

**Natick 360**  
Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



**Strategic Planning Oversight Committee**  
**Minutes \* November 29, 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  
Craig Ross, Co-Chair, designated by the Finance Committee  
Harlee Strauss, at-large member  
Fred Witte, at-large member

**Absent**

George Richards, designated by the Planning Board

**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

**Item 1. Minutes of November 1, 2006.** Moved by Ms. Evans, Second by Ms. Strauss to accept minutes as amended. Vote 8-0-0 to accept minutes.

**Item 2. Coordination with sponsoring boards.** Mr. Blackerby reviewed the schedule of meetings with the sponsoring Boards and Committees during December 11-14. *Action items:* (a) Mr. Gardner will schedule the Conservation Commission. (b) Also need additional Planning Board and Conservation Commission meetings for February 12-15, March 26-29, and September 17-20. For December 11-14 meeting: Committee members should review Value & Vision Statements prior to action. Ms. Driscoll asked about "preparing Boards for the Meetings." Mr. Ross noted that the meeting materials will be distributed in advance, including an agenda explaining what they will be asked to do during the meetings, so the Board and Committee members don't arrive with questions about what they are supposed to do. Ms. Driscoll noted that she cannot attend the meeting; Mr. Ross clarified that phone calls and emails are sufficient. *Action item:* (c) Blackerby Associates will develop agenda and describe what they will be doing. A draft of the meeting materials was submitted to the Co-Chairs today, but they have not yet been reviewed; they include an issue about public health. Mr. Ross reviewed the process of developing summary materials from the Visioning Weekend, and noted that the documents are generally posted on the [www.Natick360.org](http://www.Natick360.org) web site, with some delay. SPOC is scheduled to meet Dec. 13, at 6:30 p.m.

**Item 3. Fundraising.** The Natick 340 project budget is funded 75% by Town Meeting, and 25%, or \$50,000, by private fundraising, which is used for expenses such as copying, mailing, communicating with the public. Contributions will also be used for the scientific survey of the

community in June 2007. The survey is an important part of the process, to get input from the community at-large who do not attend meetings, and whose voices are not otherwise heard in the process. So far pledges total \$21,000. To raise the balance, a subcommittee of Mr. Heerwagen, Mr. Richards, Mr. Parish and Mr. Ross have written fundraising letter to approach businesses. One business called today, had participated earlier, and now wants to fund sponsorship before the end of the year. Another business identified its willingness to give to this effort after the new year. SPOC members are encouraged to refer potential donors to the subcommittee members. Donations are made to the Town of Natick for the Natick 360 account. This account is not a 501(c)(3) charitable donation. SPOC may have to make an arrangement with a 501(c)(3) organization to provide deductibility for these donations.

***Item 4. Phase 1 report by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council*** (MAPC). Phase 1 research started over the summer; lots of work went into it, including many data sources; MAPC produced valuable maps as part of the process. In mid-October, SPOC asked MAPC to edit and refine the language and the charts, to make it more readable. They have done a good job of refining it. It is a foundation reference document under Phase 1; municipal benchmarking analysis is another foundation reference document. Highlights of the MAPC report were distributed during the Vision for the Future Weekend, focusing on demographics. *Action items:* SPOC anticipates creating some more of these summaries, including (d) one on municipal finance, describing where the money comes from, where it goes, and who decides how it is spent. (e) one on physical elements of the community, such as traffic, natural resources, green space. All this information is available in detail in the MAPC report. SPOC members can also suggest topics for additional summary documents.

*Action items:* (f) Missing from the report is a last section, a summary of preliminary focus group research (by Ms. Driscoll) conducted over the summer, including citizens, community groups. (g) The report also does not yet include business forum input, which SPOC will also add.

Mr. Ross summarized the outline of the MAPC report, noting that it includes a section on resources and potential outside sources of funding.

Mr. Ross acknowledged that the sense of the Committee is that this document is ready to be included in a package, which can be presented to the Committee for action at its next meeting. The finished package will be available next week, for action the following week. *Action items:* Other sections that need to be added to the package include: (h) a preface to guide people through the rest of the report, and (i) a substantive executive summary (suggested by Ms. Strauss). The finished package will include the missing business forum input, three summary reports, a preface guide to the report, and a substantive executive summary.

