Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 27, 2018

Attendees: Christine Poland, Madelyn Hennessey, Dave Hennessey, Ashleigh Randall, Mary Wallace, Karly Perry, Phil Carey, Antoinette Tate

Absent: Peter Ocertko, Nelson Marass

Notes:

- Municipal Planning Assistance Program from State of Maine
- Last plan was adopted in 2005
- Comprehensive Planning is governed by the Growth Management Act (The Planning and Land Use Regulation Act)
- It is not mandatory for all municipalities to have a comprehensive plan unless the town has zoning, building or growth caps, or impact fees
- Other good reasons to plan:
    - State grant eligibility/preference – for some it is a requirement to even apply
    - Influence state capital investments – provides a good measure of local control
    - Makes sense to have a "business plan" for your town – good faith statement on the part of town in regards to where it wants to go, not necessarily what will happen but provides intent
    - It is a good idea to think about the future
- Plan can be amended, it is meant to be a living document
- Steps can be taken to support and retain important community values and create a smarter, more sustainable pattern of growth
- Healthy places are self sustaining
- If farms and forests can make money for their owners, the land is less likely to be sold for development
    - Same with working waterfronts
- What needs to be in the plan?
    - Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule
        - Indispensable guide for creating a plan that is consistent with the Growth Management Act
        - There is also a self assessment check list
    - Population
    - Housing
    - Economy
    - Water & Other Critical Natural Resources
    - Recreation & Open Space
    - Agriculture and Forestry Resources
    - Historic and Archeological Resources
    - Transportation
    - Marine Resources
    - Public Facilities – Fiscal Capacity
- Recommended to form subcommittees within the committee to focus on more specific topics
- Future Land Use- this is the section of the plan where it all comes together
    - Includes map and description of:
        - Designation of growth and rural areas

                - Encourage growth around existing public facilities – i.e fire station and school
                - Growth areas can be places that are already developed – focus should be on improvements and maintenance
            - Critical natural resources
            - Proposed land use districts (proto zoning)
- Comprehensive Plan is an important consideration for grant funding and application process
- It is also important for the plan to include realistic/honest goals but ideas shouldn't be automatically dismissed because they don't seem attainable at this moment – think ahead for the future
- Degree of obligation comes into play in the future land use plan – land use districts which impact zoning
    - These should align, there is a two year time period for this to happen
    - Any discrepancy forms the basis for a legal challenge, but generally no other legal enforcement/consequence
- Rules were changed with an eye toward making things simple for towns in the development of the plan
    - Implementation strategies – intended to act as a guide for what should be included in your plan to the extent of how relative they are to your town
- There are lots of options to work with other communities within the region
    - Take notes of existing partnerships – how are they working currently, any issues, any room for improvement, etc.
- Rural and growth areas can be divided into sub districts
- MPAP Provides:
    - Basic technical assistance from staff & through RCs
    - Town specific resource packages
    - Online manuals, models & forms
    - Online library of municipal plans
        - Since the new rule change
        - They are the original draft that was originally submitted, none of the changes are reflected in the form that is posted
    - Comp plan consistency reviews
    - Ordinance consistency reviews
- Can reach out to Phil Carey – email is the preferred method of communication
- Plans developed in conjunction with consultants tend to be stronger
    - Can alleviate a lot of the burden off of the typically volunteer committee
    - Tend to read better which puts the town in a better position when it comes to being awarded a grant
- The key is to make sure that the plan is understandable, well written, and consistent
- The review time for the state to approve a plan is roughly 45 business days (9 weeks)
- What has changed?
    - Law amended (12 year plan life)
    - New Rule adopted
    - Funding for planning grants suspended
    - Administration of GMA shifted to DACF
    - Name of program changed
    - Preferred status with some state grant programs

- Knowledge is power – be creative but don't try to reinvent the wheel, each place is unique and your plan should reflect this, but use a consultant that has experience in writing consistent plans and use readily-available resources

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- One of the primary elements in the plan is a vision statement
- Public input is key
- If there is a doubt about whether or not to include something, then you can always have a very large appendix that contains all of the additional information
- Tax base is largely residential homeowners, there isn't a large commercial/industrial fiscal input; there has to be a realistic ideas based on the funding on which we have to draw upon
    - There are state and federal grants available so that the town only has to make a partial contribution to make the town's dollar go farther
- Should our planning be limited to the life of the plan (12 years) or should we be thinking beyond that timeline? It is helpful to include goals as a guideline
- A capital improvement plan is an important piece of this process – what are we anticipating for
- Significant capital investments and what are the sources of funding for them?
- When you are listing your strategies, break them out into short term, medium term, and long term goals and plans as well as include ongoing plans
    - Assign boards/people to be point persons and have responsibilities