "Challenges and Opportunities" of the future outlooks of Exeter, many listed money, taxes, regulations, etc., indicating that there is some understanding of the hurdles the Town faces in implementation.
- The draft Housing Report was sent to HW and it should be looked at with the comments from the workshop.

The Steering Committee was asked to provide any comments on the draft summary by Monday, March 13. At which point, it will be posted on the project website and an email will be sent out to announce it is available. Next steps will be included. A link to the summary will also be posted on the town website under "Things about Town."

To promote the results at the election on Tuesday, March 14 [now postponed to Thursday, March 16], a poster will be made announcing that the summary is available on the project website and to again thank everyone who attended.

Looking to the second public workshop, it was commented that the outreach for the January workshop was successful. It appears that social media was a big part of it, but it was not certain. During the second workshop, participants could be polled to learn how they found out about the event.

A press release was suggested to announce the summary and when the next public outreach event would happen. Since the latter is not known yet, we will wait to send out another press release. HW will prepare a proposal for the next public workshop, which will be presented at the next meeting.

Update of Interviews & Focus Groups

Two additional groups need to be interviewed: Board of Selectmen and representatives of the School Department. Arrangements will be made to meet with the newly elected Board of Selectmen. HW will work with Dave to schedule this meeting.

The discussion early on in the process was to meet with elementary school principals, but some members of the Steering Committee noted that the Exeter School Board should also be part of the process. To do this efficiently, it was suggested that perhaps we could get on the Board's monthly agenda for a half hour. Further it asked was if we can we combine both groups (Exeter School Board and principals) for a joint meeting/focus group. HW will work with Dave to see the best approach.

It was asked if Phillips Exeter Academy was interviewed. Yes, HW met with Lisa MacFarlane, Principal, on February 1. Roger Wakeman (Director of Facilities) was invited, but not available at that time.

Baseline Snapshots

Krista presented a draft outline of proposed Baseline Snapshots. Early in the scoping process, the Steering Committee wanted to have a slimmer, more user friendly document. The idea around the snapshot was to condense the data-heavy chapters found in a master plan into a more succinct format: staying away from "What does it mean?" and focusing on "What's going on."

A draft list of proposed topics for each snapshot was provided for comment. The list included typical topics found in a master plan:

- Housing
- Demographics
- Transportation
- Existing Land Uses
- Community Facilities and Public Services
- Natural Resources
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development

Each snapshot will be two to four pages and very visual with graphics and photographs. Each would have a section "Why it Matters?" that would describe why understanding existing conditions around that topic are important in the master plan, followed by statistics and descriptions of the resources in Exeter.

As a draft, the Steering Committee was satisfied with the outline. Comments were:

- Economic Development should highlight smaller businesses and their diversity. Right now it stresses larger businesses.

- There was some discussion to talk about education separately, but that would be too specific for the level of detail in these snapshots.

Based on these comments, HW will prepare draft text for the Steering Committee to review and distribute in two weeks.

Draft Master Plan Outline

Nate Kelly presented two draft outlines. To simplify presentation of the outlines, they were called “Call to Action” and “Land Use.” Both outlines began with two opening sections: Introduction and Our Home Town. The latter explains the public process and describes the elements of Exeter that create “community character.” It will be heavy on images and graphics.

Both outlines also center around six action words, which are used to show the interrelationship between concepts of the Master Plan: Support, Preserve, Grow, Communicate, Connect, and Prepare. Where the outlines differ is how they address the land use discussion. In the Call to Action outline, these actions are used to organize all the “typical” information in a master plan under the heading “Issues and Opportunities,” including land uses. In the Land Use outline, land use is its own section and the action headings are addressed specific to land uses. The remaining topics are fall under “Community Opportunities,” also using the action words as headings.

The last section in both outlines was an Action Agenda.

The Steering Committee preferred the Call to Action outline. Comments were:

- Communicate: be sure to include intra-municipal communications; the idea of participation should also be discussed here.
- Connect: include the social systems.
- Grow: there was debate within the Steering Committee about the statement in the outline “...Exeter will need to grow” and the use of “need.” To be discussed further as material is drafted.
- Add Waterfront when Downtown is mentioned to ensure they are connected.
- Revisit the use of “West Exeter”.
- There is a concern about being too specific. For example, the Lincoln Street improvements will be done before the plan is approved in the fall. In response, adjustments can be made, but in some cases, specific actions are needed to keep the plan relevant and moving projects forward.
- Questions were asked, how do we acknowledge and deal with tensions or competing areas in the plan? How do we alert people to these tensions? The Steering Committee talked about how these tensions may play out as projects are brought to the Planning Department or before committees/boards. The draft Master Plan will also be brought to the committees and boards for review and debate will most likely occur during the update process. Another way is to acknowledge these tensions and differences in the Master Plan directly.
- Preserve: add Exeter River.
- Starry Brook is not a forest, and should be deleted.
- Under Natural Resources: subheadings should be broader, example, Wildlife, Water, etc.
- Kingston Road (not Kingstown Road)
- Connect: Regional connections – be more specific and include the Downeaster

The electronic version of the Call to Action outline will be sent to the entire Steering Committee and they will be asked to comment. No specific deadline was set for these comments.

Next Steps

Action	Who	By When
Comments on Draft Public Workshop Summary	Steering Committee	3/13/2017 (done)
Post Public Workshop Summary on project website	HW	3/14/2017 (done)
Post Public Workshop Summary on Town website	Dave Sharples/Town	3/15/2017
Create a poster about the Public Workshop Summary available online	HW	3/13/2017 (done)
Proposal for the second public workshop	HW	Next meeting (wk of 4/10)
Schedule time on Board of Selectmen agenda	HW/Dave	After election (in progress)
Coordinate a focus group with Exeter School Board and elementary school principals	HW/Dave	End of March (in progress)
Develop draft Baseline Snapshots	HW	By 3/24
Send electronic version of Call to Action outline to Dave	HW	ASAP (done)
Send electronic version of Call to Action outline to Steering Committee	Dave	ASAP (done)
Send out Doodle poll for next meeting, week of 4/10	Dave	End of March