MINUTES
OF THE
LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
May 11, 2022

Present: Jonathan Finn, Lisa Hassler, Roy Anderson, Nanette Perkins, Jeffrey Picard

Staff: Ralph Vitacco, Director of Planning and Development; Leanne Drake, Town Planner; Sharon Rooney

Mr. Finn convenes meeting at 5:15pm. Ms. Perkins is participating remotely via telephone.

Minutes
Ms. Perkins motions to approve the minutes of April 13, 2022; Ms. Hassler seconds. Approved 5-0-0.
Ms. Hassler motions to approve the minutes of April 27, 2022; Mr. Anderson seconds. Approved 5-0-1.

Consultant Presentation
Mr. Vitacco introduces Sharon Rooney to the committee. Ms. Rooney thanks the committee. She is happy to be in person and engage with the committee. Ms. Rooney explains that she is familiar with the last plan as she worked at the Cape Cod Commission (CCC). Ms. Rooney advances the slide and discusses her background. She is in a unique position as she did a lot of work on the Regional Policy Plan and had a major role in restructuring the LCP regulations. The LCP is a different animal now. The regulations were changed in order to create a document that did not sit on a shelf but was actionable. Ms. Rooney runs through project goals. Mr. Anderson asks if the actual end state is certification and not town approval and budgeting. Mr. Vitacco states we have a bifurcated goal, we want to get it certified but also has to be approved by town meeting. Ms. Rooney describes Tighe and Bond's scope. Mr. Picard asks when we sunset. Mr. Vitacco explains that the committee with sunset after town meeting. Mr. Picard asks for clarification on a statement made by Ms. Rooney regarding updating the LCP regulations. Mr. Picard asks how the CCC made it more effective. How can a policy change drive for more effective use of something. Ms. Rooney states that she will try and touch on this today. Mr. Finn asks if the CCC can request changes to the document after town meeting approval. Ms. Rooney explains that they can but one update to the regulations was a regular check in with CCC staff during preparations of the LCP. Commission staff should be reviewing the committees work as you go to make sure it is consistent. The committee discusses this further.

Ms. Rooney advances the slide and discusses the benefits of a certified LCP. Impact fees are one benefit to towns. Mr. Vitacco states that the town availed of this with Granite Ridge. Mr. Picard asks if it is always fees. Ms. Rooney explains that is always fees. She states that mitigation is different to impact fees. She outlines the other benefits of certification. Ms. Rooney advances the slide and details the required content for certification. Ms. Rooney states that there is a requirement to include a targeted action plan with whose responsible, a timeframe and a priority level. Ms. Perkins asks if there is some sort of outcome if those responsibilities are not met. Ms.
Rooney states that she doesn’t have a really good answer for that but the target action plan does assign responsibilities. The committee could reconvene or a new committee could be established to look in tasks achieved. One of the committees Sharon works with are tying the strategic plan and capital plan to their actions and goals in the LCP. The plan sits on a shelf if it has too many actions, doesn’t identify who’s responsible and isn’t tied to anything else. The towns that do the best job with it, integrate it with their other efforts. There is not one way to do it. Mr. Finn discusses tying it to the annual report. Once it’s approved by town meeting and certified and there’s an annual review it won’t be a good situation for any department to be ignoring the will of the plan. Ms. Rooney explains that Brewster produced a visioning document with recommendations and they did an annual review to see what has been achieved. The committee themselves went back to stakeholders to find out where were they in implementing various actions. Mr. Anderson asks if the LCP committee here has that authority. He did not think it was part of their charge. The committee discusses this. Mr. Vitacco states that the plan ultimately falls under the Planning Board and then through the Planning Office. Mr. Vitacco reminds the committee that the process can be memorialized in the LCP. Mr. Picard states that in reality the Planning Board does not have a lot of influence on other departments and if the town wants to move in another directions. The Planning Board does not have any real authority to direct. The committee discusses accountability.

