

Planning Board

Jeffrey Cohen, *Chair*
Shawn Hanegan, *Clerk* Sandra Hackman
Amy Lloyd Lisa Mustapich
Glenn Garber, *Planning Director*
Catherine Perry, *Assistant Planner*

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BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Regular Session and Joint Discussion with the CP Advisory Ad Hoc Committee
Town Hall-Selectmen's Meeting Room
October 15, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeffrey Cohen, Chair; Shawn Hanegan, Clerk; Sandra Hackman; and Amy Lloyd

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lisa Mustapich

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Garber, Planning Director; Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner and Cathy Silvestrone, Planning A.A.

STAFF ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: See Attached

Emergency Evacuation Notice: read by Shawn Hanegan, Clerk

Note: All submittals are available for review in the Planning Office.

BUSINESS SESSION:

- 1) **Minutes**—Regular Session and Joint Discussion with the CP Advisory Ad Hoc Committee dated September 24, 2013

MOTION: Sandra Hackman moved to approve September 24, 2013 Regular Session and Joint Discussion with the CP Advisory Ad Hoc Committee Minutes with minor edits. (Amy Lloyd seconded the motion)

VOTE: 4-0-0

- 2) **Staff Report**—Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, reported that the Montessori School currently located on Concord Road plans to relocate to Alfred Circle in approximately one month. Site Plan Review will be needed.

- 3) **Other**—Suzy Enos, Energy Task Force, shared information regarding an initiative Massachusetts Clean Energy Center is sponsoring to solarize Massachusetts and reduce carbon footprint in communities. Ms. Enos asked the Board if they would consider supporting this initiative because promoting clean energy production and reduced carbon footprint are aspects of the Comprehensive Plan. The Board had a brief discussion regarding Bedford's proposal to

participate in this initiative, and then asked Ms. Enos some follow-up questions regarding expected savings to the town.

Ms. Enos informed the Board that she has prepared a letter stating that the Town of Bedford's Planning Board supports Bedford's proposal to participate in the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's Solarize Massachusetts initiative; and said if the Board is in agreement, she would appreciate Chair Cohen endorsing the letter on behalf of the Board.

MOTION: Shawn Hanegan moved that the Planning Board support Bedford's proposal to participate in the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's Solarize Massachusetts initiative and approve of Chair Cohen endorsing the letter of support on behalf of the Board that was provided this evening by Ms. Enos. (Amy Lloyd seconded the motion)

VOTE: 4-0-0

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORK SESSION:

Planning staff provided the Board and CP Ad Hoc Advisory Committee members with handouts in preparation of this evening's discussion regarding a second round review of new drafts for Services & Facilities Element and Services & Facilities Action Plan.

Services and Facilities Element —the following are some highlights from the Service and Facilities Element second round draft review discussion:

Director Garber discussed written comments provided by Suzy Enos. Director Garber voiced that he agrees with Ms. Enos' comment that there are some inconsistencies with some of the information provided in the Energy Use Section and also noted that this information should be clarified. Mr. Garber mentioned that Ms. Enos shared concern regarding the upcoming retirement of Richard Jones, Facilities Director, and asked if it were appropriate to include language in the CP about the expectation of leadership in energy reduction and to continue the good progress that Facilities Director Jones and the Facilities Department has made in this area. Director Garber expressed that the role of Facilities is strongly emphasized throughout the chapter and in the actions; however, he agrees that some language could be added to convey that the town will need the new Facilities Director to continue leadership in this area, including pursuing numerous grant opportunities. Mr. Garber said another great comment Ms. Enos offered was to include information in the CP about the part-time Energy Manager Bedford shares with Arlington and how the Energy Manager focuses on changing the behavior of building occupants to help them better understand how behavior can impact energy usage.

Director Garber briefly discussed the *many* references to non-vehicular modes; (pedestrian, bicycle, trails and sidewalks) throughout the CP; and then shared that there has been some recent demand to further reference non-vehicular modes. Director Garber said; although it is important to keep within a non-vehicular structure concept, over-referencing can be an issue. Director Garber reiterated that the CP is a conceptual plan; and not a Master Plan for pedestrians, bicycles, trails, and sidewalks. Director Garber suggested placing more focus on comments pertaining to issues, goals, vision and actions.

Amy Lloyd suggested that when the Executive Summary is written, some language explaining the “common” references could be included.

Tom Kinzer agreed that it is important to have sidewalks/Complete Streets unified in specific areas of the CP. Mr. Kinzer also suggested that reference to Healthy Bedford should be included in the Transportation section of the CP.

Sandra Hackman commented that the Services and Facilities Element so far looks great; and that she likes this chapter.

Sam Petrecca said that he likes to see in the Vision Statement that the town can provide many services; however, he would also like the town to be realistic on what it can actually accomplish while holding real-estate taxes stable.

Amy Lloyd commented that the Vision Statement may not be the place to distinguish how this should be handled.

