

**TOWN OF BRUNSWICK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE STEERING COMMITTEE
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 12, 2019**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Larissa Darcy (Steering Committee Chair), Catherine Ferdinand, Alison Harris, Fred Koerber, Marcy McGuire, Anthony Sachs, Jacqueline Sartoris, Sande Updegraph (Planning Board), Christopher Watkinson (Town Council, District 5), Kathy Wilson (Town Council, At Large)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Elizabeth Kohler and John Perreault (Town Council Chair, District 4)

STAFF PRESENT: Matt Panfil, Director of Planning and Development

A meeting of the Town of Brunswick Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee was held on Thursday, September 12, 2019, in Room 206 of Town Hall, 85 Union Street. Steering Committee Chair, Larissa Darcy, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Matt Panfil, Director of Planning and Development, provided an update on the project timeline. Matt reported that he contacted several people who either work or worked for the State of Maine. In response to questions regarding the expiration of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update's findings of consistency, Phil Carey, former Senior Planner and Comprehensive Plan Review Coordinator for the State Planning Office (now the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Municipal Planning Assistance Program) stated that upon expiration of the findings the Town's status with the State will change from "consistent" to "unknown." He continued that the expiration of the findings does not necessarily mean the plan has become inconsistent with the State's Growth Management Act, but it is not as secure from legal challenges of the legitimacy of the Town's land use ordinance.

Larissa Darcy further explained that the current plan does not expire on November 20, 2020, but the State no longer acknowledges it as consistent with its Growth Management Act. Considering this information, Larissa stated that she still believes it is best to aim for completion by the November 2020 deadline and that one of the ways this can be achieved is through "dividing and conquering" the work among the Steering Committee members and Town Staff. The update process should also be divided. The first step is reviewing the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update. The goal is to complete this step by the end of December, 2019. Part Two is developing the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update. Keeping the expiration date in mind, Larissa mentioned that as Part Three, addendums to a Comprehensive Plan can be filed after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update. These addendums would be other topically- or geographically focused plans that have either already been identified as a Town need or other plans that are identified through the Comprehensive Plan Update process. For example, a Climate Plan is a topic-specific plan that would serve as an addendum to the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update. Unlike the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update, the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update will not have the

benefit of recently approved plans to incorporate into the document. Matt Panfil stated that he believed the timeline may need some adjustments in regards to the amount of time for Planning Board and Town Council review, but he is hopeful that they will be able to stick close to the timeline outlined by Larissa.

Matt Panfil then read from correspondence with Deborah Johnson, Director, Office of Community Development in the State of Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. In response to a question about the issuance of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the Town if its findings of consistency expire, Ms. Johnson replied that if a community does not have current findings of consistency it may be considered a lower priority, but funding decisions have never been made solely on that issue.

Ruta Dzenis, current Senior Planner for the Municipal Planning Assistance Program and a reviewer of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update, also responded to an email regarding the impact of the expiration of findings of consistency. She reiterated previous comments by saying that expired findings do not invalidate a locally adopted plan, nor any recommendations that the plan carries. In regards to the Coastal Community Grant (CCG) program and Shore and Harbor Grants the Town's findings will still be consistent when applications for the next fiscal year are due.

Larissa Darcy stated that one of the ways to help expedite the Planning Board and Town Council review process is to provide frequent updates on the Steering Committee's progress so that when the final draft is complete, there should be no surprises as to its contents. Several members of the Steering Committee agreed that this is a good way to go forward. Larissa also stated that public participation is important and outlined several methods for public outreach, including social media and public events outside of a public hearing setting.

Jacqueline Sartoris suggested that the Steering Committee host a "Town Fair," similar to what was part of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update process. Fred Koerber suggested that the Steering Committee be highly involved in preparing for the event. Catherine Ferdinand agreed and stated that it has to be organized to get meaningful public input. Several members of the Steering Committee made suggestions on how to incorporate the youth into the planning process. Alison Harris suggested some broad early visioning questions for the public to get them thinking about the future of the Town.

The Steering Committee had a discussion regarding the logistics of such an event and agreed that their preference was to host a public event on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, 2019 at the local polling place, Brunswick Junior High School. It was also agreed that there should be another Steering Committee prior to the event, preferably on Tuesday, October 29, 2019. A second public event is anticipated in late January.

