

**TOWN OF LINCOLN**  
**MINUTES OF COMPREHENSIVE LONG RANGE PLAN COMMITTEE**  
**February 8, 2007**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Judi Barrett	Community Opportunities Group
Ken Hurd	Planning Board
Tim Higgins	Town Administrator
Mark Whitehead	Town Planner
Anita Scheipers	Assistant Town Administrator
Peter Sugar	Trustee, Lincoln Public Library
Jacqueline Apsler	” ”
Fez Morse	Council on Aging
Noah Eckhouse	Recreation Committee
Sharon Antia	School Committee
Craig Donaldson	Community Preservation Committee
B.J.Scheff	Housing Commission
Sarah Cannon Holden	Board of Selectmen
Catherine Perry	Planning Admin.

**Discussion with Judi Barrett on consultant’s role and associated costs**

Ken Hurd reported that the Steering Group had met the previous day and had discussed alternative scenarios for hiring a consultant to do some of the work on the plan. They considered that the most worthwhile scenario would be to use a consultant for gathering data and doing some initial analysis, and for offering some guidance to sub-committees but allowing them to take the lead and to make the policy decisions. On this basis, Judi Barrett has worked out some estimates of typical consultants’ fees for various phases and items of work. Total budget estimates were \$91-110,000.

Tim Higgins commented that the Steering Group judged most of the figures to be reasonable but thought that those for transportation and land use seemed high. Ms. Barrett responded that transportation and land use are central and interrelated elements of a plan. She advised that to address transportation well it is necessary to follow a thorough methodology and an outside view can be helpful, and that transportation work is highly paid. On the land use side, she explained that a consultant can provide an assessment of where current zoning is leading and an exploration of options.

Mr. Higgins said that the Town usually has a line item in its budgets for contingencies and asked if there was a safety margin in the estimates. Ms. Barrett recommended adding 10% for contingencies.

Noah Eckhouse asked if there were any direct financial benefits from preparing the plan, to offset its cost. Ms. Barrett said that the main benefit is that a plan enables a town to spend wisely and to head in the right direction. Mr. Eckhouse also wondered if the scale of data analysis could be limited if a sub-committee made initial judgments as to where there was most scope for change. Ms. Barrett’s response was that although this was a matter for members to decide, there can be value in having a broad start with some external input.

Mr. Higgins said he considered that consultant input or peer review would aid the plan's credibility with town residents. He also had concerns about burn-out by volunteers without consultant help, in view of the length and scale of the exercise. Mr. Hurd expressed support for having some guidance to sub-committees at the outset, to help ensure balance in the plan.

Sarah Cannon Holden asked if it was possible to retain some flexibility in view of there being some uncertainty at this stage as to where a consultant's help would be needed. Ms. Barrett said it may be possible to negotiate shifts in the workload within the total; she also suggested that attendance at meetings could be a line item based on an estimated total number of meetings, keeping flexibility as to whether these would be main committee or sub-committee meetings. Ms. Scheipers felt that the early sub-committee discussions would help to give greater precision to the consultancy needs.

Ms. Cannon Holden also wondered if there was a way of quantifying work done by volunteers, relative to consultancy work. Ms. Barrett pointed out that this has some complications such as the fact that meetings involving a group of people involve more person-hours, but offered to see if she could produce some estimates of how much volunteer time it takes to do technical work. Ms. Cannon Holden also asked how much other towns have made use of their plans once prepared. Ms. Barrett said that some towns have needed to follow up with further consultancy work to do implementation plans or write changes to their zoning bylaws, but that well-staffed towns have not had much trouble in moving on to implement their plans. One town had a capital spending plan created as one of the outputs of the master plan process.

### **Recommendation for funding to Town Meeting**

Overall, the Committee was supportive of the use of a consultant at around the cost level presented. The exact level of funding to recommend to the Finance Committee was discussed. A middle estimate plus a 10% contingency would be \$110,000. The total amount can be spread over more than one financial year. After further discussion, the Committee thought a slightly lower figure would be workable. A MOTION was proposed, seconded and voted favorably, to recommend funding of consultancy work on the plan at \$95,000. (All members except one voted in favor; Mr. Eckhouse against).

### **Subcommittee Assignments and Charge**

The Steering Committee has produced a set of notes for the sub-committees, as food for thought and assistance in getting started. This includes: a diagram of the committee structure; the charge to and membership of the main committee, and purposes of each sub-committee; an outline of sub-committee topic responsibilities; a set of procedures and guidelines for sub-committees; and a timeline. Feedback is invited.

It was agreed that the sub-committees will consider this material. They will also need to appoint leaders, and any member who cannot attend regularly should arrange a substitute, or consider doing 'side work' instead. Groups should think about the need for consultation with other sub-committees on areas of overlapping interest. Mr. Whitehead agreed to re-circulate the list of issues from the brainstorming session.

Some of the sub-committees reported briefly on their progress in recruiting members and beginning to discuss their roles. The Housing and Built Environment group

is making an effort to have a diverse membership. The Services and Facilities/ Circulation group has familiarized itself with the Town's current business planning process. The Cultural and Historic Resources/ Governance group has had one meeting but has few members from outside the main committee so far; Jacqueline Apsler volunteered to join the group.

Anita Scheipers reported that there have been some calls into the office asking about involvement. She suggested some advertisements and/or announcements. Mrs. Cannon Holden undertook to mention the work of the sub-committees at the Selectmen's meetings.

Mr. Hurd drew attention to the need for coordination on surveys so that the public is not overloaded. Mr. Eckhouse suggested online surveys with incentives for completion. It might be advisable to make an alternative paper version available. Sharon Antia suggested that the groups consider live cable TV phone-in discussions. These would need to be advertised.

Scheduling and compliance with the Open Meeting law were discussed. Meetings should be posted in advance via the Town Clerk's office. If a group fails to comply with the notice requirement, any vote should be postponed to the next meeting. A regular schedule can make things easier. Potential venues are various rooms in the Town Offices and a room at the Library.

#### **Next Meeting**

The next Committee Meeting will be on March 8<sup>th</sup> and will discuss the presentation to Town Meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup>. The Article is expected to be placed after capital spending. Sub-committees should have at least one meeting in the interim. The Committee may have another meeting before Town Meeting if needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Submitted by Catherine Perry