

CLRPC Steering Committee Meeting
May 22, 2007
8am

Present: Peter Von Mertens, Chris Klem, Noah Eckhouse, Tim Higgins, Mark Whitehead and Anita Scheipers

Also present: Catherine Perry, Adm. Asst.

A. Workshop with Judi Barrett

Judi reviewed the 14 standard steps typically taken in most comprehensive planning processes – whether done in house or with a consultant. They are as follows:

1. Scoping Session to establish basic goals; schedule developed w milestones
2. Initial information gathering (factual/anecdotal/observations)
3. Public participation event – early public events are for initial consultation
4. Issues identified from early work and public feedback/Phase 1 Recap of “what we heard” prepared.
5. Information gathering Phase 2 – more detailed information sought
6. Master Planning “Working Papers” drafted – will be a basis for report later – includes criteria to be used to evaluate issues to be presented in report(see later comments on this issue; outline of opportunities and constraints to achieve goals; paper should frame the major policy decisions the group must make (without getting caught in minutia)
7. Outline Recommendations and tradeoffs which need to be considered.
8. Initial decisions of Steering Committee/Sub Committees
9. Public participation event – formal event which identifies initial decisions/recommendations made to date (what and why). Public provides feedback as to whether they agree.
10. Final decision making of Steering Committee/Sub Committees/Planning Board (PB must be on board here)
11. Draft report prepared.
12. Public Hearing held by Planning Board
13. Final Report prepared
14. Initiate and setup systems for implementation of the report findings

There was much discussion about the idea of developing a decision matrix to assist the sub committees in evaluating their various issues for prioritization. Judi gave an example of how the Town of Hopkinton developed a very user friendly model for their planning process dealing with evaluating property for appropriateness of acquisition by the Town.

Judi stated we should be careful to not foreclose on the opportunity for a consultant to weigh in on the early steps taken. This allows better understanding by the consultant of issues, and allows objective consideration of options which local volunteers may miss.

B. June 19th Meeting

The committee members explained to Judi the proposed agenda of June 19 Public Event session and the expected outcomes. She cautioned the group to create a clear and usable record of the outcomes and feedbacks from this June 19th session. It will be needed for both the sub committees and the consultant. This information will help in evaluating the issues each sub committee is tasked with evaluating, as well as guide the groups as to what more detailed information they need to seek in Step 5.

The group agreed the proposed agenda of introduction, sub-committee reporting, Q&A, active participation event, and summary is acceptable.

It was also mentioned we need to ensure that the moderator for the “active event and summary” is skilled at handling such a session. S/he must be able to summarize the outcomes of the public participation, relate it to the work that needs to take place as we proceed ahead, and must be viewed as objective and neutral to the process. It was discussed whether Judi Barrett should be considered for this or if perhaps a staff person, such as Tim Higgins, would be appropriate.

The Steering Committee agreed we must define what we are looking for from the sub-committees in preparation of this event. It was basically summed up as being: We need to know what the top 6 issues are for each group. Each group must be prepared to give a 5 minute presentation as to these top pressing issues which they intend to study throughout the planning process.

It was agreed that we should realistically expect that each group will be unique in the content and delivery of these points in their presentation.

C. Consultant RFP Status

It was agreed we shall continue with the proposed May 31st Steering Committee meeting to discuss the draft RFP for Consultant Services. Mark and Anita will finish the draft scope and submit to the Steering Committee members in advance of the May 31st meeting to allow members to review the document and prepare for discussion at that meeting.

D. Website

It was mentioned that the CLRPC section of the Town’s website needs a little more organizational work. The CHUG section is separate from the CLRPC link. It was agreed that each sub-committee shall examine the website and provide feedback at the next meeting as to necessary edits.