

NEW LONDON PLANNING BOARD WORK SESSION & REGULAR MEETING APRIL 8, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Ebel (Chairman), Dale Conly, Tom Cottrill, Michael Doheny, Jeff Hollinger, Kenneth McWilliams (Planner), Alternate Michele Holton

MEMBERS ABSENT: Celeste Cook, Larry Ballin (Selectmen's Representative), Alternate Deirdre Sheerr-Gross

Chair Karen Ebel called the **MEETING TO ORDER** at 7:30 PM. Chair Ebel asked Alternate Michele Holton to sit in for PB Member Larry Ballin. She then asked Ken McWilliams, Town Planner, to lead the discussion regarding the crafting of a Community Survey to solicit information from the public for the Master Plan Update.

I. MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Ken McWilliams reviewed the documents provided to the PB in earlier mailings that included a summary of the results of the 1996 Community Survey, a list of suggested new community survey questions, and a sheet with diagrams of three different patterns of development. He said that on the sheet providing the results of questions from the 1996 community survey, he had typed in bold print those questions that he thought were still pertinent or for which the PB had not gotten any clear direction from the prior survey. He recommended keeping the survey length reasonable so that people would want to complete it.

Chair Ebel said that she would like to be able to offer an on-line option in addition to the paper survey. PB Members Hollinger and Cottrill advised that the Recreation Department had done an on-line survey. PB Member Cottrill said that if an on-line option were to be offered, he would want there to be some way to verify the town residency of respondents. He opined that the PB also needed to know that people only voted once. PB Member Hollinger said that the PB could add a disclosure to the survey to achieve those goals. Mr. McWilliams advised that it would be possible to cross-tab the survey responses with lists of property owners and voters. He pointed out that the same issues would arise with a printed survey.

Chair Ebel asked which of the documents provided to PB members, the blank copy of the 1996 community survey or the copy presenting the results, would be most helpful for the discussion. Mr. McWilliams replied that the latter copy would be best to use. PB Member Hollinger suggested that it might be better to determine the length of the survey before discussing specific questions. Mr. McWilliams advised that the prior survey had been nine pages and that there had been a "pretty good" response rate; therefore, he had been using that as a guide. Chair Ebel said that the 1996 survey contained only 25 questions; however, some questions had many alternatives.

- A. Chair Ebel recommended starting with the 1996 survey and working through those questions to determine which, if any, questions should be asked again. PB Member Conly opined that it would be good to have some of the same questions so that the PB could see if attitudes had changed over the 10-year period. Chair Ebel added that some of the alternatives available might also have changed.

Resident Robert Lavoie observed that some of the questions had not been highlighted, and he asked if that meant that Mr. McWilliams was not recommending that they be asked again. Mr. McWilliams responded affirmatively, but advised that the PB could override his recommendation. PB Member Cottrill recommended asking the same first three questions and putting them in exactly the same order to see what the tenor of the public was now. He said that it would allow the PB to measure the progress that had been made on the issues. Chair Ebel opined that the PB should determine if new issues had surfaced or if something was no germane.

Survey Question #1: PB Member Cottrill recommended leaving the question "as is". All agreed

Survey Question #2: Chair Ebel asked if there were any additions or deletions to be made. PB Member Doheny recommended leaving the questions as stated. Chair Ebel recommended that Item g. Attract more outdoor recreation-based businesses be changed to "Attract more outdoor recreation". PB Member Hollinger recommended adding a new item re "Better Internet connectivity".

Survey Question #3: PB Member Cottrill asked why the town would want to focus development around the lakes and ponds.

Chair Ebel asked why some of the paragraphs were in bold type. Mr. McWilliams replied that bold type had been used to identify background information and to set it apart from the survey questions. Chair Ebel asked if the survey contained any questions relating to the Conservation Subdivision Plan. Mr. McWilliams replied that it was addressed on page 3 of the survey.

Survey Question #4: Mr. McWilliams advised that the question in the 1996 survey had gotten a strong response, and he didn't see a need to repeat it. Chair Ebel added that the PB had not done another build-out study since the 1996 survey. PB Member Cottrill asked what the current build-out number was. Chair Ebel responded that the originally projected 11,400 build-out population had been reduced to 9,400, and subsequently, it had been adjusted to 9,000-plus-a-little.

PB Member Doheny opined that the information provided by Question #4 would be good information to have as it would reflect how folks now felt about growth and the revised build-out population of 9000. PB Member Hollinger said the current population was 4490. PB Member Cottrill opined that it would be good if Mr. McWilliams could update the estimates to reflect the most recently available data, rather than 1990 data.

