



Town of Brunswick, Maine

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE STEERING COMMITTEE

85 UNION STREET, BRUNSWICK, ME 04011

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE STEERING COMMITTEE AGENDA

BRUNSWICK TOWN HALL

85 UNION STREET

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2020, 6:30 PM

THIS MEETING IS BEING CONDUCTED VIA ELECTRONIC DEVICES WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATING FROM REMOTE LOCATIONS.

THERE IS LIMITED OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO VIEW THIS MEETING IN PERSON.

THE PUBLIC CAN VIEW OR LISTEN TO THE MEETING ON TV3 (CHANNEL 3 ON COMCAST) OR VIA LIVE STREAM FROM THE TOWN'S WEBSITE: <http://tv3hd.brunswickme.org/CablecastPublicSite/watch/1?channel=1>

***THE PUBLIC MAY PROVIDE COMMENT VIA EMAIL (mpanfil@brunswickme.org) PRIOR TO THE MEETING OR THEY MAY PROVIDE LIVE COMMENT VIA ZOOM TELEPHONE AT:
+1 (929) 205-6099; MEETING ID: 897 4973 6521; PASSWORD: 744721***

- 1. Roll Call of Members**
- 2. Public Comment**
- 3. Subcommittee Reports**
 - a. 2008 Plan Update Report
 - b. Outreach and Marketing
- 4. Staff Updates on Other Related Plans and Studies**
 - a. Brunswick Transit Study
 - b. Downtown Streetscape Enhancement Project
 - c. MRRA West Side Parcel Plan
 - d. Pleasant Street Corridor Study
- 5. Inventory Update**
- 6. Website Update**
- 7. Timeline**
- 8. Future Meeting Dates**
 - a. Tuesday, October 29, 2020
 - b. Tuesday, December 1, 2020
 - c. Tuesday, January 6, 2021

9. Meeting Summaries

- a. August 13, 2020 – Draft 2
- b. September 1, 2020 – Draft 1

10. Other Business

Town of Brunswick, Maine

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee

FROM: 2008 Plan Report Subcommittee
Matt Panfil, AICP CUD, Director of Planning & Development

DATE: October 6, 2020

SUBJECT: 2008 Plan Report Update – Request for Assistance

The 2008 Plan Report Update Subcommittee continues to work on revisions and additions to the document. To speed up the revision process and maintain the proposed timeline, staff requests assistance in providing the following information to be included in the 2008 Plan Report:

1. Region 10 Technical High School 1-, 3-, and 5-year survey results and job placement data.
2. History of railroad service to Rockland, including status update on restarting service.
3. Summary of public participation (# of meetings and when) for Downeaster service.
4. Summary of Homeless Assistance Fund.
5. List of cemeteries maintained by the Pejepscot History Center.
6. Summary of why Gateway Overlay District was not adopted.
7. List of all water access points acquired with the Town's participation since 2008.
8. Summary of BTLT's independent acquisitions since 2008.
9. List of amenities, or planned amenities, provided by the Village Improvement Association.
10. Summary of BDA's collaboration for creative economy events such as the Friday Night Artwalks and partnerships with Maine Street Music Theater (MSMT).
11. Summary of façade improvement program, including money distributed.
12. Summary of licensing terms for student shellfish harvesters.
13. List and description (Locations? Is it located on Town property? Frequency?) of various local markets (farmer's markets and winter market).
14. Data for number of active farms, annual shellfish licenses, etc.

The Subcommittee has established the following timeline to bring a "clean" draft to the full Steering Committee:

- October 6: Request for assistance on data gaps
- October 16: Deadline to submit data gap information
- Week of October 19: Subcommittee meets to finalize draft prior to distribution to full Steering Committee
- October 23: Updated draft report provided to full Steering Committee

After the 2008 Plan Report is complete and found to be acceptable by the full Steering Committee, the next step in the process is to identify the topics and items that the Steering Committee believes should be brought forward and incorporated into the 2021 Plan.

