

Comprehensive Planning Committee Minutes

March 29, 2023

Present: Jeffrey Carlson, Chris Cheney, Paula Clark, Jessica Cobb (KVCOG), Greg Durgin, Eric Dyer, Jessica Gorton, Elaine Katz, Matt Nazar, Dennis Price

Absent: Greg Leimbach

Jessica G. called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. in person at the Town Office and via Zoom.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Before the meeting Jessica C. sent the committee members a draft of the full plan for review, which Eric put on the website.

Eric reported that at a recent public hearing he made a presentation of the Comp Plan to about 10 people and received useful feedback.

There appears to be some misconceptions about how the Comp Plan relates to the broadband plan that voters rejected last year. Jessica G. searched for the words internet and broadband in the completed plan and found seven mentions, but nothing that matched the issues raised. The committee discussed how these misconceptions can be counteracted.

MINUTES

Paula moved that the minutes for March 15 be approved. Dennis seconded. Approved, with two abstentions due to absence.

Paula moved that the minutes for February 15 be approved, and Dennis seconded. Approved, with one abstention due to absence.

OLD BUSINESS

Future Land Use Chapter

Before the meeting Paula sent the committee a draft of the Future Land Use chapter she revised based on the original document Jessica C. had put together.

Paula went over her revisions with the committee. She said she changed some of the language and added text in other places. One major change is to consider the addition of a Rural Resource District.

She noted that there is some overlap to the Existing Land Use chapter, and there are references to that chapter and others.

An error she found is that the old Comp Plan is referred to as 2008 in some places; it should be 2009.

She said that everything suggested by the committee in previous meetings has been included.

Questions were raised about a few issues, such as growing cannabis as a light industrial. There is interest in that industry but no business currently pursuing it.

Paula asked Jessica C. re Articles 7 and 11, which says ambiguous language creates gray area about what is allowed. Committee discussed what it refers to and how to address.

Paula asked about the placement of goals and strategies, which will lead the chapter.

Eric asked Paula if anything in the chapter stood out as markedly different from the old plan or if anything is missing. She said no, and that she doesn't think anything has been left out.

Everyone thanked Paula for her work on this chapter, which is one of the most technical and important and took a great deal of time.

Matt asked when this chapter needs to be finalized. Eric said that on April 10 the Select Board will work on the draft plan, and any changes or corrections to Paula's draft should be completed by them. On April 19 the CPC will meet to hold a final review. The final proof needs to be ready on April 28 for the town warrant.

The committee discussed timing for final tasks. Matt, who is the second lead on the Future Land Use chapter, said he will read the chapter and get his feedback to Paula well before the 10th.

There was some discussion about open space and residents' attitude toward it. Eric said that there is a small group that feels we have enough, but mostly people are in favor of it.

Jessica G. asked committee members to read through the Future Land Use chapter and get their comments to Paula by April 5 so she can integrate them.

Matt asked if there is a map for this chapter. Jessica C. said yes, it was presented at the last public meeting. She said she will work on getting the maps into the draft before the Select Board meeting.

Final Draft Plan Review

Jessica C. presented the draft of the plan, stopping as she scrolled through the 259 pages to ask questions. There were some questions about the first plan, which was in 1993. The next plan was 2009.

Several people offered suggestions and corrections. Topics that had been discussed previously, such as the Fairgrounds project, funding options, recreation, critical natural resources and maps were discussed. It was decided to include the text of the survey and then provide a link to the survey results.

Survey Results

Eric reported that all the survey results are up on the website. He also created a summary of the comments and posted those as well. 169 long-form responses and 67 short-form responses were received, which is a little more than 12 percent of the population. There was a separate survey for businesses, which drew eight responses, mostly angry.

At the beginning of the long-form survey there were questions about where in town people lived, how long they have been here, how old they are, etc. Those answers reflected the fact that Readfield is a community that skews older and retired.

Eric said he is trying to compress the information for presentation slides, but he said he doesn't want to cut them too short because many residents have expressed interest in the survey results. Chris suggested that for transparency the business survey should be included as well.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Information and Education

Eric said it's important that we continue to provide a steady flow of information to counteract efforts to distort the purpose of the plan.

Members discussed the schedule of meetings and plans for moving ahead, and how best to give residents an opportunity to offer feedback. Eric suggested that the CPC's May 17 meeting be turned into a public hearing. At that point changes can't be made, but it will give the committee an opportunity to explain the plan and encourage discussion.

Eric said the Select Board has discussed public outreach. There will be a flier and an explanatory document to give to the public.

Deliverables/Votes

Matt moved that the draft plan as presented this evening is ready to go out for public perusal. Greg D. seconded. All approved.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be April 19. At that meeting a vote will be held on the Future Land Use chapter and the complete plan.

The committee will also discuss plans for presenting the plan to the public at the May 17 meeting.

Jessica G. asked everyone to read the Future Land Use chapter and offer their comments to Paula by April 5.

Dennis moved for adjournment; Greg D. seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Holly Rahmlow