Resident Robert Lavoie asked if the purpose of the question wasn't to determine reaction to the build-out study. He said that since the existing build-out study was obsolete; why not delete Question #4. Resident Rosemary Fulton opined that it would be difficult to say what one's reaction was without having current data available. Chair Ebel recommended making a statement to the effect that the town's current population was about 4500 and asking people how they felt about growth. She also recommended updating the statistics.

Survey Question #5: PB Member Cottrill pointed out that option d. *Newport Road opposite Cricenti's Market & parking lot and the U. S. Post Office* was no longer available because the land had become part of the Bewley development; therefore, it should be deleted.

Survey Question #6: PB Member Hollinger asked why, since the PB had not been discussing the issue, the question should be included. Chair Ebel recommended deleting Question #6. PB members agreed.

Survey Question #7: Chair Ebel recommended deleting o. *Car wash*, inasmuch as the town now has a car wash. She also recommended adding "and businesses" to option f. *Home occupations*.

Survey Question #8: A suggestion was made to add "Roundabouts" to the list of items. Resident Fulton said that item "l" might not be necessary, since the state would require buffers around lakes and ponds and along streams. PB Member Cottrill asked why list it, if there was no choice. Chair Ebel and PB Member Conly recommended deleting Item z. "Other" and Item y. "None of the above". Both opined that the survey should offer no opportunity for respondents to have "No Opinion".

Survey Question #9: PB Member Cottrill asked if the question was needed any longer. Mr. McWilliams responded that it would assist in the establishment of site and building design guidelines, e.g., a building shouldn't be "just a box". PB Member Cottrill replied that the PB had the opportunity to review the site and building design during Site Plan Review. Mr. McWilliams opined that guidelines would provide something to measure a plan against and would provide a basis for a conversation with the developer.

Chair Ebel suggested that it might be a question to delete, since there didn't seem to be a ground swell of support. Resident Fulton asked if people were not afraid of something like McDonald's coming into town. She asked how it could be excluded if there were no restrictions. PB Member Hollinger replied that there were regulations regarding "drive-through windows" and sign limits. Resident R. Lavoie opined that it was a valid question and the public might want them. Chair Ebel recommended put Question #9 on the "B-List".

Survey Question #10: PB Member Cottrill recommended deleting the question. PB members agreed.

Survey Question #11: Chair Ebel asked if Colby Point was now protected. Mr. McWilliams responded that he did not recall if there was an easement. PB Member Conly advised that "*Cricenti's*" should be

changed to "*New London Shopping Center*" in item "P". Mr. McWilliams advised that the field referenced in "P" was now zoned for commercial use. PB Member Cottrill asked what the depth of the commercial zone was in that area. Mr. McWilliams replied that it extended beyond the Cricenti house. PB Member Cottrill asked what were the views referred to in item *a. Main Street*. Discussion ensued about the various views from Main Street. Resident R. Lavoie opined that Pleasant Lake should be included as an item. PB Member Hollinger suggested that the item could mention "Kidder Point on Pleasant Lake". Chair Ebel advised that the item was meant to address unprotected property. She asked how the question could refer to the "former King Ridge property". PB Member Cottrill suggested that the large fields along County Road and Tracy Road should also be considered.

Survey Question #12: Mr. McWilliams said that the original survey question received a strong response, and he did not see a need to repeat the question. PB Member Hollinger opined that the town spends a lot of money to acquire land considered to be significant to the character of the town, and it would be nice to be able to state that x% of the population supported the effort. Resident R. Lavoie asked about purchasing land for a proposed trail system. Mr. McWilliams said that land for the proposed trail was to be acquired through landowner contributions.

Survey Question #13: Chair Ebel opined that the issues related to streams had been adequately addressed; therefore, that item should be deleted. PB Member Cottrill said that "*Other*" should also be deleted. Chair Ebel suggested that there could be an opportunity provided at the end of the survey for "*Additional Comments*". She suggested that there should be an item about protecting ridge lines and hillsides and cooperating with other towns to do so. PB Member Cottrill stated his support of Chair Ebel's suggestion. PB members agreed to add hillsides and ridge lines to the list of options.

Survey Question #14: Chair Ebel asked if the town had not passed a law addressing the issue contained in Question #14. Mr. McWilliams replied that it had not. PB Member Cottrill said that "*No Opinion*" should be deleted. PB Member Hollinger recommended deleting all the "*No Opinions*" throughout the survey.

Survey Question #15: PB Members agreed to delete Question #15.

Survey Question #16: Chair Ebel asked what had been done with the data collected in Question #16. Mr. McWilliams responded that it had been incorporated into the Master Plan chapter on Community Services. PB Member Cottrill asked if the data necessitated any action.

