

TOWN OF LINCOLN
MINUTES OF COMPREHENSIVE LONG RANGE PLAN COMMITTEE
Held on September 16, 2008
At 7:30 PM in the Donaldson Room, Lincoln Town Offices

PRESENT:

Ken Hurd (Chairman)	Planning Board; HOBE sub-committee
Peter Sugar	CHUG sub-committee
Mark Whitehead	Town Planner
Jack MacLean	Chug sub-committee
Bob Domnitz	Planning Board
Anita Scheipers	Assistant Town Administrator
Kim Buell	
Peter Braun	FACTS sub-committee
Alaric Naiman	FACTS ”
Alvin Schmertzler	FACTS ”
Ben Horne	HOBE sub-committee
Angela Seaborg	Conservation Dept.
Ken Bassett	LUED sub-committee
Jim Meadors	OSNR ”
Peter Von Mertens	OSNR ”
Sara Lewis	OSNR ”
Phyllis Mutschler	HOBE ”
Chris Hamilton	HOBE ”
Bob Sutherland	FACTS ”
Noah Eckhouse	FACTS ”
Patti Kelleher	Community Opportunities Group
Judi Barrett	”
Anna Hardman	LUED sub-committee
Bryce Wolf	LUED ”
Harriett Todd	CHUG ”
Sarah Guerrero	LUED ”
Karen Keane	CHUG ”

INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed committee members and noted that they were coming back together after a period in which work has been progressed through sub-committees. He explained the format for the discussion. Attendees introduced themselves.

DISCUSSION OF CONSULTANT’S PROGRESS

Judi Barrett thanked people for their patience over the late delivery of some plan documents. She said that she has reviewed the issues put forward by sub-committees for the content of the plan, and so far has not seen much conflict but things may need to be discussed more closely. Overlaps between sub-committee topic elements were addressed at the last Steering Committee meeting in terms of where to place material in the plan.

The intention is to produce an executive summary which will act as a draft plan document for presentation to the State of the Town Meeting in November. This will include goals, key issues and findings and key actions. COG is completing the chapters of the plan for each element, incorporating comments received on the drafts, and will also fold in feedback from SOTT. Work on the implementation plan is proposed for early December, followed by the final plan.

DISCUSSION OF REMAINING TIMETABLE

Mark Whitehead drew the committee's attention to the fact that only six months remains until presentation of the final plan to Town Meeting in March. He distributed copies of a broad timeline with key stages in reverse order, and explained it. The SOTT follow-up meeting is now scheduled for November 18th, not 13th as initially proposed, due to room availability.

The Chairman asked whether COG has what it needs for the SOTT report; Ms. Barrett confirmed this, subject to what comes out of the committee's discussion and the need to fill out some areas.

The role of the Planning Board was discussed. The Board will sponsor the Town Meeting article and will need to discuss, and potentially amend, the plan in advance. Two members of the Planning Board have been involved in CLRP sub-committees and Bob Domnitz (the current chairman) has sat in as an observer on the LUED sub-committee, while Ken Hurd has continued to chair the CLRP Committee/ Steering Committee. It was agreed that it will be important for the Board to liaise on the plan as it develops from this point, including reviewing the results of this meeting's discussion.

SUB-COMMITTEE PROPOSALS AND ISSUES

The chairman of each sub-committee presented its key proposals, as set out on a compiled list (appended).

DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK ON PROPOSALS

Judi Barrett and Noah Eckhouse encouraged attendees to identify any areas of potential conflict. An open-format discussion took place, ranging over the following topics:

Housing diversity

The question was asked, whether there should be a clearer goal in terms of the overall split of housing of different types in town, rather than an open-ended aim of increasing certain types. HOBE's view was that if we do nothing, we are losing the smaller homes so it felt action was needed to counter that trend. Ms. Barrett warned against being too prescriptive in planning for particular housing types, as preferences/ needs may change. HOBE also considered that some higher density housing in preferred places could reduce pressure on areas that the town would prefer to keep low density. It was suggested that LUED's criteria for assessing development proposals may help and it was agreed to circulate them.

15% was suggested as an appropriate goal for affordable housing, if there was to be one. The committee estimated that if genuinely affordable housing is counted, including accessory apartments that do not meet the state's criteria, the town may already be at

about this level. There was some support for checking this. Alaric Naiman commented that a steady inflow of new types of people is healthy for the town.

Recreational open space needs v. conservation

The Steering Committee agreed that formal outdoor recreation (playing fields etc.) would be covered in the facilities element. It was noted that all current playing fields about the schools and that building expansion is being considered; therefore there may be a future need for playing fields elsewhere. In some towns this search for land comes into conflict with conservation. OSNR representatives suggested land being newly acquired may be more open to formal recreational uses than existing conservation land, and that the criteria set out in the Open Space Plan may help.

Town-owned historic buildings

A potential conflict was identified between preserving historic buildings owned by the town and renewing facilities. It was acknowledged that the town offices have significant problems in terms of operational capability, working conditions for staff, and disabled access. Peter Sugar suggested that the needs should be seriously assessed with a view to updating, and the cost addressed.