Mr. Petrecca said he did observe the fact that commercial tax base usually covers many of the projects. However, this has not held true recently; and therefore the residential tax base has had to make up the difference.

Shawn Hanegan discussed the mechanism of proposition 2 ½; and how residents have taking the brunt of covering additional expenses through their taxes.

Sam Petrecca said much of the town has depended on its great bond rating as an indicator of asset management; however, it’s also important to know the Finance Committee’s principles regarding how the town should manage its money. Mr. Petrecca suggested sharing some information in the CP to demonstrate that the town has a clear picture of moving forward while still remaining well-managed.

Director Garber noted that the Economic Development element includes a lot of these points; and that you need to connect Economic Development and Services and Facilities to get the needed answers. Director Garber voiced that adding a reference to Economic Development in Services and Facilities would help.

Sandra Hackman referring to **Table 1 Municipal Debt Service FY 13** on page 15 suggested removing the chart because there is not enough information to indicate its significance. Director Garber said he would prefer to keep the chart, but agrees that more information is needed; and that some of the information in the chart may have been inadvertently cut off in the editing process.

Sam Petrecca (**Vision/Summary of Issues and Opportunities** on page 2) suggested *changing* Major Capital: strategic long-range capital planning to *Strategic long-range capital expenditures*.

Chair Cohen suggested moving the information about Climate Change (also located on page 2 in the list of Summary of Issues and Opportunities) further down the list.

Goal #1—a suggestion was made to include the words “*within and*” before *beyond the standard 6 year time horizon*.

Shawn Hanegan (Goal #2 – page 3) questioned the five year, 20% reduction goal for municipal energy timeframe. Suzy Enos commented that the town had committed to that goal through FY14 as part of being a Green Community.

Shawn Hanegan expressed that this goal should be more general; and then suggested changing the language in goal to read as follows; Continue to strive toward aggressive goals for reduction of municipal energy consumption etc...

Sandra Hackman suggested removing “and savings” from goal #6.

Decision Section Comments:

Chair Cohen suggested changing *government* complex to *municipal*.

Tom Kinzer, referring to page 4, suggested adding more information about the landfill/dump function—(ex. used for collecting yard waste for composting) and add “schools” before municipal buildings in the 2nd paragraph.

Amy Lloyd suggested sharing supportive information regarding why Bedford benefits from having its Facilities Department run a separate operation for maintenance of its municipal buildings.

Status of Facilities Department Section Comments:

Chair Cohen, page 4, asked if the last word in the paragraph, *norm*, should be changed to *average in recent years*. Planning Director Garber agreed with Mr. Cohen’s suggested change.

Page 6, a suggestion was made to add information to Cultural Resources regarding the Historical Society, which remains in the former library building and where the current Police Department exists.

Brian O’Donnell commented about Depot Park area being part of the historic area expansion.

It was noted on the top of page 7 that the 12,000 SF fire station building was *renovated/expanded* in 1997 and not constructed as stated.

School Section Comments:

Chair Cohen suggested the following changes to the page 7 and 8;

1) move the last sentence on page 7 beginning with “A fluctuating number of students...” further down in the paragraph; 2) after the word *number* in the second sentence on page 8 add “*of*

students eligible to enroll” and clarify the number of homeless children out of the 100 that enrolled and are actually attending Bedford Schools; **3**) in the 2nd paragraph on page 8—would like the school enrollment information to be verified with the numbers and graphs that were shown at the public meeting held by the Selectmen to discuss the use at the Bedford Plaza Hotel.; **4**) in the last sentence remove the word “upgrade” and change it to internal reconfiguration and repurposing.

Amy Lloyd suggested including language in the school section sharing that; although there has been an influx of homeless students enrolled in the school system; that these numbers are already beginning to decline.

Chair Cohen spoke in general about the overall planning process for recent school expansion projects and how quickly projections don’t line-up with the actual number of students.

Social Service Section Comments:

Tom Kinzer, page 9, shared that the Board of Health gets involved with many important aspects (ex. work on laboratory procedures, emergency responses with Fire Department, ensuring that residents are fit to live in their present environment, etc.) and then suggested that the paragraph on Board of Health include these additional functions.

Chair Cohen agreed with Mr. Kinzer that the Board of Health paragraph should be expanded; and then shared that the Board of Health also works with the Fire Department on hazardous waste procedures and with Youth and Family Services, and Council on Aging on emotional and psychological issues.

Recreation Section Comments:

Director Garber, regarding page 9-11, read the following written comments that Amy Hamilton, Recreation Director, provided: 1) the Outdoor Recreation Area Study Committee (ORASC) was disbanded; and therefore should not be listed as a responsible party other than to reference the report they prepared for the Selectmen; 2) pointed out that Services and Facilities #7 seems more geared toward trails even though the word sidewalk is present. Ms. Hamilton suggested that more referenced toward sidewalks is needed.