Survey Question #17: PB Member Hollinger recommended adding "recreational trail system". Mr. McWilliams opined that the bike path was really separate from the trail system which was intended more for walking than for bicycle riding. Chair Ebel suggested it should indicate "non-motorized usage". It was agreed to make the change from "bike path".

Survey Question #18: PB Members agreed to delete Question #18. Town Administrator Jesse Levine said that she would like the question re-instated.

Survey Question #19: Chair Ebel recommended putting Question # 19 on the "B List". PB Member Hollinger stated that he liked Question #19. PB Member Cottrill asked what if everyone were to say that there was not enough land. Would the town buy more land? Chair Ebel recommended deleting the question. PB members agreed.

Survey Question #20: Chair Ebel said that most of the sidewalks listed had been constructed, although the one on County Road would end at the hospital. She recommended deleting the question. PB members agreed.

Survey Questions #21-#25: Chair Ebel opined that Questions #21-#25 were needed.

Survey Question #22: PB Member Cottrill opined that it would be helpful to know whether the respondent worked in town or out of town. Mr. McWilliams said that there was good information available from the census data.

Survey Question #24: Following discussion it was agreed to change item d. to “30-49 years” and add an item e. “50 and over”.

Survey Question #25: PB Member Cottrill said that more people were working and living longer and the retirement age has really moved upward. He suggested changing item e. to “65-74 years old” and adding an item f. “75 and older”.

Chair Ebel said that she would like to add a question about the educational level of the respondents. Mr. McWilliams advised that it would be possible to cross-tabulate responses, so that the PB would be able to determine what group supports what.

- B.** The PB then turned its attention to consideration of the additional questions suggested by Town Planner Ken McWilliams.

Growth & Development Question #1: Chair Ebel recommended deleting “commercial” in the second line. PB Member Cottrill asked if the issue hadn’t already been covered elsewhere as in Survey Question #5. Resident R. Lavoie said that it was the only place that “regional” was addressed. Mr. McWilliams advised that the question would get at “do you want to grow as a regional hub”. Mr. Lavoie asked why not simply ask the question that way. PB Member Doheny suggested asking the question over a “yes or no” response. Chair Ebel suggested tying it together with prior Question #5. PB Member Cottrill recommended referring to the “greater Kearsarge-Lake Sunapee area” rather than “regional hub”.

Growth & Development Questions #2: PB Member Cottrill opined that the town was already very proactive in working with neighboring communities. PB members agreed to delete Question #2.

Growth & Development Question #3: PB Member Cottrill opined that the question might seem threatening to property owners on Newport Road. Chair Ebel questioned how one could encourage redevelopment in the absence of any guidelines.

Growth & Development Question #4: PB Member Cottrill questioned whether the question addressed a PB issue. He opined that it was a Board of Selectmen issue. PB Member Doheny recommended making the first sentence shorter. PB members decided to delete the first sentence entirely.

Growth & Development Question #5: Chair Ebel opined that if the question were to be retained, it should be placed in the Commercial Zone items. She recommended keeping the question. PB Member Cottrill asked if the issue wasn’t already covered in the 1996 survey question #7. He questioned the reference to salaries. PB members agreed to delete “providing local employment with well paying salaries”.

Housing Table: Chair Ebel opined that the jargon used in the table might not be understood by the public. She cited “accessory structure” and “accessory dwelling unit” as examples. PB Member Cottrill suggested using “attached apartments” and “detached apartments” instead. Chair Ebel questioned what the R-1 District was. She recommended that Mr. McWilliams give more thought to the table.

Housing Table 1.b.: Town Administrator Levine asked if 1.b. meant rent-control. Mr. McWilliams responded that it would be through some housing group. PB Member Hollinger opined that 1.a. through 1.c. needed to be clearer.

Housing Table 1.d.: PB members advised that the item should refer to both the New London and Elkins villages.

Housing Table 1.f.: Chair Ebel asked if the town had land that it could donate for affordable housing. Town Administrator Levine mentioned the Little Common and land off South Pleasant Street in the area of the old sewer system. Resident R. Lavoie suggested that the town could acquire land to donate for affordable housing. The PB agreed to simply state “The Town acquires and donates land for affordable housing.”

Housing Table 1.g.: PB Member Cottrill made a suggestion that “R-1” should be replaced with something more understandable to the public. PB members recommended changing “Zoning” to “Zone”. Chair Ebel

recommended that Mr. McWilliams take the issue of clarity under advisement and figure out how to address it.

Environmental Question: Resident R. Lavoie asked if there were broad support for a trail system, where would the trails be constructed. Mr. McWilliams responded that the system of trails would be developed gradually as areas were developed. Town Administrator Jessie Levine asked the PB what it would do if people didn't like the Conservation Subdivision Design approach. Resident R. Lavoie suggested having some conceptual questions regarding where trails should lead. PB Member Hollinger advised that Recreation Director Chad Denning had some ideas.

