

Leverett Selectboard April 11 2023: Comprehensive Plan progress report by Tim Shores, Planning Board member & secretary

"Rural planning is about developing and protecting physical and human capital and addressing the at times conflicting goals of economic development and resource conservation." – From the International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Second Edition)

Evidence-based, Community-driven: The two important qualities of a Comprehensive Plan.

1. **Evidence-based:** Planning consultants with experience in land use, economic development, environmental engineering, and facilities will gather, evaluate, and communicate the evidence of Leverett's policy and economic needs.
2. **Community-driven:** All Leverett residents will be invited to identify, learn about and discuss problems, to envision our values as a community, and to learn about the costs, benefits, and tradeoffs of different economic scenarios devised from the evidence.

Progress since Fall 2022

- **August and September:** Communication to Selectboard, to the community on Leverett Connects, and PB members reached out to people about Steering Group opportunity.
- **October 2022:** Department of Housing & Community Development informed the Town that we'd been awarded full \$75,000 Community One Stop for Growth grant in support of Phase 2.
- **November:** The Planning Board worked with Margie to write and publish a Phase 2 RFP.
- **January 2023:** The Town received a single proposal, and we awarded it to Emily Innes Associates with RKG Associates and Tighe & Bond.
- **February:** Met with Emily Innes and coordinated more Steering Group outreach.
 - We posted in the Town Newsletter -- that got a couple hits.
 - Mostly we focused on individual outreach. Steering is a bigger job and we learned from last year's Working Group that broad outreach didn't convey how much time and showing up that people should expect to commit.
- **April to October 2023**
 - The Steering Group and consultants will work with independence from Planning Board authority: to support a fair, transparent, and community-driven process.
 - S.G. will attend approximately 7 meetings in person or online (12-15 hours), will contribute feedback on scenario planning options, community input, and drafts.
 - S.G. will review materials and questionnaires and conduct outreach and event coordination for Community Visioning Groups. Community Visioning is where residents can learn about the existing conditions analysis and scenario planning options developed by consultants, discuss together, and provide input.
 - Planning Board will review report drafts, develop an approval process for the final report, and follow the report's guidance on implementation, including a proposal to create a Comp Plan Implementation Committee.

Appointed Steering Group members:

Steve Weiss
Matt Boucher
Silas Ball
Jenny Daniell

Arlyn Diamond
Jim Field
Gary Gruber
David Henion

Isaiah Robison
Kim Van Wagner
Maybe: Pete Sylvan

Planning Board member Swan Keyes is organizing a way to include a group of LES students in Steering Group or Community Visioning events.

Planning Board will consider nominees until end of May. People interested in contributing could instead attend Community Visioning Meetings.

Expected contents of the final Comprehensive Plan

The plan must contain the components of a Comprehensive Plan as outlined in the current requirements of MGL Chapter 41 Section 81D.

These requirements include (but are not limited to) the following elements:

1. Goals & Policies
2. Land Use
3. Housing
4. Economic Development
5. Natural & Cultural Resources
6. Open Space and Recreation
7. Services and Facilities (municipal and capital)
8. Circulation (Transportation)
9. Implementation

The finished Comp Plan must also include additional elements of concern to Leverett:

1. Climate Adaptation and Sustainability
2. Social and Economic Equity
3. Energy
4. Regionalization of Town services

The finished MP shall also identify any portions of the Town’s Rules and Regulations Governing Subdivision Control, Zoning Ordinances and Planning Board Rules and Regulations that may need to be updated in order to be consistent with the findings and recommendations of the MP.

Each community Comprehensive Plan element will be developed with the aim of making Leverett a more sustainable and resilient community, prepared for environmental, economic, and demographic change for the next decade and beyond.

From the November Planning Board minutes:

Tim recommends that everyone watch **The Field** with Richard Harris, John Hurt, and Tom Berenger, and to reflect on the shared human experience of overheated tempers when a community lapses into conflict over the control of a cherished field.