**TOWN OF BRUNSWICK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY – DRAFT 2
AUGUST 13, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Larissa Darcy (Steering Committee Chair), Catherine Ferdinand, Alison Harris (Planning Board), Fred Koerber, Elizabeth Kohler, Marcy McGuire, Anthony Sachs, Jacqueline Sartoris, Christopher Watkinson (Town Council, District 5), and Kathy Wilson (Town Council, At Large)

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Perreault (Town Council Chair, District 4) and Sande Updegraph (Planning Board)

STAFF PRESENT: Matt Panfil, Director of Planning and Development

A meeting of the Town of Brunswick Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee was held on Thursday, August 13, 2020, via electronic devices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Steering Committee Chair, Larissa Darcy, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Chair Darcy opened the meeting for public comment. There was no public comment.

Matt Panfil provided an update from the 2008 Plan Report Subcommittee. Chair Darcy asked if there is a Subcommittee Chair to which Matt Panfil responded no. Matt Panfil stated that the Steering Committee's packet for the meeting included a draft of the report that consolidated the members' comments that he had received. He stated that there were over 150 comments. The Subcommittee has not yet completed a full review of the report but intends to do so now that the Steering Committee has resumed its work. According to Matt Panfil, the 2008 Plan Report will be edited to remove references to whether an action item was achieved or not achieved. Instead, the 2008 Plan Report will focus on providing the background information and the efforts that were made to address each action item. Matt Panfil added that he not yet updated the website but will work on completing an update within the next couple of weeks. He reminded the Steering Committee members that they can still submit comments to him for the 2008 Plan Report. He acknowledged that the first draft was not well received by some and he is open to suggestions as to how to improve the format and content.

Chair Darcy agreed the 2008 Plan Report could benefit from simplification and provide an update as to where the Town is now versus where the 2008 Plan thought it would be. She felt the original draft tended to attempt to rewrite the 2008 Plan rather than provide a basic update.

Matt Panfil stated that the subcommittee would try to meet at least once prior to the next Steering Committee meeting on September 1, 2020. He agreed that the need was to provide a basic update without getting slowed down over debate over past policies and actions.

Catherine Ferdinand agreed that the report could be simplified. Matt Panfil stated that there are also certain sections of the document that are redundant and the report can be shortened.

Alison Harris agreed that the 2008 Plan Report did not need to follow the same format as the 2008 Plan.

Chair Darcy asked if altering the format would affect the State's review of the Plan Update. Matt Panfil stated that the 2008 Plan Report is not necessary for State review, but it is helpful to understand where the 2008 Plan left off and what can be incorporated into the current Plan Update.

Marcy McGuire asked if the State's checklist was available to the Steering Committee. Matt Panfil responded that he would email the checklist to the group. Chair Darcy added that the Steering Committee's intention is to go beyond the checklist requirements, especially for public participation. She also asked that the 2008 Plan Report Subcommittee meet at least once prior to the next meeting and attempt to make progress on revising the report's executive summary.

The Steering Committee reviewed the draft Share Your Vision Community Workshop Report. Chair Darcy felt that although there were not as many participants as were hoped for, the participants that did attend provided a lot of diverse information. She added that the report received did not meet expectations in that it was just a presentation of raw data and lacked analysis of the data. Matt Panfil agreed that although the workshops were scheduled in winter the level of participation did not meet expectations. Chair Darcy suggested that the Steering Committee could use social media to promote the videos of the meetings and include questions from the workshops for the new viewers to respond.

Liz Kohler stated that the Steering Committee can get more public input without having to restart or reuse the community workshops. She suggested brief videos with Steering Committee members summarizing key topics they received during the workshops and include a feedback option.

Fred Koerber stated that it did not need to be done immediately, but the Steering Committee should start identifying the five (5) or six (6) key takeaways from the workshops. Jacqueline Sartoris agreed with previous comments about the low participation for the community workshops and supported Liz Kohler's idea to create video summaries with an opportunity for more participation.

