

**TOWN OF BRUNSWICK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY – DRAFT 2
JANUARY 15, 2020**

*--- This Meeting Was for the Purposes of Planning the February 6 and February 8, 2020 ---
Community Workshops and Steering Committee Member Attendance Was Optional*

MEMBERS PRESENT: Larissa Darcy (Steering Committee Chair), Catherine Ferdinand, Alison Harris, Fred Koerber, Marcy McGuire, Sande Updegraph (Planning Board), and Kathy Wilson (Town Council, At Large)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Elizabeth Kohler, John Perreault (Town Council Chair, District 4), Anthony Sachs, Jacqueline Sartoris, and Christopher Watkinson (Town Council, District 5)

STAFF PRESENT: Matt Panfil, Director of Planning and Development

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Freshley and Markos Miller, Good Group Decisions

A meeting of the Town of Brunswick Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee was held on Wednesday, January 15, 2020, in the Town Hall Council Chambers, 85 Union Street. Steering Committee Chair, Larissa Darcy, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. She explained that the purpose of the meeting is to meet with Craig Freshley and Markos Miller from Good Group Decisions to prepare for the February 6 and February 8, 2020 community workshops that they would be facilitating for the Steering Committee.

Craig Freshley began by introducing his business, Good Group Decisions, which is located on Maine Street in Brunswick. Good Group Decisions has an extensive history in public policy development and land use planning issues. Craig asked the Steering Committee to define what a successful community workshop would look like to them and what are their desired outcomes.

Before responses from the Steering Committee, Matt Panfil provided Craig Freshley with an update as to where the Steering Committee was in the update process. The first phase of the update process, reviewing the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update, is nearing completion and the Steering Committee is ready to begin the second phase, visioning and goal setting. The third phase will be developing an implementation plan.

Chair Darcy stated that she felt the launch party event held on November 5, 2019 was successful because of the amount, and quality, of public participation. Craig Freshley asked for an estimate as to how many people attended the launch party. Matt Panfil stated that he does not know how many in total attended, but at least 500 people participated in an activity to vote for what were their top priorities for the Town to address.

Sande Updegraph stated that to her a successful workshop would include as much diversity as possible in regards to age groups that participate. She also wondered if it would be possible to accommodate some of the new Mainers at the events.

Marcy McGuire stated her concern regarding the scheduled length of time and would like the events to be structured to allow for residents to stay for whatever length of time they have available. She suggested that the workshops should include prompts that help people present their ideas to the Steering Committee.

Alison Harris stated that she would like the community workshops to address growth management and would like input from the public as to how to increase density in the downtown and growth area rather than the rural area, which is where most of the Town's residential growth has been occurring. She added that the community workshops should also gather public input regarding the Town's historic and cultural heritage. She agreed with Sande Updegraph's comments that youth participation would be a sign of a successful event.

Fred Koerber also agreed that a broad cross-section of Brunswick residents with diverse interests would lead to a successful event. He would also like residents that participate to feel invested in the creation of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Catherine Ferdinand stated that she would like residents to be able to participate in lively and thoughtful activities, but most of all she hopes to be able to identify themes that can be turned into goals and actionable items for the Comprehensive Plan Update. The visioning sessions should provide a framework for success in developing and implementing the rest of the plan.

Councilor Wilson expressed her concern that although she wants as much public input as possible, but she believes that people will only be at the event for a short amount of time. She also agrees that a diverse turnout in regards to age groups would be indicative of a successful event. She would like to see a way to see people's dreams and visions turned into practical actions.

Matt Panfil stated that from staff's perspective, he would like to see the community workshops operate as a filtering process that takes public input and consolidates it into identifiable topics from which to create objectives and action items. He would also like to see the workshops gather public input on growth management.

Chair Darcy agreed with Fred Koerber's comments regarding addressing a variety of issues rather than focusing on only one or two areas.

Craig Freshley asked the Steering Committee about their plans to host more public meetings. Matt Panfil responded that in April or May another meeting is anticipated that would present the Steering Committee's work on developing a vision statement, goals, objectives, and action items. Alison Harris stated that her expectation for the community workshops is broad, not a final vision statement. Catherine Ferdinand would like the vision

statement to also address the topics that are required by the State. Councilor Wilson asked for examples of other communities' vision statements that Craig has helped develop. The Steering Committee agreed that a draft vision statement was a desired outcome from the community workshops.

