

**TOWN OF LINCOLN  
COMPREHENSIVE LONG RANGE PLAN COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING  
Held on June 19, 2007 at Bemis Hall**

**ATTENDANCE:** The meeting was attended by approximately 100 residents.

**INTRODUCTION**

Noah Eckhouse welcomed people and explained the purpose of the meeting: to update residents on the progress of the Comprehensive Long Range Plan, to explain the process and to receive input. The meeting was advertised on public sign boards and in the newspaper, and also a letter from Sarah Cannon Holden was widely circulated by email. Mr. Eckhouse reviewed the purpose of the Comprehensive Long Range Plan (a master plan), the structure of the committee and sub-committees involving over fifty people currently, and the timeline. He stressed that this is early in the process and encouraged residents to get involved.

**PRESENTATION OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

Sarah Cannon Holden explained that packs of information were distributed at the door, containing listed bullet points of issues identified so far by each of the five sub-committees. These points were also set out on boards around the room and residents would have an opportunity to use stickers to show which ones they consider important. Each of the sub-committees was invited to briefly outline its work, with the aid of Power Point slides. Residents were asked to hold their questions until the end.

**a) Open Space and Natural Resources**

Peter Von Mertens explained that the Open Space and Recreation Plan has already been drafted and will be a stand-alone document but will also form part of the Comprehensive Long Range Plan. The main theme of current work is a shift from land acquisition to stewardship.

**b) Housing and Built Environment**

Ken Hurd explained that his group has identified a number of issues to look at, ranging from the broad ones of population size and types of housing to design issues. He suggested that 'smart growth' may be a relevant concept in looking at South Lincoln (around the station). Accessory apartment policy may be worth revisiting. A recent bylaw change paved the way for Neighborhood Conservation Districts: should their designation be encouraged?

Mr. Hurd showed photographic slides that illustrate alternative approaches to landscape and site design, and the difference they make.

**c) Cultural and Historic Resources, and Governance**

Paul Giese stated that in some plans, these matters are an afterthought but in Lincoln they were considered central. His group has ten members, who wrote a mission statement for themselves. Mr. Giese suggested that governance will mean strengthening the town's traditional culture rather than importing a new model. He pointed out the need to take a long term view on some issues, and expressed a desire for the various institutions in town to work together.

**d) Facilities, Transportation and Services**

Noah Eckhouse said that his group has seven members and has also considered its mission. It has spoken with all the major service providers in town, about what they see as the big issues, their roadmaps and assumptions. The results are reflected in the group's bullet points. Mr. Eckhouse mentioned that Lincoln students are a shrinking proportion of the high school, and wondered if this raises issues about how the school feels and about meshing budgets. Water issues are causing some difficulties currently, more in terms of state rules than sufficiency of supply. Mr. Eckhouse considered a planned approach to the town's development was important because yesterday's policies become tomorrow's implications. He saw potential to integrate financial modeling and to plan for maintenance as well as capital costs.

**e) Land Use and Economic Development**

Chris Klem explained that this group has six members, who are also members of a range of town committees, but it would welcome an additional member. So far the group has concentrated mainly on the land use aspect, examining the history and considering some broad ideas about future directions. The bullet points are broad but 'how did we get here?' could cover two acre zoning and its implications, the role of conservation, and the evolution of a layered zoning system, raising questions about whether these are good for the future. Objectives could relate to preservation, community, diversity, density, or maximization of property values. In terms of methods, it is worth noting that in future, zoning changes have to comply with a master plan; also there are new types of zoning to be considered. The group has identified the fact that many land use decisions involve trade-offs: flexibility v. predictability; individual choice v. regulation of externalities; preferred uses v. fiscal impact. A specific question is whether the town should be seeking to increase private sector employment uses. It needs to be borne in mind that some mechanisms for change are protected from town control (Dover amendment and Ch. 40B).

**GROUP EXERCISE**

Peter Von Mertens invited a few 'burning questions' from the audience prior to the sticker exercise. A resident asked if the Deaconess development was a way of avoiding a 'hostile 40B'. This was confirmed. The development includes 30 units that will count as affordable.

A resident pointed out that the listed bullet points do not include issues relating to the National Park or Route 2. Mr. Von Mertens said that a blank board was provided for the audience to write up additional bullet points and see if they attract support.

Mr. Von Mertens explained the sticker exercise. Each participant should have two sheets of yellow stickers and may use as many as they wish to 'vote' for issues that they think are worthy of further examination in the planning process. Each person should also have four green stickers, to identify issues that they think are worth spending money on (either the town or themselves personally).

Participants spent half an hour placing their stickers against items on the boards and adding new issues to the blank board. The boards were then put up on the stage.

Tim Higgins concluded the exercise by saying that work will be done on crafting a workable plan, taking into account these results. They will not be simply compiled into a wish list but will form input into discussions, and the practicality of their implementation will receive attention.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Tim Higgins invited questions or comments from residents.

**Q.** How will topics that land on the boundaries of sub-committees be handled?

**A.** The sub-committees will consider the shape of issues and try to address them in an appropriate way, liaising with other groups where necessary.

**Q.** What is the timeline?

**A.** There is an eighteen month process; Mr. Hurd will explain it later.

**Comment:** The mention of practicality is welcome. Recommendations in the plan should be tested against the costs of implementation as a reality check.

**Q.** How can we be sure we are looking at external factors?

**A.** The Town is keeping track of Hanscom and of development proposals in Waltham that could affect Lincoln. There may be a need to obtain a traffic study.

**Q.** What is the cost of the proposed consultant and how does this fit with the Town Planner's job?

**A.** \$95,000 was allocated by Town Meeting for consultancy work to support plan preparation. The Town Planner has a full workload, but has been involved in a coordinating role throughout the process.

**Q.** Home Rule gives small towns a reputation for being insular, but will the consultant be told that Lincoln participates in Metco and other regional activities?

**A.** The consultant will be fully briefed on how Lincoln operates.

## WRAP UP AND 'WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?'

Ken Hurd explained the timeline from this point forward. The Committee hopes to hire a consultant by the end of summer, present an interim report to Town Meeting in fall and prepare a draft plan early in 2008. The sub-committees will coordinate, consult and produce recommendations. There will then be a report to spring Town Meeting and a final plan to fall 2008 Town Meeting.

The process is designed to involve a large number of people and to obtain input and feedback from the wider public. Implementation will be an essential part and there will be ongoing reviews.

Further arrangements for public participation are being considered. It is hoped to have a comprehensive survey rather than numerous separate ones, but the Housing and Built Environment Sub-committee would also like to conduct a different design preference exercise. Sub-committees may also reach out to particular groups or neighborhoods affected by specific issues. Further ideas will be welcomed.

Anyone wishing to make contact or get involved should email Mark Whitehead, the Town Planner, at [whiteheadm@lincolntown.org](mailto:whiteheadm@lincolntown.org), or telephone him on 781-259-2684. Anyone who missed the meeting may send the equivalent of their sticker choices to Mr. Whitehead.

Mr. Higgins encouraged residents to use the website to see updates on the progress of the Plan and the work of the sub-committees.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Submitted by Catherine Perry