Jacqueline Sartoris stated that she is concerned about moving forward too quickly due to COVID-19 influenced changes. For example, the real estate market in southern Maine is still growing and that the Planning and Development Department has stated that they have yet to experience a slow down in permits and development review. She is also concerned about the results of the map exercise from the community workshops because she felt that they did not show enough information for participants to make fully informed decisions. She would like to try to engage the public again in the visioning process through some of

the methods Liz Kohler suggested. Chair Darcy agreed that considering the COVID-19 pandemic there are proven methods to engage the community via online technology.

Anthony Sachs stated his agreement that the community workshop report was only raw data and that he would like to see additional analysis performed. Chair Darcy stated that she has been respectful of the preparer of the report's timeline for their sabbatical and asked Matt Panfil if the agreement was for raw data or for an analysis of the raw data. Matt Panfil stated that he believed the agreement was for a full analysis. The group agreed that they would try to follow up with the report's author to see if a complete analysis can still be performed.

Catherine Ferdinand concurred with the others regarding low turnout at the community workshops as well as Liz Kohler's ideas for video participation to allow for continued virtual public input.

Alison Harrison asked for suggestions as to how to incorporate the recent changes, especially local development pressures during a global pandemic and economic downturn, into the information and public input already received and moving forward in the process. Chair Darcy agreed there has been a dynamic shift that will need to be addressed.

Liz Kohler stated that there may be an opportunity to utilize college students that are skilled in information visualization that might be able to display different planning scenarios in a more easily understood format. Alison Harris added that visuals for housing development patterns would be helpful.

Marcy McGuire stated that the group needs to know how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected resident responses and opinions since the completion of the community survey. Chair Darcy added that the changes in the public's increased ability to work remotely may also have an impact. Matt Panfil stated that he is not sure that even by November of 2021 there will be a grasp of how the pandemic has affected everyday life and the different elements of the Comprehensive Plan update. He emphasized the need for vigilance in reevaluating and updating the plan often as the data collected to date and subsequent data may be frequently changing. He suggested a recorded webinar or other format that residents can watch and then provide comments. Chair Darcy stated her preference for a series of short, three- to five- minute videos. The Steering Committee concurred. A motion was made by Chair Darcy and seconded by Kathy Wilson to develop the project.

The Steering Committee then discussed the community surveys, including the mail survey, digital survey, and high school survey. Matt Panfil apologized that the mail survey and digital survey results spreadsheet did not print properly and that he would have to correct it before the next meeting. He stated that the response rate for the mail survey surpassed the 2008 survey response rate. He also added that staff would scan in the written comments that some respondents included that went beyond the survey questions. Catherine Ferdinand stated that the comparative charts and tables could use improvement. Chair Darcy agreed with Catherine Ferdinand and Liz Kohler suggested that a one-page summary would be helpful for residents. Matt Panfil agreed that staff would try to provide

such a document. He added that if any Steering Committee members had any examples or recommendations for documents and visuals that they find helpful he would review them for assistance in formatting the update.

The Steering Committee then discussed alternative methods for public outreach. Catherine Ferdinand suggested a “virtual Town Hall” or webinar format where administrators can either relay information on a specific topic or include an interactive option where questions are submitted in real time. She suggested that an hour is a preferred maximum length. Matt Panfil added that Zoom can include polls for the audience.

Anthony Sachs stated that it is important to plan for outreach methods to get people to watch any of the videos, webinars, etc. Options suggested by the group included TV3, Facebook advertisements, Curtis Memorial Library, email announcements like the Brunswick Downtown Association’s “Brunswick Blast” newsletter, QR codes, tax bill inserts, and vacant store window displays. Liz Kohler added that October is National Planning Month and there could be an opportunity to provide some associated activities and events.

Chair Darcy asked the Steering Committee members to review the inventories that were included in their packet and provide comments to Matt Panfil. Matt added that housing or transportation inventory will most likely be included in the packet for the next meeting.

A motion was made by Marcy McGuire and seconded by Catherine Ferdinand to approve the Draft 2 February 4, 2020 meeting summary. The motion passed unanimously. Chair Darcy asked the Steering Committee was asked to forward comments on the Draft 1 March 3, 2020 meeting summary to Matt Panfil prior to the next meeting.

