

Local Comprehensive Planning Committee Minutes Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 5:30 PM

Call to Order

Chair Wendy Northcross calls the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

Member	Present	Absent
Wendy Northcross – Chair	X	
Cheryl Powell	X	
Mark Hansen		X
Amanda Converse		X
Sue Rohrbach		X
Meaghan Mort		X
Alyssa Chase	X	
Asia Graves	X	
Fran Parks	X	
Katia DaCunha	X	
Lindsey Counsell	X	
Jennifer Williams	X	
Bob Twiss		X
Avery Revere – Clerk	X	

Also in attendance are Planning & Development Staff Jim Kupfer, Assistant Director; Kate Maldonado, Senior Planner; and Genna Ziino, Administrative Assistant.

Notice of Recording

The meeting will be televised live via Xfinity Channel 8 or high definition Channel 1072. It may also be accessed via the Government Access Channel live stream on the Town of Barnstable’s website:

<http://streaming85.townofbarnstable.us/CablecastPublicSite/watch/1?channel=1>

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 30A Section 20, the Committee must inquire whether anyone is taping this meeting and to please make their presence known.

Approval of Minutes

January 25, 2024 and February 8, 2024 – Avery Revere notes that the minutes are fine except Lindsey Counsell’s name was misspelled and APCC was misspelled. With those corrections, Fran Parks makes a motion to approve. Cheryl Powell seconds.

Vote:

Aye: Wendy Northcross, Cheryl Powell, Asia Graves, Fran Parks, Lindsey Counsell, Jennifer Williams, Avery Revere

Nay: None

Public Comment

Chair Northcross reads a statement to address recent public comments. The Committee has heard the call for the need for further study of land use that falls under the natural resources section of the plan. She explains that the natural resources section of the draft plan contains references to multiple plans that delineate from the Local Comprehensive Plan, but this Committee is not speaking to those project-specific issues (Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan, Open Space & Recreation Plan, freshwater management, etc.) but rather the broad goals and visions of the community.

She suggests that this Committee recommend addressing how Barnstable's coastline is used in the future, including cable landfall, by citing the need for a shoreline uses plan that dovetails with other key plans on the Local Comprehensive Plan. This could also take into consideration aquaculture, docks, moorings, wetlands, wastewater management, dredging. The planning process would include hearing advice from experts to inform the final goals and strategies. She proposes that the Committee include that as part of their draft, and she asks the Committee for their feedback.

Asia Graves adds for the benefit of the public that this Committee has no authority over the wind projects that are in progress—members of the public would need to speak to the town and the state about that. Fran Parks expresses concern about the state's Executive Order 160, which is a Commission on Clean Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting. She explains that it will allow the state to take over energy projects, overriding the town regulatory commissions. She thinks it's something to consider reviewing and is concerned that Rhode Island and New York have instituted state-wide government authority for energy projects.

Lindsey Counsell says what the Committee has seen in the last few weeks has convinced him that the town needs a broader look at all existing renewable energy inventory. That information could also help identify where cables or wind farms could be landed reasonably. Katia DaCunha agrees with the Chairwoman's recommendation and wants everything to be done in a clear, open way. Cheryl Powell agrees with the inventory idea, and requests more time to review Chair Northcross's recommendation about a shoreline use plan. Asia Graves didn't think this Committee had purview over energy projects. Chair Northcross explains that she is proposing that shoreline use needs further study and should encompass all uses of shoreline. She is suggesting putting it in the hands of people who know more than this Committee does.

Asia Graves feels it's important to note for the public that this is a nonpartisan committee—political views shouldn't have a say on who gets what support in the community.

Chair Northcross asks if there is any public comment. There is none.

Topics for Discussion

- Discuss and review draft Natural Resources Chapter including issues, opportunities, policies and strategies

Kate Maldonado walks through the agenda for this portion of the meeting. Regarding the survey, they have made minor amendments to speak to the use of public land more broadly. Users will be able to rank survey responses. The survey is being translated into Spanish and Portuguese and then will go live (by end of business Monday). She will send a direct link to the Committee once the translation is complete. The plan is to keep the survey open for a month.

Ms. Maldonado explains that the overall structure of the Local Comprehensive Plan will be:

- existing conditions & vision statement
- chapters
- action plan & performance measures
- addendum.

She is proposing to streamline chapters by including information in the addendum rather than the chapters themselves. So the addendum would include maps, outreach, and summaries of subject matter presentations and additional documentation. The chapter structure is proposed as introduction, data sheet, actions achieved since 2010, issues and opportunities, and policies/goals and strategies.

Tonight will focus on the natural resources chapter, which has six categories: groundwater, marine water, freshwater lakes and ponds, wetland resources, habitat, and open space. The Committee will discuss goals and strategies of each in breakout groups. The public is welcome to provide feedback to staff via email or hard copy.

