

**Natick 360
Strategic Planning Oversight Committee
Meeting Minutes 10/4/06**

DRAFT 10/5/06

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, designated by the Board of Selectmen
Craig Ross, designated by the Finance Committee
Fred Witte, at-large member

Absent

George Richards, designated by the Planning Board
Harlee Strauss, at-large member

Consultants

Mr. Phillip Blackerby, Blackerby Associates
Ms. Holly St. Clair, MAPC
Mr. Mark Racicot, MAPC

Guests

Ms. Betsy Boggia, Advisor on Visioning Weekend Publicity Plan

Meeting called to order at 6:35PM.

Item 1 Minutes

Motion to accept meeting minutes of 9/14/06 made by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Ms. Evans. Voted 5-0-2.

Motion to accept meeting minutes of 9/20/06 made by Mr. Parish, seconded by Mr. Gardner. Voted 7-0-0.

Item 2 Coordination with Sponsoring Boards

Ms. Driscoll reported she will be in front of the School Committee at 7:30 this evening (10/4) to update them. Mr. Ross requested that Ms. Driscoll remind the School Committee about providing input on the Town Services – Schools section of the Phase I report.

Mr. Ross reported that he provided an update to the Finance Committee on 9/28 and that he invited each member of the committee to register for the Vision for the Future weekend.

Mr. Ross also reported that he was in front of the Board of Selectmen on September 25 to request authorization of a contract with Blackerby Associates. The Selectmen voted to authorize a contract with Blackerby Associates in the amount of \$119,700.

Item 3 Phase I Draft Report - MAPC

Mr. Ross described the communications strategy for the Phase I report to the Committee. The MAPC Report will be designed as a very detailed and very thorough report which will be written for completeness and accuracy, but not brevity and ease of reading. The MAPC Report will be used as the Foundation Reference Document for a series of summary documents which highlight key findings from each section in a more readable format. These summary documents or “briefings” will be written for the general public by the SPOC and will pull information out of the Foundation Reference Document. These documents will then be organized and preceded by an Executive Summary.

Ms. St. Clair went through the draft of the report section by section, giving the Committee an overview and orientation to the document. A series of maps were also presented for review by the Committee.

Mr. Gardner requested that some information be placed in the MAPC report about the Floor Area Ratio payments which have resulted in an multi-million dollar fund which will be available for open space acquisition to offset dense development.

Ms. Driscoll suggested consolidating some information on maps, perhaps the sidewalk map could be consolidated with the Arts and Culture map.

Mr. Heerwagen thought that the Key Challenges suggestion could be integrated with the report better. Perhaps changing the name of the section would help. This section is a summary of qualitative research but not a summary of key findings from the data analysis conducted by MAPC.

The Committee agreed to the following actions following the presentation:

1. Mr. Gardner will lead the review of the accuracy of the maps and consolidate feedback for MAPC early next week. He will attempt to get the maps reviewed by the Conservation Commission, Community Development Office, current or former Planning Board members, other knowledgeable citizens.
2. All committee members would provide feedback to Mr. Parish and Mr. Ross by email regarding the Phase I report. All feedback should be made no later than Monday 10/9. Feedback should focus on flaws or information which seems to point to contradictory conclusions. Our goal is to focus time on cleaning up the information available and clarifying – not adding to the scope of the document.

Item 4 – Visioning Weekend Format and Schedule – Blackerby Associates

Mr. Blackerby introduced the project management website which is at the address: <http://www.blackerbyassoc.com/Natick/#Management>

He then reviewed the proposed format for the Visioning Weekend – a document available at the project management website.

Friday Evening session has been designed to accommodate visiting dignitaries, allow ample time for the keynote speaker and Phase I report presentations, and provide a format for audience participation at the end. The Committee approved this format for Friday night.

The Saturday and Sunday focus group sessions will be structured with a 10-minute orientation, focus group feedback for 95 minutes and then a 15 minute group prioritization session.

Ms. Evans suggested adding a closing event at the end of the weekend where the results of the entire weekend could be shared. After discussion, the Committee decided that it would be best to share the results in a follow-up letter or e-newsletter to participants rather than try to have people return to the Middle School venue at the end of the weekend.

Item 5 – Visioning Weekend Publicity Plan – Betsy Boggia

Mr. Ross welcomed Betsy Boggia who has volunteered to put together a publicity plan for the Visioning Weekend. Ms. Boggia then presented an overview of the publicity plan.

The goal is to have 1000 people attend the event over the weekend. To accomplish this, we are focusing on getting approximately 388 active volunteers in the community – people who are in Town Meeting or who sit on various committees – to register. Then each of these registered people will be asked to register 2-3 friends. If most of the active volunteers register and get 2 or 3 friends to register, we will achieve our goal of 1000 people.

A mailing to the 388 active volunteers was sent on 10/3. There will be a phonathon to contact these 388 people during the week of 10/9. An email newsletter will be sent out during the week of 10/2.

Each person registering will get a follow-up email requesting that they get 2-3 friends to sign up and make it a social event. If registrations are strong in the first 10 days or so, then we have a very good chance of hitting the 1000 goal.

Broadcast messaging to publicize the event includes an appearance by Mr. Ross and Mr. Parish on The Town Crier cable television program. There will also be a series of 4 articles published in the Natick Bulletin and Tab over the next 4 weeks. Coverage has been good in the MetroWest Daily News, with an article published on 10/4 which highlighted the Vision for the Future Weekend. The Committee will submit a request to the Board of Selectmen to hang a banner across Main Street in the week(s) leading up to the event.

The Committee thanked Ms. Boggia for her assistance in putting together the publicity plan.

Mr. Ross led a discussion about Registration Packages and Door Prizes. Mr. Heerwagen offered to take responsibility for soliciting through Natick Center Associates and Rotary for the registration packet materials and door prizes. Ms. Evans offered to help with this task. Ms. Boggia requested that information about door prizes be circulated early to help boost attendance.

Mr. Ross led a discussion about the need for volunteers and the various jobs volunteers could perform. There were a good number of people who filled out surveys during the summer who offered to help volunteer. Mr. Parish suggested a volunteer coordination meeting. Mr. Ross will work with Ms. Boggia to set up a meeting for volunteers.

Item 6 – Project Schedule – Blackerby Associates

Mr. Blackerby led a discussion of the proposed project schedule. In particular he highlighted dates for meeting with sponsoring boards, the May 18-20 Strategic Choices weekend, and the need to start the search for a community survey vendor in January.

The following actions are required of Committee members:

1. Review the calendar and add other important town dates (Town Meeting, Elections, etc)
2. If you are a designee for a sponsoring board, review the calendar with the sponsoring board and get their commitment to make it work
3. Provide feedback to Mr. Parish and Mr. Ross prior to the meeting of 10/18.

Item 7 – Other Business

Mr. Ross asked the Committee to approve the addition of Kevin O’Sullivan to the Blackerby Team as a facilitation resource.

Motion by Ms. Evans, seconded by Mr. Gardner to approve the addition of Kevin O’Sullivan as a subcontractor to provide facilitation and other services as determined by Phillip Blackerby. Voted 7-0-0.

Mr. Ross informed the Committee that they will be required to review all invoices over the duration of the project and that this will become a regular agenda item. Billing from Blackerby Associates will be monthly.

The next meeting of the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee will be at 6:30PM 10/18/06 in the Dlott Meeting Room (Selectmen’s Meeting Room 2nd Floor Town Hall).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.