Alison Harris asked Matt Panfil to include the State’s Comprehensive Plan Checklist on the planbrunswick.org website. Chair Darcy and Matt Panfil agreed that the website needed an update.

Chair Darcy adjourned the meeting at 8:13 PM.

**TOWN OF BRUNSWICK COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY – DRAFT 1
SEPTEMBER 1, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Larissa Darcy (Steering Committee Chair), Catherine Ferdinand, Alison Harris (Planning Board), Fred Koerber, Marcy McGuire, Jacqueline Sartoris, Sande Updegraph (Planning Board), Christopher Watkinson (Town Council, District 5), and Kathy Wilson (Town Council, At Large)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Elizabeth Kohler, John Perreault (Town Council Chair, District 4), and Anthony Sachs

STAFF PRESENT: Matt Panfil, Director of Planning and Development

A meeting of the Town of Brunswick Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee was held on Tuesday, September 1, 2020, via electronic devices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Steering Committee Chair, Larissa Darcy, called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Chair Darcy opened the meeting for public comment. There was no public comment.

Matt Panfil provided an update from the 2008 Plan Report Subcommittee. He stated that the Subcommittee met once since the last meeting on August 13, 2020. The Subcommittee has completed their review of the full 2008 Plan Report Draft, but a lot of editing remains. Based on comments, the draft report will no longer label action items with status updates such as “achieved,” “did not achieve,” “ongoing,” etc. because this often led to confusion as many items were no longer necessary or were achieved, but not in the manner anticipated by the 2008 Plan. The intent is that the next draft will be more informational with less commentary. The second draft of the Executive Summary was provided in the Steering Committee members’ packets. He noted that the draft is close to complete, but there are still a few comments from members that need to be incorporated into the document. He asked the Steering Committee if they preferred to receive the rest of the second draft in parts or wait until it is fully complete.

Catherine Ferdinand added that some of the general observations at the end of the Executive Summary were not taken from specific member comments and she anticipated further discussion with the larger group. The Subcommittee is also working on identifying issues and items from the 2008 Plan that they will recommend the Steering Committee incorporate into the update.

Jacqueline Sartoris concurred with Catherine Ferdinand and asked Matt Panfil if it were possible to make the draft documents available to the public. He responded that he could post them on the website but would leave it to the Steering Committee to decide if they were refined enough for public review. It was agreed that the report still needs more work before making it widely public. The Steering Committee then discussed their preferred file type for the documents. It was agreed that a Microsoft Word format is preferable.

Jacqueline added that she would like the Executive Summary to better reflect the 2008 Plan's connection to the State's Growth Management Act and why updating the comprehensive plan is important aside from the State requirements. She added that the reason the 2008 Plan has some redundancies is because the document is complicated and people may read only one section of the document and the related information from other sections needs to be included or referenced.

Alison Harris pointed out that because the Steering Committee packets are available online from the Town website, the public does have access to the draft documents. Chair Darcy emphasized the need for the documents to display their draft status. She also added that the documents need to be consistent in referring to the update as either the 2020 Plan or 2021 Plan.

Matt Panfil suggested that the updated plan can incorporate a color- or icon-based system that identifies the policy area(s) associated with each action item.

Chair Darcy stated that the current timeline recommends using the remainder of 2020 to complete the 2008 Plan Report and State-required inventories before moving on to new business in 2021.

Chair Darcy then provided an update from the Outreach and Marketing Subcommittee. The Subcommittee will be meeting prior to the next regularly scheduled Steering Committee in October. She referenced Liz Kohler's previous comments that Northeastern University has a program for students to help with projects such as data visualization and other items associated with the 2021 Plan.