Mr. Ross has an electronic version of all the maps, and they are complete; he is discussing with the webmaster how to make them available to the public. *Action item:* (j) At Mr. Parish's inquiry, Mr. Ross said he will see about transferring GIS files from the MAPC system to the Town system for archives. The Morris Institute Library wants archival copies of the maps and other documents; MAPC will deliver those archival maps over the next couple of weeks.

The sponsoring Boards and Committees will also have to take independent action to review and accept this report, separate from the visioning work sessions. They may act on the summaries separately, to smooth the logistics of the approval process.

**Item 5. Phase 2 Summary.** The Vision for the Future Weekend was a huge public session at the end of October; 327 people attended, plus 200 online surveys were received; consolidated into 53-page document, on Natick360.org under documents. Blackerby Associates condensed the document to an 11-page summary, collapsed repetition, and organized the material by themes. This document was made available to sponsoring Boards Nov. 13-16. In 2-hour facilitated sessions, they highlighted noteworthy items and added things they wanted. Today the SPOC Co-Chairs received transcripts of the notes from those five sessions, plus a public session. Today, Blackerby Associates also produced the first draft of a consolidated report. The Boards and Committees will have an opportunity to review and comment on the materials, and a different version will be produced for the December 11-14 meetings; it will be at a high level of abstraction.

Values and visions are foundations of the strategic planning structure. Values are things to preserve, and vision are things to develop over next several years to create a future people want to see. Agreement on values and vision is necessary first step; if problems arise at higher levels, participants may return to the foundation of values and vision to reconsider their options. One way to evaluate a planning effort is to measure how much time is spent on these value and vision basics; for example, freedom is bedrock value of founding of country; complexity is built on top of it, but the foundation is solid. In the process, we are hearing very consistent themes from participants.

Ms. Strauss expressed concern that some issues may be lost in this process. *Action item:* (k) Ms. Strauss, Mr. Ross and Mr. Parish will review the materials, and get a product to SPOC by Friday; SPOC comments must be returned by Tuesday; output to Boards and Committees will then be sent out by Wednesday; then meetings the following Monday-Thursday. One document will be produced, a draft values and vision report, summarizing information from the sponsoring Boards and Committees, and public input. Some things from Visioning weekend are actions; the visioning document does not include actions; rather, they are overarching ideas, without predefining actions to be decided later; they are common themes, widely-accepted by the residents. They may also be in apparent conflict, such as affordability and low taxes *vs.* infrastructure needs and programming preferences. The subcommittee will create a preamble describing what to do with the document.

**Item 6. Key Informant Workshop and database.** The Key Informant workshop will be scheduled February 13, 2007 at the Morse Institute Library, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., with an informal lunch. On the Yahoo group site is a new Key Informant database; it is based on a list from MAPC and other organizations; SPOC members should review the list and add people or organizations that should be included in the process.

**Item 7. Natick 360 displays and publicity.** The print of Natick Center, with the mat signed by participants in the Vision for the Future Weekend, has been framed by The Frame Shop, with a plaque about the Visioning Weekend workshops. It will be on display at Town Hall, with brochures to explain where it came from. Maybe later it can be displayed at other locations, such as the Kennedy Senior Center, Morse Institute Library, or at sponsors' locations. It will help generate ongoing public awareness of the process. Ms. Evans' experience is that it is a powerful image to generate great interest among people who see it.

Also, the timeline is a great teaching and discussion tool. The timeline is now on the Natick 360 web site, with the capability for people to add items to it.

The Morse Institute Library has offered to display the maps, properly mounted. Boards and Committees have continually asked for some of these maps, and now they will be able to have them. Also the library has circulated two DVDs of the opening session; demand was so high they have asked for two more copies.

***Item 8. Senior forum and other forums / speakers bureau.*** Some populations have been difficult to reach, including seniors, youth, and low-income households. Natick Service Center is trying to help people with lower incomes to participate, but they need babysitters or have jobs or other weekend commitments. SPOC is continuously looking for ways to engage people. On December 13, 2006, 1:00-3:00 p.m., a senior forum at Kennedy Senior Center is scheduled during the day. Ms. Strauss volunteer to coordinate the Senior Forum.

