

Natick 360
Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



Strategic Planning Oversight Committee
Minutes * January 3, 2007

Present

Rosemary Driscoll, designated by School Committee
Terri Evans, at-large member
Matthew Gardner, designated by the Conservation Commission
John Heerwagen, at-large member
David Parish Co-Chair, designated by the Board of Selectmen
George Richards, designated by the Planning Board
Craig Ross, Co-Chair, designated by the Finance Committee
Harlee Strauss, at-large member

Absent

Fred Witte, at-large member

Consultants Present

Phillip Blackerby, Blackerby Associates (by telephone)

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. EST by Co-Chair Mr. Ross in the School Committee Meeting Room, 3rd Floor Town Hall, Natick, MA 01760. A quorum was present.

Item 1. Minutes of December 13, 2006: Mr. Heerwagen moved approval of the minutes; Mr. Gardner seconded the motion. The Committee voted 4-0-1 to approve the minutes.

Item 2. Coordination with Sponsoring Boards: Mr. Ross reported that Phase 1 documents went to the sponsoring Boards before Christmas. Phase 2 documents are to be sent out shortly. Priorities: Board Members will have full agendas, and if they ask, "If we can do only one, which will it be?" Mr. Parish reported that the Board of Selectmen has delegated to Selectman Carol Gloff; Mr. Parish will work with her; and they may not need to prioritize. The priority is the Phase 2 Values & Vision acceptance. Ms. Driscoll agrees; the School Committee has gotten back to her about the Phase 1 document, and wants iterations on that document. Phase 2 is a higher priority; already had two rounds of feedback in that process. Mr. Gardner agrees. Mr. Ross has had difficulty contacting the Finance Committee, which will hear a budget presentation next Tuesday. Mr. Heerwagen asked what kind of feedback is expected on Phase 1 report. Ms. Driscoll reported that context had not been given for document review; concerns are about a combination of omissions and some factual interpretations. Mr. Ross noted that the document is not intended to be comprehensive, but a snapshot. Ms. Driscoll noted that some feedback pointed out that it should contain something about the high school building in it; she is not sure if other members will also have concerns. The School Committee will meet Monday, but the Phase 1 report is not on the agenda. Mr. Ross will tell all Committee members to go forward with the Phase 2 Values & Vision documents. Mr. Parish noted, regarding Phase 1, the only concerns should be errors. Mr. Ross noted that the Committee could do

an additional document to cover omissions, but would not go back to MAPC and redo this document. Wordsmithing and minor edits may be dealt with; omissions to be covered in separate document, which we would ask them to help us write. Example: referred to computer labs as state-of-the-art, but the School Committee member did not feel it is state of the art. Omissions include details of poor condition of high school and senior center buildings. Mr. Ross reiterated that priority is to get Phase 2 Values and Vision report accepted. If people have questions or objections to Phase 1 report. Conservation Commission meets tomorrow morning. Tension points are the School Committee and the budget process. Ms. Evans noted that the dates for the Planning Board are fixed for February 14 and March 28.

Item 3. Fundraising update: Mr. Ross reported that MetroWest Subaru contributed \$500 sponsorship before the end of the year. Mr. Richards reported that Belkin Lookout Farm, John Burns, Manager, contributed \$5,000 sponsorship, which arrived last Friday.

Mr. Ross also spoke to a local activist who is also an executive with a telecommunications company and will ask for \$10,000; the executive indicated the timing is great. A request to a retail developer has been forwarded to a committee, which will reach a decision in the next couple of weeks.

Item 4. Key Informant Meeting Update: Mr. Parish reported that the date is set, February 13, 2007, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at Morse Institute Library; an email announcing the date has been sent to approximately 80 individuals and organizations, including representatives of MBTA, state agencies, health organizations, and others in MetroWest region, with follow-up; expect 40-50 participants. Some responses have been received. Time was set to avoid traffic, while keeping people out of their offices. Mr. Parish will coordinate time with the Library management. The purpose of the meeting is to inform participants about what Natick has undertaken, and to start thinking about the roles they might play going forward. We will be able to show them Vision and Value statements at that time. Blackerby Associates will facilitate. Examine gaps between where we are and where we want to be, and how they might help fill those gaps. *Action item (a)* Mr. Parish will send a spreadsheet with details to the Committee members.

Item 5. Vision and Value Report Update: A new version of the Phase 2 document has been distributed. Mr. Blackerby summarized the report. Mr. Parish noted that a criterion was to ensure that all issues could be considered under one or more value or vision statements. Ms. Evans noted that this version is different from the version sent yesterday, without all the detailed content. Ms. Strauss asked about vision statements, noting that one on transportation is absent. "...desirable and accessible destination...". Mr. Richards also expressed concern about transportation. Ms. Evans noted that transportation comes under several statements. Ms. Driscoll noted that transportation should be in at least one of them, as well as parking in downtown; transportation was one of the biggest issues. Mr. Gardner asked about sidewalks connecting neighborhoods. No 7 is about marshalling resources, and being a community leader; then gets into connectedness; he suggested sending that paragraph to the first vision statement. Ms. Driscoll suggested editing to start the sentence with "Natick." Mr. Heerwagen noted value statements about Natick Center and business community, but the value statement about business community doesn't convert over to a vision statement; it was noted that the business community is referenced on page 8, about "work and thrive." He suggested adding "diverse businesses" to the first vision statement. Mr. Parish asked about the first value statement, "tradition of affordability." Also, many residents, not "a large percentage." Page 1. add Belkins Lookout Farms and MetroWest Subaru as primary sponsors in

footnotes. Page 4. bottom “Natick residents like living in Natick. Natick’s greatest challenge may be to build on its success...” and Page 7, “many citizens feel that the small town feel results from interconnections. Also look for capitalization of “town” for consistency. Stewardship, page 7 bottom, “clean lakes” delete “water.” Mr. Gardner asked about prioritization; change sequence to “diverse geography, with a healthy aquifer, lakes, rivers, ponds, wetlands, ...” Mr. Parish asked if we should start on page 5, and move the rest to the back. Strike pp 5-6. The Committee decided to add a front page with the heading and logo, titled “Natick Value and Vision Statements.” Then list the Value and Vision statements, with their introductory statements, then add a footnote with the random order disclaimer; change the numbers to bullets. Blackerby Associates will make changes by tomorrow; any more feedback from SPOC members should be received by Friday, January 5. The Conservation Commission will discuss the document tomorrow, and may delay a vote to January 18.

Mr. Richards moved to accept the document as amended in the suggestions during the discussion, above; Mr. Heerwagen seconded the motion; the Committee voted 8-0-0 to accept the document as amended.

Item 6. Vision Statement Gap Analysis – Brainstorming: The Committee started an exercise to test a gap analysis for one of the vision statements. After a brief time, the Committee halted the exercise for discussion, and decided to forego it, so as not to address the content of the process.

Item 7. Other Business:

Blackerby Associates Invoice for December: Mr. Gardner moved approval of invoice 07-001 for \$8,550.00; Ms. Strauss seconded the motion; the Committee voted 8-0-0 to approve the motion.

Ms. Strauss moved to adjourn, Mr. Heerwagen seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 8-0-0 to adjourn at 8:56 p.m.

Summary of Action Items noted above:

- (a) Mr. Parish will send a spreadsheet with details about the Key Informant meeting to the Committee members.