Matt Panfil asked the Steering Committee for suggestions on anything they can be doing via social media to try to regenerate interest in the project since the pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Chris Watkinson suggested that the "quick polls" that are included on the website could be beneficial for generating interest and gathering more data. Matt Panfil suggested that it may be helpful to solicit input as to how the public views the pandemic affecting the Town's land use planning and the growth patterns. Chair Darcy suggested resharing and posting about previous activities and events via social media to help rebuild momentum for the project. Catherine Ferdinand suggested that it may be too early to fully understand how the pandemic will impact long-term planning for the community. Matt Panfil stated that at this point community input pertaining to the pandemic would not be used for making any conclusions, but rather to take the pulse of the community and get the public reengaged in the process. Chair Darcy added that such questions could be used as a baseline to track over time how the public views the pandemic's impact.

Fred Koerber suggested that the pause in the process provides an opportunity to try to engage more stakeholders that had yet to participate in the process. He noted that the community survey response rates for residents living in apartments and mobile homes was lower than others. He said the Outreach and Marketing Subcommittee should be contemplating what stakeholders have yet to be heard from and how to reach out to them.

Marcy McGuire mentioned a public comment she saw requesting updates and information

in a local newspaper and agreed that it was a good idea. She also suggested contacting the participants from the housing panel discussion to ask them if they feel the pandemic has changed what they discussed last February. Jacqueline Sartoris asked Matt Panfil about using email lists to distribute updates and ask people to forward them to their local clubs and organizations. She suggested asking a question as to how people's perception of Brunswick and use of its facilities has changed during the pandemic. She mentioned that she has noticed an increase in the use of trails.

Sande Updegraph asked for an update on the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority's survey pertaining to potential use of the parcel west of the runways. Matt Panfil stated the survey just closed the previous Friday and that the last he heard there were already over 300 responses. He was unsure when MRRRA would have shareable data from the survey. The next step in MRRRA's planning process will be to develop different concepts for community review.

Jacqueline Sartoris stated that she felt MRRRA's survey was biased and should not be relied upon to make planning decisions. She believes the survey implied that there were substantial costs to the community in a no build scenario and assuming there were no costs associated with any development scenarios. She added that she understood MRRRA was not to move forward with creating development scenarios because the Town has ideas and rights to determine how or if development should occur at the site. She mentioned that most of the site was once part of the Town Commons before being taken for the Brunswick Naval Air Station (BNAS) and there was a promise that the property would one day be returned to the Town.

Chris Watkinson expressed concerns about the survey's questions pertaining to how development would be funded and residents' willingness to pay in increased taxes. He asked Matt Panfil about how much input the Town has on MRRRA's ultimate plan for the site. Matt Panfil responded that development in Brunswick Landing generally is at least reviewed by the Planning Board. He anticipates that any develop scenario proposed by MRRRA will require several different approvals: an amendment to the BNAS Reuse Master Plan; an amendment to the 2008 Comprehensive Plan or incorporation into the 2021 Plan, depending on timing; rezoning; and any subdivision, site plan, or building permit for the project area. He added that MRRRA has authority to do land use planning, but ultimately development does not occur without the Town's approval.

Kathy Wilson agreed with Jacqueline Sartoris' comments.

Catherine Ferdinand mentioned that there are people who viewed the survey as biased in a different way than Jacqueline Sartoris had mentioned.

Chair Darcy asked for an update on the Steering Committee's request for a more detailed and analytical Community Survey report. Matt Panfil stated that at the last meeting it was decided a member of the Steering Committee would contact the author of the report, but he has not received an update.

Chair Darcy then asked Matt Panfil to introduce the draft housing inventory. Matt Panfil

stated that the draft housing inventory is based on the State's specific criteria, but that he feels it only gets halfway to addressing all the different housing issues the Town faces, especially for affordable housing. He believes transportation costs should be included in affordable housing calculations as there is a clear connection to growth management and sprawl in that people may choose to live further away from their jobs because housing is generally more affordable the further away it is from amenities and services. He also would like to include discussion about affordable housing for essential employees such as teachers and Police, Fire, and Public Works Department staff. Other housing topics such as the emergence of tiny homes should be addressed. He added that the decrease in the number of dwelling units over the past decade is based on American Community Survey (ACS) data, which are estimates with a potential wider margin of error than the decennial census. Therefore, the general observation that can be taken from the data is that the number of dwelling units is relatively stable. The closing of BNAS probably affected these numbers early in the decade, but it will not be until the 2020 census data is released that there will be a clearer picture. Building permit data from 2019 and 2020 suggests that the number of dwelling units is increasing significantly, but it is yet to be determined if this is short-lived or the sign of a longer trendline.

