

Natick 360
Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



Strategic Planning Oversight Committee
Minutes * November 1, 2006

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
Fred Witte, at-large member

Absent

None.

Consultants Present

Phillip Blackerby, Blackerby Associates, by telephone.

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. EDT by Co-Chair Mr. Ross

Item 1. Minutes of October 18, 2006. Corrections suggested by Ms. Driscoll: correct typo on page 1, paragraph 1; and change attribution to SPOC, and apply to all boards on page 4. Moved by Mr. Parish, Second by Mr. Richards to accept minutes as amended. Vote 7-0-1 to accept minutes as amended.

Item 2. Coordination with Sponsoring Boards

(defer to Item 6)

Item 3. Project Finances

Mr. Parish and Ms. Evans submitted expenses; Ms. Driscoll is gathering receipts. Invoice 06-014 for consulting fees by Blackerby Associates, \$8,550.00 for month of October against Town Meeting appropriation. Moved by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mr. Parish. Vote 9-0-0 to approve Blackerby Associates invoice 06-014.

Invoice 06-015 for \$995.84 for reimbursable expenses by Blackerby Associates against donation account. Ms. Driscoll asked about reimbursement for sales tax; Town is tax exempt, and does not pay sales tax. Should provide documentation at time of purchase. Sales taxes are not reimbursable. Mr. Richards moved approval; Mr. Gardner seconded. Vote 9-0-0 to approve Blackerby Associates invoice 06-015.

Mr. Ross reported that the Committee has now received \$5,000 from Eastern Bank and \$200 from Fair Yeager Ins., for total receipts of \$12,750 against total pledges of \$21,000. Now have spent approximately \$2,300 of this amount.

Item 4. Debriefing

Vision for the Future was an unqualified success. 327 people registered; plus over 200 on-line surveys. This means we have heard from more than 500 people, or over 2% of registered voters. Mix was interesting; concern we would have heard only from the regular activists in town is disproved by breakout of attendance: 63% were from general public with no prior involvement in Town institutions, demonstrating great response. Surveys are still coming in, available on web site at www.Natick360.org. Representation was low from seniors and young adults, though a more thorough analysis of representation will be prepared later. Based on findings, the Committee may schedule some additional meetings in the community; tried to reach out to youth for Youth Summit, and four attended. Each person who attended had an opportunity to fill out an evaluation; an analysis of the evaluation responses is also under way.

Ms. Evans reported she heard from people who said it was a great and unique experience. Mr. Heerwagen attended two workshops; the discussion was terrific, thoughtful and good tone even when disagreement was present; a whole range of people attended; event was terrific, could not be better, higher quality discussion. Mr. Parish sat in on a session Saturday; he asked people how they happened to be there; one gentleman responded that wife attended this morning, and told him to get off the couch and get over there this afternoon. People really like this Town; this attitude came through clearly. Ms. Driscoll stated that it is important to keep the momentum going; whenever we gear up again, remind them of this experience, and urge them to bring their neighbors; it was fun, but also serious things going on. Mr. Ross stated that the next big weekend is May 18-20, 2007; another series of workshops in strategic choices on policies, programs and projects. He encouraged people to add their email to the updates list on the web site under Contacts. A biweekly newsletter is planned, with opportunities to participate. First newsletter will be at the end of this week.

Mr. Ross stated that handwritten thank you notes will be sent to key people. He thanked the committee members for their good and hard work. Others also volunteered to hand out fliers, staff registration desk, provide food & drink, etc. More notes to write; urge committee members to sign and add a note as well.

Wilson Middle School was a perfect facility, including auditorium, cafeteria, meeting areas. School staff was a great help.

Natick Pegasus taped the Friday night opening ceremony, keynote speech by Anthony Flint on new urbanism, to design communities that use less energy and improve environment. Also briefing on *Natick: Our Community Yesterday and Today* presentation by Joel Barrera of MAPC. Pegasus is creating DVDs for distribution through Morse Institute Library.

Morse Institute Library is creating an archive of the Natick 360 process. Mr. Ross has assembled a packet of material for this purpose, which he summarized. Also, a strategic planning report by Natick Cares focused on youth and children. Natick Center Associates is conducting design charettes, continuing November 5, February 6, April 3 and June 6. Library is also doing a strategic planning process. Natick 360 will integrate these results into a Town-wide plan.

Mr. Ross acknowledged project sponsors: Middlesex Savings Bank; Natick Federal Savings Bank; Eastern Bank; and WebReply, Inc. Also, weekend sponsors included: TCAN, with prize tickets to Paula Poundstone; Walnut Hills School tickets to upcoming performance; Fair Yeager provided financial funding; H. Brandt Jewelers gave six \$50 gift certificates for raffle; Frame Shop gave prints, framed and unframed, for raffle, and large print for participants to sign.

Phase 1 consultants, MAPC, produced a series of interesting maps. These maps will be on display in Morse Institute Library, and possibly Bacon Library.

Item 5. Key informant workshop

Mr. Parish summarized this opportunity for organizations (MBTA, State Agencies, etc.) to be updated about the process and its accomplishments so far, to provide feedback and to contribute ideas. Proposed December 12 schedule will not work; another date is under consideration.

Mr. Ross summarized that this project is an opportunity for people to participate in development of the community. Also Natick will gain attention of resources outside to help us achieve goals and extend the process; help with prioritization of projects they are involved in. Get them interested in this unique process in Natick.

Item 6. Review of Phases 2-4 project schedule

Mr. Ross distributed a two-page summary report presenting: key information about the visioning weekend for the sponsoring Boards and Committees; set expectations with Sponsoring Boards and Committees to analyze the voice of the people. Pull out common voices from participants, and give each group a chance to organize and summarize what they heard into Value statements (what people value, or want to preserve) vision statements (aspirations for the future) and strategic focus areas (themes for policies, programs and projects). Each Board and Committee will work independently. They may work through a subcommittee. Designees are asked go to Boards and Committees, in public if necessary. Also dates need to be set for December, February, March and September. Meetings will need to be posted. Participation by SPOC members and the public will be up to the Board and Committee chairs. Also possibly schedule a parallel public session for interested people. Mr. Gardner concurs in soliciting public participation. Two hour workshops with each Board and Committee, generating five (or six, with public) sets of ideas. Ultimately the project manager will take all the results and synthesize them into a series of recommendations back to the Boards & Committees to vote up or down, or comment.

Item 7. Phase 1 Report Update

Mr. Ross noted that he had requested additional draft from MAPC; waiting to hear when we will receive that draft.

Item 8. Other Business

None.

Next meeting currently scheduled Wed., Nov. 15th at Senior Center at 6:30 p.m. This may change.

Mr. Gardner moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Witte. The Committee voted 7-0-0 to adjourn at 7:43 p.m.