

North Yarmouth EDSC Minutes

Monday, Oct 27, 2022; 6:30-8:00pm

EDSC Members Present:

- Kit Maloney, Chair
- Kevin Robinson
- Byron Kern
- Alicia Dostilio
- Maureen Lucey

Not Present:

- Rich Parenteau
- Ian Acker, Secretary

Also Present: North Yarmouth Residents

6:35 - Call to order ● Pledge of allegiance and opening to the meeting

6:36 – Kit recognized members of the Comp Plan team and thanked them for attending, reviewed procedure for meeting agenda creation.

6:40 - Minutes Approval: All in favor, passed 5-0

Old Business:

6:43 - By-law amendments updated – Kevin asked for a reminder of the changes made. Kit listed the changes, which were two minor edits to formatting and wording.

6:45 – review of sub-committee work on Comp Plan charge. Kevin and Rich had sent out communication to several other committees, but none provided feedback at this time. Kit and Rich talked about the challenge with engaging other committees which are often very busy. Kit asked if we wanted to invite members of those committees to our next meeting – the group was in favor of that.

6:56 – Byron reviewed

7:05 – Alicia reviewed the work she and Moe had done around how we structure/run the public forum. Suggestion is that we hold the meeting after the new year as December is very busy for many people. Possibly hold the forum in the same time slot as our regular meeting and see if babysitting/childcare can be provided for that time. Want to aim for 90 minutes for the forum to keep it from getting too long. Possibly review the information and then break up into separate groups based around each goal, possibly as “stations” so that smaller groups can rotate through each goal. We could list the current and proposed versions at each station.

Moe brought up that we need to frame things to solicit the type of feedback we want. Do we have questions that people can answer about each goal: is it important/relevant, and has it been addressed well since the Comp Plan was created? This could help guide the next discussion when we get to the policies. Moe also suggested we have food at the meeting, sourced from a local catering business that is starting up in town.

Kit suggested a 1/26 date for the forum.

7:21 – Kit introduced Steve and Chris from the Comp Plan team to join the EDSC for further discussion. She asked them to talk through what their process was in creating the Comp Plan. The meetings were held monthly for 1.5 years to create the plan. Meetings were open but few members of the public attended. In general, their impression was that it was a struggle to get the public to engage with the process. They also had challenges getting info from the Yarmouth Water District which made things difficult. The survey had good participation and representation across the age brackets in town, which they relied on for guidance in creating the plan. They also used guidance from GPCOG about how to proceed with the process of creating the document. The survey responses seemed well aligned with the 2004 Comp Plan, so they didn't make drastic changes, instead focusing on streamlining the document and making it more readable. There were not many new ideas included – it was more editing than creating something new.

Kit asked if there were parts of the Comp Plan that didn't come to fruition in the way they thought it would. They mentioned that their focus was more on what to keep out (big box stores, etc) than specific development. They mentioned that the pitfall seems to have been that there was no implementation committee/team to work on executing the things on the plan, and so many of them have not really been fully addressed. Chris acknowledged that the select board and planning board have used the document, just that more of it than he would like has languished "on a shelf".

Byron asked for clarification of the term "rural hamlet" in Goal #3. Steve said the term was meant to capture a high-level vision/feeling and was not referencing a specific definition of the term "hamlet".

Steve and Chris both brought up that something that hasn't gotten much focus is the farm & forest district and protecting the natural resources there – most attention has been on the village center. Chris said they had discussed the idea of NY becoming a "farming center" for the area since we have such good farm land.

7:55 – Steve mentioned that the goal of the smaller lot sizes in the center was always intended to protect the surrounding rural areas by allowing development there rather than forcing it to spill outward.

Steve and Kevin discussed the changes to the LUO that are upcoming for a vote. Chris said that he thinks the proposed changes may be at odds with what the comp plan was trying to accomplish and push development into the farm and forest district.

8:04 – Moe asked if there is a misalignment between the LUO and comp plan, how long does the town have to address it? Kit said that her understanding is that the vulnerability is more that a developer could potentially take legal action if a project was denied but was aligned with the comp plan.

Chris mentioned that Bowdoinham had 22 people on their implementation committee to oversee the use of the comp plan, despite being a small town than NY.

8:10 – Kit thanked Steve and Chris for speaking with us. She also reminded the public about the upcoming LUO vote. She pointed out that the 2018 comp plan was created over 18 months with many public meetings but the upcoming changes were not done that same way.

8:13 – Kit let the group know that the Nov and Dec meeting dates will be 11/10 and 12/15.

8:14 – The committee discussed the application of Eliza Bachelder to be an alternate. Kevin mentioned that he wished we had more than one candidate, but that Moe had been a lone candidate and he had been impressed with her. Eliza spoke to the committee about her interest in joining the committee. The committee voted in favor of recommending to the SB that she be appointed – passed: 4-1

8:18 - Public Comment

Judy Potter asked if comp plan info will be made available to the public prior to the forum. Kit said that we fully intend to put out as much information as we can. Judy mentioned that she'd like to see a greater focus on protecting water resources, and that in a prior survey people were against apartments. She thinks that the current LUO for the village center works for businesses but not for residential properties and that we should have separate ordinances for each. Judy mentioned that parking is an issue in the center and should be kept in mind whenever a business would be added.

Mike Mallory suggested that when we talk about policies we make sure to show them along with whichever goals they relate to.

Rachel Whitmarsh mentioned that not everyone heard about the 2018 survey and that we should focus on using multiple ways to communicate to the public when we go to solicit feedback. She said that many people are interpreting the proposed LUO changes in different ways

Amy Haile mentioned that the Living Well committee did not have an October meeting, which may have contributed to them not responding to Rich and Kevin.

8:30 – Kit adjourned the meeting.

Minutes submitted by Byron Kern.