Catherine Ferdinand suggested including definitions for the housing inventory, especially housing types.

Fred Koerber asked where geographically the loss of dwelling units occurred. Matt Panfil stated that a deeper look at the material will be required to provide an answer. Fred Koerber asked if the data accounted for the conversion of single-family homes to multi-unit buildings and vice-versa. He added that the Police and Fire Departments could be affected by either the loss or growth of dwelling units in specific areas of Town. He also asked if there was an explanation as to why residents who identify their house as a boat, RV, or van dropped from 56 units to zero (0). Matt Panfil responded to Fred's question about unit conversions by stating that if the assessor is aware of the changes, it is reflected in the data. However, illegal conversions have occurred. Matt Panfil said that he would check with the Town Assessor for an answer to the question about boats, RVs, and vans. He added that a question he has is how to account for tiny homes on wheels now that the State has said they are not required to meet the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC).

Jacqueline Sartoris asked if congregate housing was included in the inventory. Matt Panfil responded that he does not believe so as the data is based on dwelling units, but that he will research the answer to the question in order to confirm and explain how congregate housing is addressed. Jacqueline asked for clarification as to how low splits are reflected in the data. Matt responded that if a lot is split and a new home is constructed, the new dwelling unit is included. Jacqueline asked if accessory apartments are included in the data. Matt stated that if they have been built according to the Town's accessory apartment regulations they are probably not included because they do not count as density. He said that he would check with the Town Assessor to verify and see if there is a way to estimate that number of accessory apartments in Town.

Matt Panfil stated that based on the Steering Committee feedback he will try to make the data and terminology easier to understand for the general public.

Alison Harris suggested including a discussion about the homeless population and short-term rentals in the housing inventory. She is also interested in information pertaining to the connection between transportation and housing.

Catherine Ferdinand suggested providing the following: data from the Brunswick Housing Authority (BHA); more information as to how the former Naval housing was absorbed; and identification of data sources. Matt Panfil responded that he will also include a description of the American Community Survey as it the primary source for the housing inventory data. He added that he will also need to do additional research to provide separate data for property owners with a mortgage and those without a mortgage.

Jacqueline Sartoris suggested adding a section pertaining to how the pandemic has affected Maine's housing market as recent sales reports have shown an increase in demand.

Catherine Ferdinand asked if there is a standard time frame to determine a trend in the housing market. Matt Panfil stated that he did not know but could ask local realtors.

Marcy McGuire noted that some of the former Naval housing on McKeen Street was converted from rentals to for sale housing and asked if this was reflected in the housing inventory. Matt Panfil stated that this is most likely accounted for as long as the Town Assessor routinely receives updated owner data.

It was agreed that Matt Panfil's suggestion to discuss future housing types in the inventory was not necessary and the idea can be addressed in the 2021 Plan if necessary.

Matt noted the changes he made to the website: added the State Checklist and new Beginning with Habitat maps. He still needs to post links to the panel discussion videos from February. He also plans to overlay the maps from the Community Workshops on the Beginning with Habitat maps.

A motion was made by Jacqueline Sartoris and seconded by Chris Watkinson to approve the Draft 2 March 3, 2020 meeting summary. The motion passed unanimously. Chair Darcy asked the Steering Committee to forward comments on the Draft 1 August 13, 2020 meeting summary to Matt Panfil prior to the next meeting.

Matt Panfil announced that there is an upcoming transit study meeting and there will also be another Downtown Streetscape Enhancement Project meeting soon. Finally, he announced that due to Election Day, the regularly scheduled November meeting will be held on Thursday, October 29, 2020 at 6:30 PM via Zoom.

Chair Darcy adjourned the meeting at 8:19 PM.