Another idea was to take a coordinated look at Lincoln Center as a community focus. Potential activities that could be located here are a farmers' market and a volunteer job market. One suggestion was to consider conversion of the town offices to multi-family housing.

Single point of contact for land use changes; planning process

Mark Whitehead pointed out that on the staff side, it is part of his role to act as the point of contact and coordinator for prospective developers. LUED members clarified that their proposal is aimed at boards, not staff; there was concern about a need for a clearer process when developers approach the town with ideas for major land use changes. This could be seen as 'phase 1', with 'phase 2' being the normal board hearings. The sub-committee wants the process to be led by land use planning and to encourage consideration of alternatives.

Peter Braun considered that the process may be too proponent-driven and commented that in the past, plans have given more locational direction, with South Lincoln and the area of North Lincoln around Route 2A made available for non-residential development. Others responded that proponents of change could be town boards as well as private developers, and that there have been cases where the town has creatively shaped a development through a process that began with a specific proposal.

It was noted that the At Risk Properties Committee looked at alternative uses for major sites but did not create a consensus about preferred uses.

Some members were concerned that the town may appear to be encouraging development proposals, whereas the general consensus is that little change is desired. It was felt that this context can be expressed in the plan. It was noted that some changes can happen by right while in other cases the town has a lot of control through the overlay district process but cannot stop developers from framing proposals. A process and list of criteria/ considerations are intended to help to respond to proposals in a structured way.

Land use reform and the state's expedited permitting regime were briefly discussed. LUED thought these were not of positive interest on current terms.

Size of Board of Selectmen

This was discussed briefly. It was noted that with three members, the BoS is smaller than other boards. CHUG has discussed the issue with other towns and wishes to explore it further but reported that some considerations, such as ease of reaching decisions, support the current size.

Volunteer coordinator

There was discussion as to whether the idea of a volunteer coordinator or committee, without any funding, would simply add to the need for volunteers. It was noted that the increase in women's participation in the workforce has resulted in there being fewer volunteers available.

How to get more contested elections

Sarah Guerrero raised this issue. Peter Sugar reported that CHUG thought it was a similar problem to the shortage of volunteers. Politeness may be involved as well, but some positions are vacant. The absence of the League of Women Voters also means there is no forum for candidates to present their views.

One suggestion was dividing up work into more manageable tasks, in recognition of the fact that working people have limited time. Another idea was widening the range of jobs eligible for tax work-off. CHUG thinks there may be a need for a mentoring program to train and develop volunteers. At one time, people were invited to act as assistants to boards (taking notes, etc.) and were potential future board members.

Regional Land Use Issues

LUED was asked if it had considered land use issues beyond the town's borders, and replied that they were considered to be beyond the town's jurisdiction. There was some support for addressing the town's ability to influence regional issues, and offering guidance.

DISCUSSION OF SOTT MEETING PRESENTATION

Jim Meadors asked whether goals or action items should be used for the SOTT document. Judi Barrett said it would draw upon both goals and major action items. OSNR will need to include some of its broader material and to coordinate with FACTS.

Ms. Barrett agreed to send out an email via Mr. Whitehead, setting out what is needed for the SOTT document. She said she thought the sub-committees were working on the right areas but she will need to ensure that she has the right material. The deadline for sending the report to the Selectmen's office is October 13th.

Mr. Whitehead stated that the CLRP will have two hours at the SOTT Meeting. He asked if the structuring of tonight's discussion was a suitable model for SOTT. There was support for keeping the format of presenting all topics first and then inviting questions. It has previously been agreed to post the report on the website in advance and to have articles in the Lincoln Journal. It was suggested that guidance be included for the public on what to expect and how to have an input.

It was agreed that Ms. Barrett will have a supporting role at the SOTT Meeting, with the emphasis being on the large-scale involvement that residents have had in the preparation of the plan. There was support for a short Power Point presentation to be prepared by COG.

WRAP UP

Mr. Hurd thanked people for coming.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Submitted by Catherine Perry

(Sub-committees' proposals for discussion attached)



TOWN OF LINCOLN

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Comprehensive Long Range Plan Committee

The Land Use and Economic Development Subcommittee proposals for discussion:

- institute a comprehensive planning process for all land use changes, including changes in type and intensity and any rezoning. Specific changes to the current zoning map are not proposed.
- create a single point of contact for proponents of change.
- adopt a table of Assessment Criteria for use in evaluating proposals for change.
- the Lincoln Station area meets many of the proposed Assessment Criteria to a high degree. The Town should consider pro-active planning to promote the Lincoln Station area as a compact, dense, and walkable neighborhood that provides services to residents, opportunities for social interaction, and new housing choices.
- promote economic development within the Town that protects our rural character, adds to the vitality of residential life, encourages human interaction at Lincoln Station, and maintains, improves the delivery of services to residents.
- establish a task force to think creatively about seeking revenue streams consistent with the Assessment Criteria.