Mr. Anderson explains that everything is really broken down into numbers and what in the budget. Ms. Rooney states that numbers can be added into the action plan. Performance measures are optional but this helps towns track their success overtime. Also in the guidance documents there are periodic lookbacks at the action plan that you will report to the Commission. Mr. Anderson states that we are in alignment, this is what most of our conversations are about. He asks if the Vision Statement and Growth Policy are linked. Ms. Rooney states that they are kind of linked. The idea is what do you want your community to be and how do you want it to grow. Ms. Rooney advances the slide and clarifies the committee’s role. Mr. Anderson inquires about the draft documents. Ms. Rooney states that they will be looking at the last plan to provide some framework but it has been 10/12 years that have past. We will be relying more on recent plans and studies. Ms. Perkins makes a comment that the last plan really said nothing, it was so general and open ended. We all entered into this in the hopes that it would be nothing like that. Mr. Finn affirms this comment but also clarifies that the guidance they now have is very different to the guidance that was in place when the old plan was created. Brevity and focus has changed. Ms. Rooney explains that existing conditions will be no longer that 4 or 5 pages long. It is a summary. Mr. Anderson explains that we have an opportunity to list documents in an appendix and have key action items very clearly outlined. Ms. Rooney explains that you can have links to the plans you don’t have to have them physically attached. Mr. Picard makes two comments. First he discusses accountability, this is something we need to put on the board and come back to. He is interested in Sharon’s thoughts. Secondly with goal setting are we speaking generally or will there be specifics. Will it be measurable? We need to come back and think about that. Can the LCP direct departments in the town where they must go or is it simply a plan that sets where we want to be in 5 years and they choose the path. That hasn’t been decided yet.
Mr. Picard provides examples. Mr. Picard is not convinced that they can provide directions in the plan. Mr. Finn agrees, and states that we are not qualified or authorized to say build the wastewater treatment plant or know where to the pipes in. We can add our goal of why it’s needed and they can run with that. We can give specific direction in what we want to see as an outcome and what the reasoning is. Mr. Finn provides an example. Mr. Anderson agrees that we don’t have the capability but he believes they do have the opportunity to say we are looking for twenty thousand s.f. of new conservation space as a goal by 2024 and the natural resource department has to fulfill that. Ms. Hassler asks how would we know what that number is. Mr. Finn agrees, that number has to be backed up. Mr. Anderson states that is coming from the Conservation Commission, we think we want to be there. Or we are getting it from our public outreach. Wherever we can we should provide a more definitive end state. The town needs to figure out how we get there. Ms. Hassler asks how many slides are left, she wants to make sure Ms. Rooney can get through her presentation. Mr. Picard explains why he has brought these areas up. He wants to provide some insight to Sharon on areas the committee is struggling with. The discussion continues.

Mr. Finn explains that we need to focus on Sharon’s presentation and scrap the next agenda item as we do not have enough time. Ms. Rooney asks how long the meetings are. Mr. Finn states until 6:30 pm. Mr. Vitacco clarifies that they are 2 hours and should continue until 7 pm. Mr. Finn has a hard stop at 6:30 pm today. Ms. Rooney explains that she will wrap up the presentation quickly as she was hoping they would get into a discussion on goals. Ms. Rooney advances the slide and details her scope of work. Mr. Anderson asks for a copy of everything that has been provided to Sharon. Ms. Drake will email board members in the morning. Ms. Rooney recommends fleshing out the vision statement a little bit more. Ms. Rooney provides a schedule. One the document has been created there is a required public hearing before town meeting. It’s an ambitious schedule but we can accomplish it. Mr. Picard has a couple of questions. He would like some clarity with respect to the housing plan. Only a summary will be added to the LCP? Ms. Rooney confirms. Out of curiosity what is the length of a summary. Ms. Rooney explains that it’s between 4-6 pages. Mr. Picard explains that the committee needs to interact with Sharon before she starts drafting things. It needs to be presented to us so we don’t have a disconnect. Mr. Picard provides an example with the Housing Production Plan.

