

Leverett Comprehensive Plan: Phase I  
Minutes for Working Group Meeting #2  
Leverett Zoom online meeting, May 3 at 5:30 pm to 7pm

Working Group attendance:

In attendance:

- Miles Palmer, Kimberly VanWagner, Lizzie Alwan, Kathryn Stoddard, Molly Daniell
- Emily Innes, planning consultant
- Planning Board members attending to observe: Richard Nathhorst, Steve Freedman, Tim Shores (who is also taking minutes)

Silas Ball called Kathryn to let her know he was at Town Hall, as he was under the impression that the meeting was in person. Emily will make sure to provide him with a printed version of the presentation at the next meeting.

Emily recorded the Zoom meeting

Welcome:

Lizzie will be acting as chair for this meeting, because Mike Fiscella has a schedule conflict and is unable to make it.

Emily presented survey results and discussed how WG members may go on to serve in the Steering Group and to act as Planning Ambassadors (PAs)

Survey meeting preference: for WG and SG, a mix of preference between online and in-person. Community meetings have a stronger preference for in-person.

Emily recommends thinking of how to include more people from 18-24 and 25-34 age groupings.

## 2. Presentation: Community Outreach and Engagement

a. Definitions: Outreach is how we get people involved, education about the process, opportunities and constraints; Engagement is how we receive input on the process, areas of focus and options, and how we build stewardship for the plan; Implementation is how we carry stewardship and engagement into fulfilling the goals and actions of the plan. This is a cyclical process, it doesn't end, because plan implementation requires ongoing outreach and engagement. This will also help people to see the actions taken and achievements made during implementation, which helps to prevent planning fatigue, in which people are tired of planning without seeing results.

b. In-person Examples: Events, presentations, workshops, data walks, community events, hearings, walking tours, focus groups, interviews.

c. Online Examples: Can present online versions of many in-person formats, can also include surveys and questionnaires, videos, story maps, and metrics for tracking outreach and participation. Finding creative ways to use online formats to inform people of the planning process and changes. Story maps are a GIS software-driven online experience that lets people explore mapped assets and narratives relevant to the planning process.

### 3. Discussion

- Kim pointed out that 39 responses out of a town population of about 2000 suggests we'll need to think of ways to get higher response rate
- Kathryn pointed out that Leverett Connects is an excellent resource for outreach.
- Lizzie and Tim pointed out that survey response rate in other cases (Aging, Revenue Committee) reach higher rates, around 300, given more time and resources devoted to engagement.
- Molly suggested social media engagement among residents and people in town organizations, and to encourage people to become social media planning ambassadors.
- There was a discussion of planning out milestones for the process to help give people a better sense of where we are in the process.
- Kathryn suggested outreach in partnership with Leverett Elementary School, citing the importance of the school to the town, the size of the school budget, and the difficulty with engaging parents in town matters. She also suggested young leaders or youth ambassadors. A hashtag would help.
- Miles' experience with neighbors who are parents is that they are very responsive to Leverett Connects.
- Kim suggested writing talking points, or brief engagement messaging that WG members and PAs can quickly share with others. Can modify it on a regular basis to adapt it to the changing process.
- Emily pointed out that there will be a period of inactivity between end of June when the WG report is completed, and September or October when we get final confirmation of the second One Stop for Community Growth grant. We could state in the grant that the town is going to proceed with outreach, engagement and data collection over the summer, even before knowing if we win the grant. Then we can use ideas like standardized messaging for ambassadors to use.
- There was discussion of how to reach younger people. Kathryn suggested themed community sessions and events that are dedicated to certain groups, such as parents, young people, and other harder to reach groups. (e.g. "Parents of young kids week on Leverett Connects: An open discussion of town planning"). Kim suggested syncing themes with holidays, e.g. climate change events on Earth Day.

#### 4. Discussion of Documents

- Kathryn pointed out that the most recent assessors data has about 25% of property owners listing primary addresses outside of Leverett. She's curious about that, and she observed that we should make a mailing to those folks to include them in the planning process. Tim confirmed that the Working Group postcards were sent only to residents, not to owners who do not live outside of Leverett.

#### 5. Next Steps