

Minutes from Comprehensive Planning Steering Group meetings 11/20/23 & 11/27/2023
unanimously approved by Steering Committee on 1/15/24.

11/20/2023

Attendees: Emily & Ewan Innes (Innes Associates), Nicole Vajda, Jenny Daniel, Andy Vlock, Bob Weitzman, Tim Shores, Kimberly VanWagner, Matt Boucher, Silas Ball, David Henion, Isaiah Robison, Arlyn Diamond

Not in attendance: Gary Gruber, Jim Field

1. Vote on values discussed previous meeting: passed unanimously
2. Minutes from last meeting: passed unanimously
3. Updates from small group discussions/tabling
4. Lookback at 10/17 Data Walk
 - * Innes Associates felt we did very well, got good input, would change the maps based on the layout next time
 - * Currently, online questionnaire has 200 replies, comparable to a much larger survey size at this stage
5. Looking forward to 12/6
 - * Innes Asso. reviews Framework handout explaining process with the prompt: Should the Town....
 - * Group spends a few minutes working on ideas in small teams/individually

We name the following as possible scenarios:

- * Should the Town...improve and promote bike lanes throughout town?
- * Should the Town...promote tourism and support cultural/historic sites to improve economic opportunity?
- * Should the Town...reduce costs by regionalizing more town services, including building coalitions with Shutesbury for schools and vendor contracts?
- * Should the Town...change zoning to promote a commercial corridor, including a gas station, along Route 63 to attract economic opportunity?
- * Should the Town...install microgrids and electric charging vehicle stations and invest in town-owned public utility of electricity similar to town-owned broadband?
- * Should the Town...commit the resources needed to fix Rattlesnake Gutter so it is a viable road for vehicular traffic?
- * Should the Town... create a zoning overlay to allow for the community lifestyle development being introduced to Planning for the unused Yankee Candle Kittridge property on Juggler Meadow Road
- * Should the town...encourage cell phone towers to provide better coverage?
- * Should the town...promote the creation/use of a sundry station and/or tool shed to reduce purchase prices by buying in bulk?
- *Should the Town...change zoning to promote affordable housing units?

6. Values discussion (pic by Andy needed here)

7. Upcoming meetings: Pre-applicant meeting at Planning Board regarding Juggler Meadow on 12/13 and Emily presenting on 1/10/24
8. Adjourn 8:35pm; next meeting 11/27/23 Monday to prep for 12/6 event

11/27/23 Minutes from Steering Committee of the Comprehensive Planning Group

In attendance: Silas Ball, Bob Weitzman, Tom Ewing, Nicole Vajda, Andy Vlock, Matt Boucher, Jim Field, Kimberly VanWagner, Tim Shores

Absent: Jenny Daniel, David Henion, Gary Gruber

Meeting start: 6:35 pm

We have a quorum and let's get started

Small discussions updates:

Kim and Nicole and Tim coordinating with Principal Annie to talk about project with staff at LES; Kim will confirm with Annie and hand off to Nicole and Tim

Jim has been having meetings all over; Cowls family members and other targeted stakeholders, getting surveys filled out

Tim passed around a handout of people who on surveys said they would be interested in being contacted

Other outreach:

Tim & postcards:

New mailer went out, some houses in Leverett served by other post offices, so the mass mailer may not reach them

Getting the newsletter back is a big thing for people that Bob and others have talked to

Discussion: Other learnings from small groups/tabling/door-to-door work

Concerns that Leverett zoning unnecessarily restricts development

Concerns about the accountability of boards and committees; the Leverett volunteer committee structure can sometimes seem capricious or based on the individual serving; special permitting process unclear and sometimes if a committee or review board doesn't have quorum, the person seeking a permit has to delay

Discussion: Values challenges in Leverett

Environmental stewardship has been the primary or central value of Leverett; some people suggest that it's too much; but Leverett did not want to be overdeveloped like Hadley/UMass; so at each juncture of boards and committee decision-making, environmental stewardship vs. less regulation has been the conflict in Leverett

Protecting our areas (in Leverett) may cause other environmental concerns elsewhere...

If you want to build here, even if we had less regulation, we have other limitations - no transportation, no sewer or water system, no buses, no utilities. Leverett has an unjustified maybe fear of development.

How do we know the trade-offs of decisions about regulation or less regulation? How do we balance renewable energy, land conversation, tillable land vs. cut trees, etc.?

Jim - we only have to ask - there are many experts and people who will help in the valley; UMass resource to help us understand more and learn

Going through the proposed Stations from Emily:

Communication with Town Government is key to making government work better for everyone; came up with COA research last year; people not knowing where to find info; people not knowing about resources.

Let's go through the proposed topics one by one and get changes to Emily tomorrow:

See attached "20231127 Draft Stations for Review kv edits" as part of this record, showing the changes we recommend to Emily; sent to Emily 11/28 and some of our discussions/concerns.

Topic: Juggler Meadow Estate Development

How should we handle this at the Data Walk on 12/6?

Debate about whether to include a scenario board.

Pros - we have already alluded to it in our outreach materials (household mailer sent week ago with info about the questionnaire); it's really happening so we should help community figure out a role and start discussions. We want to be transparent.

Cons - it may or may not really be happening; we don't know enough; we are not the right group to position the discussion right now; all the issues as general we already are covering in other areas. Developer could pull the proposal.

Call for a vote on whether to include JM as a station at Data Walk in some way, or even mention potential development: did not pass. 3 yay, 4 nay.

Call for a vote on whether to provide a small handout that reads something like: Interested in Learning more about proposed Juggler Meadow development? Please come to the next Planning Board meeting at Town Hall on 12/13 at 7:30pm: pass unanimously.

Meeting adjourned: 8:48pm

Links to Data Walk Plus (Scenarios & Maps); held on 12/6/23

- [Leverett Community Vision Meeting 2 - Data Walk Future Scenario Boards](#)
- [Leverett Community Vision Meeting 2 - Map Tiles](#)