The Steering Committee continued their review of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update. In regards to Policy Area 1: Maintain and Financially Support a Quality Public Education System, Matt Panfil stated that he will have to contact the School Board for help in identifying the status of the key objectives from the plan. There was a discussion among Steering Committee members regarding the incorporation of schools into the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update. Jacqueline Sartoris stated that the schools and their associated facilities are a major influence on the Town's budget and capital improvement planning. Matt Panfil agreed, but stated that he felt certain action items in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update were outside of the purview of a comprehensive plan. Fred Koerber suggested that the Steering Committee have a conversation with the School Board as to their role in the Comprehensive Plan Update. Larissa Davis suggested Matt Panfil contact members of the School Board soon to get their input. Anthony Sachs suggested the School Board be invited to the October 29, 2019 Steering Committee meeting and that the Steering Committee should work with the schools for ways to get comments from the youth. Jacqueline Sartoris suggested that the School Board be given the opportunity to review the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and let them determine what role they would like to take in the update. Alison Harris commented on the interrelatedness of all the policy areas and stated that the 2020 Comprehensive Plan update should account for this.

Moving on to the next policy area in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update, Matt Panfil stated that the review Policy Area 2: Require Long Range Planning for Municipal Facilities Including Replacement and Expansion will mostly be completed by Town staff as the objectives and actions items involve municipal facilities. Catherine Ferdinand suggested that this policy area falls under a broader topic of infrastructure. Several Steering Committee members agreed that the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update was lacking in addressing infrastructure and that infrastructure should be a bigger component of the 2020 Update. Jacqueline Sartoris stated that the State's requirements of a comprehensive plan are tied to the Growth Management Act which was developed out of a concern about urban sprawl. She suggested that the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update should also address sustainability and infrastructure. Fred Koerber stated that water and sewer were emphasized because that was how the growth zone was mapped. Sande Updegraph stated that she felt the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update was duplicative in many areas, specifically in regards to regionalism. Larissa Darcy stated that the weaknesses of the 2008 plan should be kept in mind while developing the 2020 plan. One of those weaknesses is not establishing progress checks and reviews of the Comprehensive Plan so that the next update is not under a difficult timeline. Jacqueline Sartoris suggested that the Steering Committee members share their opinions as to important issues not addressed by the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Alison Harris stated that she thinks the development of growth area versus rural area is still important. Public transportation, climate change, parking, workforce development, the incorporation of new Mainers into the community, arts and culture, and the Town's relationship with institutions like Bowdoin and major employers like Bath Iron Works are other areas not covered in the 2008 plan.

Councilor Watkinson stated that he thinks the education section should be modified to not focus on curriculum and programming. He suggested that the School Board may want to provide a condensed version of their strategic plan to be included in the 2020 plan. Housing, with a focus on workforce and affordable housing, is also an area that needs to be stronger in the 2020 plan. Regional use of facilities and the continued reuse of Brunswick Landing are more areas that need to be included in the update.

Sande Updegraph stated that she would like to include in the 2020 plan an emphasis on regional approaches to the issues facing the Town and surrounding areas. She also suggested a review of the Town's policies as they impact businesses. As an example, she cited short-term rentals, ride sharing, and marijuana uses.

Marcy McGuire asked what property the Town owns in Brunswick Landing. Matt Panfil responded that he would have to look at a map to be able to identify Town-owned properties. She added that the existing infrastructure at the Landing will have a big impact on the Town. Several Steering Committee members agreed and Jacqueline Sartoris suggested an inventory that identifies owners of property in the Landing would be helpful. Fred Koerber suggested that a conversation with MRRRA would also be helpful. Marcy McGuire also asked for a copy of the Town's Zoning Map. Marcy continued by asking about the status of the "Land for Brunswick's Future" program. Fred Koerber stated that the positions for the program were created, but never filled.

Larissa Darcy stated that she would like to keep the meeting length as scheduled and that the Steering Committee can continue sharing their opinions of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update at the next meeting. Matt Panfil stated that he is still looking for suggestions for additional questions to be included in the Community Survey.

Larissa Darcy asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

Catherine Ferdinand asked Matt Panfil to bring the statistics for the growth and rural area development. She wants to know how the 2008 plan targets were developed. Jacqueline Sartoris stated that she felt the Town failed to implement many of the goals to protect natural resources, water quality, and wildlife habitat. She also suggested the use of aerial overlays to identify loss of natural resources.

Larissa Darcy stated that the takeaway items from this meeting are the launch party on Election Day, a second public event in January to start Part Two, and Matt will contact the School Board and other Department Chairs and Committees associated with the objectives and action items from the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Matt Panfil mentioned that the planbrunswick.org website was update and now includes examples of comprehensive plans from other towns and he requested the Steering Committee members continue thinking about new questions for the Community Survey. A draft of the economic and demographic inventory was also provided for Steering Committee review.

Catherine Ferdinand suggested that the Steering Committee could take a site walk or tour of the Town.

A motion was made by Kathy Wilson and seconded by Anthony Sachs to table the review of the minutes from the August 6, 2019 Steering Committee meeting.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:04 PM.