Mr. Picard has some questions regarding the capital plan. He is confused about all of the capital plans out there. Mr. Vitacco details this for the committee. Ms. Rooney states that we can spend time at a future meeting discussing this. Mr. Picard agrees and states that we should because it’s not clear to him. Mr. Picard outlines the importance of knowing what documents Leanne and Ralph are giving to Sharon. Ms. Perkins states that she trusts Leanne and Ralph are not going to give her inappropriate information. Mr. Picard explains that’s not what he meant. He details what he meant. He wants to make sure we have that alignment. Ms. Rooney details our next steps. The vision statement and growth policy. The last slide addresses goals. Ms. Rooney explains that she created a document that Leanne added to. She gives the committee some examples of goals from the CCC and Brewster. Mr. Anderson states that he would look at that and say there’s nothing there. That’s not a goal at all. Mr. Finn states that he sees it clearly. Ms. Hassler states that it’s
not action item which is where she thinks Mr. Anderson is going. There would be action items to support that goal. Ms. Rooney explains that goals should be high level and general. She does not recommend getting into specific numbers in a goal. Where you get into more specifics are in the actions. Mr. Anderson explains that from his business background objectives are lofty and goals are a number and a date. Ms. Rooney states that she understands the terminology in different contexts mean different things. There will be a lot of information coming before you before you start creating actions. Ms. Rooney explains that this is the end of her presentation.

Mr. Picard details the other important piece that Sharon referenced and that is the performance measure piece. Mr. Picard uses an analogy to explain his thought process. Performance measures need to be brought back before the town. But simply asking for updates may not achieve our goal. That’s why the performance measure piece is so important and that’s what we really want a report back on annually; not the actions. We want departments to look at this throughout the year and if they are not meeting the performance measure we have given them the flexibility to change the action. The actions set the path but if something we suggest you do isn’t helpful don’t continue to do it. Mr. Anderson agrees. Mr. Finn leaves the meeting at 6.34p.m. Ms. Rooney suggests that as homework the committee should look at the regional policy goals and start hammering out Sandwich goals. The next would be to expand upon the vision statement and create a growth policy. Ms. Rooney gave Ralph some examples. Ms. Hassler asks Jeff a questions about the analogy he presented earlier. In that scenario you had control over the tasks and you also had the knowledge regarding whether those tasks were completed and so you could also evaluate at the end. With this town plan there would be so many different people so are you thinking that there would be levels? It seems that there needs to be a higher level of reporting and evaluation. Mr. Picard responds that if the Town Manager doesn’t take ownership of it then nothing is going to happen. That causes that integration to occur. Mr. Picard provides an example. What he was referring previously is say you have this much public access in town and in 2 years’ time you have increased it be 10%. That is a measurement that the actions are working. Ms. Hassler asks if he sees the Town Administrator as the person in charge. Mr. Picard says absolutely. The committee discusses this and the annual process. Ms. Rooney states that this process is the opportunity to elevate the LCP. She makes reference to an earlier slide about being a liaison to the board and committees. You have the opportunity to update them quarterly. Get attention paid to this effort while its happening and that should garner more interested after it’s approved. Mr. Anderson explains if the plan states that we want maximize property tax revenue from our waterfront properties which says hey conservation chill out on stopping development. Get as much development as you can on the beaches, on the creeks and ponds. So basically the direction is to build everything you possible can. That would be directional. So the conservation commission would see that and say ok I guess development is good. Ms. Hassler states that would go against their charge. Mr. Anderson agrees and explains if you make a change and require a number that’s measurable it would require committees to change their thought process and potentially their policies and objectives. Mr. Anderson states that he is only using this as an example. Ms. Hassler states that it is a good point. Shouldn’t this come before the commission so that can say no this goal does not help us further our goals? Ms. Rooney agrees, all boards and
committees should have the opportunity to comment on drafts. The committee discusses this further. Mr. Vitacco states once the goals have been drafted members should bring them before their respective committees to ensure balance.

Ms. Perkins disconnects at 6.43pm.

Ms. Hassler recognizes that the committee no longer has a quorum. Mr. Vitacco states that they can discuss items for the next meeting. We will bring your thoughts up to Jonathan. Are we continuing down the path of guests still? Mr. Picard asks Sharon to bring up the timeline slide. Mr. Picard states that we should be working on the first blue box. Mr. Anderson feels that we have a lot of this done already. Mr. Picard agrees. Ms. Drake states that we are missing a growth policy. Mr. Vitacco states that we have to develop the goals before we can move on to the measurements. Mr. Anderson asks how many goals there are. Ms. Rooney states there are approx. a dozen. Ms. Drake and Mr. Anderson will draft a dozen before the next meeting. Ms. Hassler explains to the committee that they cannot continue the meeting without a quorum.

Meeting ended at 6.50 pm due to lack of quorum.

Respectfully submitted,

Leanne Drake, Town Planner and Special Projects Administrator