The HoBE group met, discussed and refined our goals for each of our elements as follows:

Housing

1. In order to meet increased housing needs, especially in achieving the town's affordable housing goals, yet preserve the town's overall rural character, encourage techniques such as higher density Smart Growth development, in which future growth is concentrated around existing transportation nodes and commercial centers, in an area such as South Lincoln Village, including planning for the infra-structure that will be required to support the desired degree of development.

2. In addition to achieving the town's goal to fulfill State affordable housing requirements, provide means and eliminate roadblocks to address the housing needs of other segments of the population, including youth, young families, the adult disabled, the elderly and those of moderate income.

3. Develop coordinated strategies and incentives to maintain or increase existing housing diversity, including adjusting bylaws and providing the means for property tax relief to encourage renovation rather than demolition of smaller homes, and to allow for greater flexibility in the use of accessory apartments and the re-use or re-configuration of existing structures for possible multi-family use.

Built Environment

1. Create a Visual Preference document to convey to developers and

those new to the community a sense of the key elements that define and differentiate Lincoln from surrounding communities, including guidance on the town's over-arching characteristics and the way its buildings relate to and fit within the natural landscape.

2. Implement greater public review of development that might impact or occur adjacent to Lincoln's conservation lands, key viewsapes and scenic roads.

3. Encourage greater use of neighborhood conservation districts, expanded historic districts and any other means to preserve certain historic homes, groups of homes or other types of buildings at risk that, in whole or in part, reflect Lincoln's heritage and preserve its overall rural character.

4. Integrate, coordinate and clarify the review process with respect to demolition and replacement of existing structures, so as to minimize the threat of negative impacts on the town and its character from excessive teardown activities and to support the goal of maintaining current level of housing diversity with respect to both size and price.

5. Develop a means to integrate environmental sustainability into our bylaws and zoning and approval processes.

Comprehensive Long Range Planning Natural Resource Proposals – September 2008

1. Prepare a list of current Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Standards that are applicable to local building projects and create an avenue for reviewing such projects.

2. Establish a local bylaw which regulates the use of chemical pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers on both public and private properties.

3. Establish a local bylaw which regulates noise and chemical pollution from landscape equipment.

Comprehensive Long Range Planning Open Space Proposals – September 2008

1. Identify criteria and priorities for evaluating the best use for available, developable land with multiple land-use possibilities.

2. Maintain the character of Lincoln's conservation land and trails in the face of increased regional pressure and recreational use.

3. Investigate the possibility of improving and expanding the trail network to enhance non-motorized, multi-modal transportation both within Lincoln and between Lincoln and neighboring towns.

CHuG Goals

Governance

- Explore and develop ways to improve Lincoln's TM form of government confirming, in the process, that it's still the best way to govern the Town:
 - Define its strengths while curing its weaknesses
 - Develop ways to improve citizen awareness, interaction, understanding and work towards increased citizen attendance at all townwide governance meetings (TM, SoTT and any other special meetings).
- Provide additional support for volunteer boards: potential strategies:
 - Improve training
 - Systematically evaluate staff/volunteer needs
 - Hold inter-board meetings on common issues
- Stimulate and promote citizen involvement in Town Government and foster leadership opportunities:
 - Form a Volunteer Outreach Committee and/or Volunteer Coordinator-Ombudsman
 - Develop a listing of citizen skills and interests and provide easy access to such an inventory
- Explore opportunities for increased sharing of resources with neighboring communities and organizations (e.g. in Transportation, Public Safety and elsewhere)
- Develop and implement opportunities for utilizing the energy and interest of the town's students in civic oriented town activities and processes, to combine learning with useful contribution.
- Enhance community outreach by improving the Town's use of electronic data systems, expanding utilization of the Town website and making full use of 21st century means of electronic communication

Cultural and Historic Resources

- Ensure that Lincoln's C & H resources continue, and can expand their, role in enriching the Town's character, balancing the Town's values of preservation, diversity, and learning while remaining open to changes both within society and in the growth of the community.
- Foster greater interaction between the C & H institutions and the Town and schools, through organized interaction and partnerings between all groups.

Services

- Data drives services: A Selectmen-appointed of volunteers should survey residents & town employees every 3 years to assess satisfaction with Town services
- Services should be reprovisioned based on survey data
- The town should actively participate in broader discussions to utilize other services (regional planning, developers, transportation and PPP's)

Facilities

- Expand concept of facility to include all buildings and certain other infrastructure (fields, footpaths, pool, etc.)
- Management of facilities should be consolidated under a new "facilities manager"
- A new facilities management committee should be established, which will oversee the facilities manager and appropriately plan for renewable and sustainable town facilities
- Undertake a critical examination of town-owned facilities and tackle the emotional element of many of them

Transportation

- Mitigate adverse impacts of increasing traffic density and speed, by promoting train, carpooling and school bus usage. Make it easier for residents to do so with better access. Elevate the trails & paths as a useful component of our transport network
- Promote transport methods that also enhance sense of community: trails, van pools, bus connectors. Force new developments to contribute to this effort
- Improve options for those for whom personal vehicle use is not possible or practical: lack of transport can lead to isolation

Overall:

- Develop a model that contemplates the financial, user and volunteer impact of new initiatives before the town. Use this to develop a more unbiased approach to the allocation of resources.