She tells the Committee that the March meetings will focus on facilities and infrastructure. The March 14 meeting will have expert insight from DPW and regional experts. The March 28 meeting will be to work through goals and strategies associated with that chapter. April's focus will be community outreach. They plan to take all chapter drafts to date and go out to the public for comment. The group can discuss the structure options for that outreach in late March. They're planning meetings in each village, the dates of which she will finalize by the next meeting.

The Committee breaks into two focus groups to discuss the categories. They then regroup and Kate Maldonado and Jim Kupfer report on their groups' discussions.

Jim Kupfer's update:

- Wetland resources – They noted the importance of enforcing to the greatest extent possible the regulations that are in place for limited or no disturbance of buffers. They discussed education opportunities about the strict requirements, to limit opportunities for people to come in after the fact. They discussed volunteer opportunities for identifying and highlighting vernal pools.
- Freshwater lakes & ponds – They discussed ways to maintain natural land within 100 feet of freshwater, including deed restrictions and conservation restrictions on these locations. They again discussed the need for enforcement and consistency in enforcement. The group felt that a lot of studies have been done but we also need to move into actions. This plan could identify several short-term actions. They discussed ways to educate the community on the ample ways to water, including promotional tours.
- Other regulations and processes – They discussed standardizing and incentivizing landscaping or reduction of lawn areas, and looking at future requirements and standards.
- Open space – They discussed further defining ways we talk about open space, potentially in written form, and showing it in illustrative form. One strategy is to update the Open Space & Recreation Plan. They added aquaculture into the land protection line, “Use land protection to protect water supply, protect fresh and marine surface waters, preserve historic, scenic and cultural resources, and provide opportunities for farming, **aquaculture**, and agriculture.” They also discussed that open space should be available to anyone regardless of ability or income, and opportunities for ADA compliance.
- Marine waters – They discussed ways to preserve existing docks and moorings in an environmentally friendly way. They discussed relooking at the moratorium every so often. There were concerns about adding moorings in Cotuit. In terms of sea level rise and flooding, they discussed potential regulations to minimize risk to infrastructure and new buildings or redevelopments.
- Groundwater – They discussed changing “untreated” to “protected” water supply in the last line. They also discussed water conservation programs, a potential townwide irrigation plan, and exploring desalinization options.
- Habitat – They discussed including robust mapping of sensitive areas and corridors. Again, focusing on enforcement and penalties for those knowingly impacting those habitats. They discussed adding customer service to get in front of enforcement issues, including a potential hotline for enforcement. They discussed changing “climate change” to “climate impact,” and changing to, “Encourage proactive planning, zoning, and permitting to protect endangered species habitats while still providing recreational opportunities to the public.”

Kate Maldonado's update: Overall there was a theme of seeking education. They discussed creating a welcome packet to inform new residents and visitors of regulations and amenities, predominantly related to sustainability.

- Freshwater lakes & ponds – They identified a need for a broader inventory with a standing for each body of water, impacts of flooding, and prioritization. They discussed incentives for homeowners for vegetative buffer improvements.
- Wetlands – They discussed ensuring buffers are vegetated and enforced. For larger conservation efforts, maybe informing abutters of the efforts would be helpful.
- Open space – They discussed a need for a variety of features: trails, modern playgrounds, exercise equipment, community gardens, etc. They discussed a fertilizer ban.
- Other regulations and processes – They discussed irrigation restrictions, increasing payment for those using more water, banning pesticides/herbicides. They discussed capacity and that there may be a need to hire management.
- Habitat – They mostly discussed trees and biodiversity and potentially updating zoning or policies about trees and buffers to maintain and improve them. Potentially developing tax incentives to keep buffers or prohibiting clearcutting properties. There could be opportunities to improve state road medians or land owned by utility companies with vegetation.
- Marine waters – They discussed preparing for retreat as sea levels rise, not only buildings but also salt marshes. Thinking about a long-term restoration plan for marshes. Tying into the earlier conversation, they discussed further study on cable landfall. Also education for landscapers on sustainable practices, and managing way to water signage.
- Groundwater – They discussed proactively coordinating with adjacent communities. Potentially irrigation shutoff valves. They discussed that West Barnstable is on private wells and there may be a need to test well water.

General Correspondence

Kate Maldonado says there was correspondence from Mr. Schulte, which the Committee responded to.

Next Meeting

March 14, 2024 at 5:30 PM to be held in person at the Barnstable Town Hall James H. Crocker Jr. Hearing Room 367 Main Street, Hyannis, MA

Matters Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

Adjournment

Fran Parks makes a motion to adjourn. Lindsey Counsell seconds.

Vote:

Aye: Wendy Northcross, Cheryl Powell, Asia Graves, Fran Parks, Lindsey Counsell, Jennifer Williams, Avery Revere, Katia DaCunha, Alyssa Chase

Nay: None

The meeting is adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Genna Ziino

The list of matters are those reasonably anticipated, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Further detail may be may be obtained by viewing the video via Channel 18 on demand at <http://www.town.barnstable.ma.us>

APPROVED