Craig Freshley asked about the Community Survey and when its results will be expected. Matt Panfil stated that a draft of data should be available within the week of January 27. Craig stated that survey data could help provide an education component for the community workshops and help orient residents to the changes that have occurred since the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update. The Steering Committee agreed that there should be a short educational component at the beginning of the workshops.

Craig Freshley suggested three (3) options for the community workshop format: 1.) a three-hour meeting; 2.) a rolling participation meeting in which people can come in at any time and stay for as long as they like; or 3.) two (2) one-hour meetings. After deliberation among the Steering Committee, Markos Miller suggested a hybrid approach that allowed for a soft start open-house style activity for people to review information to familiarize themselves with the Comprehensive Plan Update. The open-house would then be followed by a formal presentation and end with interactive exercises. The Steering Committee agreed to this type of format that allowed for an introduction, followed by two (2) short presentations on the purpose of comprehensive planning and a review of changes and trends that have occurred since the 2008 Plan was adopted. Information from the community survey will also be provided, if available. Forty minutes would then be spent covering big questions to be identified by the Steering Committee. The workshop would end with a 40-minute session covering special topics as identified by the Steering Committee.

Alison Harris and Councilor Wilson asked for advice regarding a previous question posed by Markos Miller regarding attracting people to the community workshops. Craig Freshley suggested that the Steering Committee needs to frame the workshops in terms of questions that will prompt interest from residents. The Steering Committee expressed a desire to avoid being too specific in their prompts so that only some people who care about a specific topic would want to go to the meeting. Craig helped the Steering Committee formulate the questions: What should Brunswick look like in 10 years? Where should Brunswick put new development? How do we keep Brunswick affordable and livable?

The Steering Committee discussed specific topics that should also be addressed during the community workshops. Topics included: affordable housing, cultural and historic landscape, economic development, public buildings, public infrastructure, natural resources, sustainability and climate adaptation, and transportation.

Chair Darcy asked Craig Freshley if he was developing an idea of how the community workshops will be structured. He stated that he will provide a draft agenda, but there will be a public education component with basic demographic information and other existing conditions of the Town, with survey data if available. The full group discussion will focus on the three (3) big questions that the Steering Committee just helped create. In response

to the question of what Brunswick should look like he envisions residents writing ideas and posting them on a wall. For the question as to where development should be located, he envisions the use of maps for residents to draw generally located bubbles of where to place specific uses. For the third question regarding affordability and livability he envisions a scenario where residents verbalize their ideas as he records them. The last phase of the workshop would be dedicated to the topics of interest. He suggested a soft ending in which residents can interact with the Steering Committee and other residents in an informal setting.

Chair Darcy asked Matt Panfil about the ability to have digital presentations at the community workshop locations. Matt responded that there will be equipment available at both locations.

Markos Miller asked about the Steering Committee's advertising plan to attract people to the events. Matt Panfil replied that the Steering Committee uses various methods including: an email list; social media accounts; TV3 announcements; local radio; paper handouts; a letter to the editor in the local newspaper; cardboard coasters for distribution at local cafes and dining establishments; and soliciting participation from other Town boards, committees, and commissions. Chair Darcy suggested Matt contact the local schools to either provide handouts or make announcements. Alison Harris suggested contacting the Brunswick Downtown Association (BDA) to include in their Brunswick Blast. Marcy McGuire stated that there will be an opportunity to distribute fliers at a free community meal held by a collaboration of local churches. The purpose of the meal is to get feedback on resident's difficulties obtaining housing. Alison Harris suggested posting a handout at the Visitor Information Center at the Brunswick Train Station. Catherine Ferdinand suggested that the event information be posted on newspapers' community calendar. She agreed that it was a good idea to see if the schools will make a general announcement. Chair Darcy added the chamber of commerce to the list of organizations to contact.

Chair Darcy adjourned the meeting at 8:17 PM.