Mr. Gardner suggested contacting student government at Natick High School; Jan Parsons is head of guidance at NHS, and may be of assistance. Mr. Blackerby had also spoken with Ms. Samuels, who is in charge of student community service; other SPOC members had solicited participation through the Youth Advisory Board; none of these approaches yielded fruit. Mr. Gardner volunteered for Youth Summit. Members should forward their ideas and information to Mr. Gardner.

A volunteer is still needed to coordinate a forum through NSC.

A speakers bureau presentation is needed, containing 5-10 slides, that SPOC members could deliver, to speak to PTAs and PTOs, Rotary Clubs, churches, synagogues, etc. Now is the time to reach out to these organizations, and to tell them we are available to speak to them in January. For example, Mr. Parish has reached out to Walnut Hill School; also contact hospital, community groups and others to let them know what we are doing, and solicit their input.

***Item 9. Natick 360/TCAN photography exhibit.*** Mr. Parish reported that people are invited to submit photos with a Natick theme to David Lavalley, TCAN Executive Director. Assuming more submissions than can be displayed, Mr. Lavalley will assemble a panel of experts to review and select about 50 photos for exhibition at TCAN April 29 – June 9, 2007. Additional venues may be possible, such as the Morse Institute Library, Broadmoor and the organic farm. The exhibit will include old photos as well as new ones; the Library has an archive of old photos, as well as a large private collection, and some of them may be added to the mix. This is another way to engage people in a creative way, to express what makes Natick special. The exhibition dates coordinate with May weekend events.

***10. Other business:*** (A) Blackerby Associates has submitted invoices for professional services and for reimbursable expenses. Mr. Gardner moved, and Ms. Driscoll seconded, to approve the professional services invoice for same amount as approved for October (\$8,550.00), and to authorize Mr. Ross and Mr. Parish to review and approve the invoice for expenses, and to report on both invoices at the next meeting. The Committee voted 8-0-0 to approve the motion.

(B) Mr. Heerwagen asked about coordination with Natick Center Associates and their planning process. Mr. Parish plans to attend future NCA forums; the next is December 5, 2006, at 6:30 p.m. at the Morse Institute Library, lower level. Also, the Library has plans under way, and other organizations have plans under way as well. SPOC is trying to coordinate loosely with other organizations, to leverage what they learn, publicize their events, and coordinate resources, including:

- Natick Cares, an organization concerned about youth health in the community; the Natick Cares report was distributed in participant packets at the Vision for the Future Weekend;
- Natick Senior Center study group is looking at new senior center; its report will be posted on the [www.Natick360.org](http://www.Natick360.org) web site soon;
- Joan Craig at the Morse Institute Library is coordinating a strategic planning effort, and she has been participating in public sessions for Natick 360.

SPOC focuses on public awareness, coordination, and learning from their work products.

Mr. Gardner moved to adjourn, second by Mr. Heerwagen; Committee voted 8-0-0 to adjourn at 8:49 p.m. EST.

### **Summary of Action Items noted above:**

- (a) Mr. Gardner will schedule the Conservation Commission for the week of December 11-14.
- (b) Planning Board (Mr. Richards) and Conservation Commission (Mr. Gardner) meetings need to be scheduled for February 12-15, March 26-29, and September 17-20.
- (c) Blackerby Associates will develop agenda and describe what the Boards and Committees will be doing in their December 11-14 meetings..
- (d) SPOC anticipates creating a summary of the Phase 1 report on municipal finance, describing where the money comes from, where it goes, and who decides how it is spent.
- (e) SPOC anticipates creating a summary of the Phase 1 report on physical elements of the community, such as traffic, natural resources, green space.
- (f) To be added to the Phase 1 report is a last section, summarizing preliminary focus group research (by Ms. Driscoll) conducted over the summer, including citizens, community groups.
- (g) To be added to the Phase 1 report is a summary of the business forum input.
- (h) To be added to the Phase 1 report package is a preface to guide people through the rest of the report.
- (i) To be added to the Phase 1 report package is a substantive executive summary.
- (j) Mr. Ross said he will see about transferring GIS files from the MAPC system to the Town system for archives.
- (k) Ms. Strauss, Mr. Ross and Mr. Parish will review the Values and Vision Statements materials, and get a product to SPOC by Friday.