Sandra Hackman commented that the information provided at the beginning of the Recreation Section at the bottom of page 9 seems to be disconnected. Ms. Hackman suggested adding more information to this section about passive recreation and park services instead of focusing almost exclusively on organized sports.

Shawn Hanegan commented that Springs Brook Park (SBP) is a well-known function that Recreation is responsible for; and that more information should be highlighted about SBP.

Chair Cohen, referring to recreation discussions that took place during the breakout groups at the CP workshops, conveyed that residents want to emphasize recreation as it relates to facilities.

Brian O'Donnell commented that the town has wonderful fields and courts; but when not used for schools or a scheduled event, these amenities for the most part go unused. Mr. O'Donnell suggested reviewing the use of the fields and courts beyond organized activities.

Amy Lloyd expressed that she was informed it's good practice to occasionally rest natural turf playing fields.

Sandra Hackman asked that the number of tennis courts sited on page 10 should be changed from 7 to 8.

A brief discussion took place regarding information that was provided in the second paragraph, on page 11 regarding the use of St. Michael's land and abutting land to Abbot Lane Subdivision for the construction of additional playing fields. Chair Cohen, for clarification, asked Director Garber to check on the current status of the litigation process that is associated with the future use of this land.

Brian O'Donnell pointed out that there is a small playground located on Elliot Road that needs to be maintained; and then suggested including a reference to small playgrounds as being a non-playing fields.

Energy Use Section Comments:

A brief discussion took place regarding the accuracy of the reported 10.5% annual improvement rate in school energy consumption. Planning Director said he would re-check the data that he received from Facilities. Suzy Enos offered to send Director Garber a spreadsheet consisting of figures that would verify the accuracy of the reported rate.

Chair Cohen said; given the complexity of Services and Facilities Element, should the snapshot be all on one page, or can something different be done.

Capital Planning, Financing and Fiscal Aspects Section Comments:

A suggestion was made to change "Aspects" in the above title to "**Matters**".

Director Garber commented that when he spoke with Richard Jones, Facilities Director, about a long-range capital planning analysis, he discussed reviewing data over a longer period of time (ex. 20 years) to effectively tract the Facilities Department useful life of the town's facilities and to get a better understanding of life-cycle costs and requirements.

Amy Lloyd commended the emphasis of this section; however she would like to see an improved conclusion. Ms. Lloyd suggested that Figure 3. Town of Bedford Capital Expenditure Appropriation bar chart expanded over a decade.

Capital Investment, Page 16, Sandra Hackman—questioned if the statement; to establish better coordination for capital investment involving both maintenance and *small* support facilities at the

athletic fields such as storage sheds, refuse containers and added parking spaces was best said, or even needed. Ms. Hackman suggested omitting the word *small* in that statement for clarification.

Jeffrey Cohen said that these were issued were raised during CP workshop discussions.

Amy Lloyd suggested beginning the sentence with; Evaluate the needs for capital investment....instead of Establish better coordination for capital investment.

Action Matrix Comments:

Overall the Board's consensus on the Services and Facilities Action plan was positive. Some minor edits were suggested and Board members provided these minor edits in writing to the Planning Staff. Below are two specific comments that were made by Board members.

- Cross reference Services and Facilities Action Plan with Natural & Cultural Resources Chapter.
- Add Board of Health to the Roles and Partnerships

Closing Comments:

Chair Cohen suggested preparing a master schedule to share a timeline with the CP Advisory AD Hoc Committee and public regarding the progress and direction of the CP plan.

Catherine Perry suggested that the master schedule could be presented in table format.

Chair Cohen asked how is the order of the presented elements within the CP determined. Director Garber replied; the order is determined by the stature listed in MGL Chapter 40 Section 81B.

Chair Cohen asked when the Ad Hoc Committee and Public can expect to have a cohesive CP document ready for review, comments, and feedback.

Director Garber stated that a fully drafted CP document will not be ready for public review until late November, a deadline for feedback will be slated for the end of December 2013; and that the plan will be adopted in Spring 2014.

Director Garber reported that he is currently working on some preliminary thoughts for a 5-minute presentation at Special Fall Town Meeting. Board members and Staff shared their individual ideas/comments regarding what the presentation should cover. Below are some of those suggestions;

- share information regarding the participation process
- state that the work was done mostly by staff at a great savings to the town
- present one element/chapter and briefly review it with the public to give them an example of what the CP consists of
- include visuals (snapshots/ maps/graphs)

- share the complexity involved with creating a CP
- explain that the CP is not a Planning Board document (it's a town document); even though it's the Planning Board who approves it.
- explain that the CP is a working document and that the work is in the implementation of the plan

Board members also expressed their discontent of only being allowed 5-minutes to speak at Special Fall Town Meeting given the complexity of the CP. Chair Cohen said he would approach the Town Moderator and asked for consideration to have an additional 5 minutes to speak.

Adjournment:

MOTION: Amy Lloyd moved to adjourn the meeting. (Shawn Hanegan seconded the motion)

VOTE: 4-0-0

TIME: 10:15PM