

6/4/2024

Steering Group for the Leverett Comprehensive Plan

In attendance:

Nicole Vajda, Bob Weitzman, Arlyn Diamond, Andy Vlock, Kimberly VanWagner, Gary Gruber, Silas Ball

Absent: Isaiah Robison, David Henion, Jenny Daniell, Matt Boucher, James Field

Meeting called to order 6:45pm

1. Recap of what happened at the previous meeting on 5/23/2024. No minutes presented for approval from 5/23/24.
2. Decided next steps will be drafting a letter to the Planning Board and a letter to the consultant Emily Innes. Drafting ideas during this meeting; Kimberly will type and send around, individuals can also comment to Emily by the 6/10/24 deadline if possible.

Ideas for the letter to the Planning Board:

- Emphasize the remarkable response rate for the survey and the challenges of pleasing everyone in a representative democracy
- Acknowledge the challenges of the diversity of opinions and interpretation of values, and the presumed demographic bias of older retirees inherent in the data from in-person exercises (data walks, tabletop)
- Recommend the next steps based on the comprehensive plan, including adoption of final draft
  - Using the next year of community conversations to focus on the top tiers of actions and inviting in the related committees/boards required to help enact changes
  - Prioritizing the floodplain management/climate resiliency, transportation, and housing aspects of the plan in particular, as these intersect with larger political changes at the state/federal level that we must address as a town
- Request official end to the steering group and a pizza party

Ideas for the letter to Emily Innes, consultant

- CRITICAL: CHANGE THE TERMINOLOGY OF “DO, EXPLORE, DISCUSS, RETHINK” TO “TOP TIER, MIDDLE TIER, LOWER TIER, LOWEST TIER” [especially take out the idea of “do” because it sounds like a mandate]
- CRITICAL: page numbers need to be larger and not white-on-black; very challenging for older eyes to see
- CRITICAL: quotes need to be in quotations
- P 108 - add to barriers for ADUs - septic regulations and community understanding of what more housing means for environmental protection, the involvement of Board of Health and Conservation Committee [this may also help to show how/why the tension of housing vs environment seems to show up in the values/goals [environmental protections as top priority from survey, but then housing is the top “do” in the chart from the tabletop - this contradiction must be teased out more and then expert Innes advice needed!]

- CRITICAL: please create a visual timeline of the recommended “top tier, middle tier” steps for the next 10 years/recommended rollout
- CRITICAL: Add the key to the charts so easier to read/understand what values/goals, etc relate to; or at least at the top of that section; very challenging to always go back to the beginning
- CRITICAL: move the recommended timeline into the Executive summary; move all historic data to back of the report, we want less of a chronological story of how we got here and more of an actionable document
- Correct many typos; submit a final draft for final round of corrections before the “final final” version; chart page 102 the numbers for units vs parcels doesn’t add up for condos and two-family homes
- Add description of the “2040” imagining exercise part of the tabletop exercise to lend more context to the results and explain the purpose of the “2040” idea [p 32 doesn’t say anything about the 2040 exercise and we are not sure how the priorities changed because of this imagining]
- Specifically name the available, buildable parcels remaining in town
- Specifically add more information on climate change/resiliency/air conditioning grants to the resources page
- Was there existing conditions analysis of climate change (e.g. increased floods/heat/ticks) that could be added?
- Note the demographic bias that may have skewed the choices became priorities in the tabletop exercise - specifically here we are thinking of #18, which we still hear/see as
- We didn’t see solar setbacks, native land givebacks, gray water, compostable toilets, important for the community based on the survey data but which didn’t seem to register as priority for the participants in the tabletop exercise

All participants in the meeting agreed unanimously on these ideas, although Silas left the meeting at 7:15pm, thereby ending quorum, which was noted before each vote.

Meeting adjourned 7:40pm.  
Minutes by Kimberly VanWagner