Historic Preservation: Town Administrator Levine asked about including a short definition of "historic district". Resident R. Lavoie opined that an historic district could be over-constrained. Chair Ebel read the statement contained in the Vision Statement. She suggested adding some "sites", so that the section would have both the concept and the projected boundaries. Mr. McWilliams asked if the boundaries should be in a separate question. Chair Ebel responded affirmatively.

Energy: Question 1.a. Wind Generator: Town Administrator Levine asked how the college would be classified in Question 1.a. She suggested that the sentence state "individual residence, business, or institution". PB Member Cottrill suggested that there be wind generator maximum heights for private or public generators. Mr. McWilliams responded that the State was looking at things that would preclude towns from limiting wind generator heights. He advised that the town's Energy Committee had been talking about a zoning exception for wind generation. He said that he did not know how to limit wind generators. He said he had no idea how to do it. PB Member Cottrill suggested having "a. 100 feet for individual use and b. 300 feet for business use". Town Administrator Levine suggested that "b." apply to business or institution. Chair Ebel suggested using an asterisk (*) with a comment about the different sizes.

Resident R. Lavoie questioned the use of "permitting" in the question. Chair Ebel suggested using "study" instead. PB Member Cottrill recommended adding "geothermal" as an alternative energy source. Town Administrator Levine advised that it was already possible to do. PB Member Cottrill asked if there should be anything about wood-burning furnaces. Comments were made about the smoke pollution generated by wood-burning furnaces. Mr. McWilliams said that he would re-work the question regarding studying instead of permitting. He opined that if many were already allowed, an item should be eliminated from the list.

Transportation: PB Member Cottrill said that he had been thinking more along the lines of a public transportation system or a van pool service for the elderly and car pooling, rather than more sidewalks. He opined that sidewalk construction was finished.

Water Resources: PB Member Cottrill said that he was very concerned about the amount of salt going into the lakes from salting roads. Town Administrator Levine opined that the town didn't need a survey to determine the effect of road salt. She opined that if the PB thought that Low Impact Development (LID) was a good idea, any survey response would not matter.

PB Member Cottrill said that the town could control the amount of salt used on its roads. He asked how New London could put pressure on the State to use calcium chloride on Interstate 89. Town Administrator Levine related the town's experience with the State regarding its requests for reduced salt on roads. PB Member Cottrill opined that there had to be alternatives to salt. Ms Levine said that the town was already using less salt on its roads. Resident R. Lavoie said that the Lake Sunapee Protective Association was already working on the salt issue.

Mr. Lavoie asked about the adequacy of the water supply. Chair Ebel said that she wondered about the need for regulations re water withdrawal, e.g., bottling plants, even if the town regulations were to overlap with state regulations. She recommended that the town should take action to limit ground water withdrawal.

Diagrams re Development Patterns: PB Member Doheny suggested presenting only the figures and asking respondents to indicate their preference. Town Administrator Levine said that the diagrams should be

placed near the environment question. Ken McWilliams replied that the questions had not yet been sequenced. Chair Ebel suggested that perhaps the development patterns could be merged with “b. Conservation Subdivision Design” in the Environmental section. Ms Levine recommended combining the diagrams with the prior environment question.

Resident R. Lavoie opined that neither example given was really rural. Mr. McWilliams concluded that Question 3 would then not be needed. Resident Fulton said that the sheet didn’t indicate who would be responsible for rural agricultural open space. She opined that there were lots of issues related to the concept. She asked if the open space would be public space. Mr. McWilliams replied that the open space would be owned by the developer or homeowner’s association. He said that it could be farmland or forest. Chair Ebel said that it would be open land.

Chair Ebel asked Town Administrator Jessie Levine about the possibility of having an on-line version of the survey. Ms Levine responded affirmatively and advised that the International City Management organization designed community surveys. PB Member Hollinger asked if the survey could include a certification statement. Resident Fulton suggested that respondents could be required to call to get a number in order to complete the on-line survey. Ms Levine said that the town website would provide a link to the survey.

Town Administrator Levine said that she would like the community center question, Question #18 on the 1996 survey, put back in the survey. She said that she would also like a question about whether respondents supported public (taxpayer) support or private support of a community center, i.e., town financing or private financing. She opined that under town financing, the town would become the driving force. She suggested a two-question format: (1) Do you support the concept of a community center; (2) Should the community center be (a) town financed or (b) privately financed.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

A. The MINUTES of the MARCH 25, 2008 meeting were APPROVED, as circulated.

The **MEETING** was **ADJOURNED** at **9:53 PM**.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith P. Condict, Recording Secretary
New London Planning Board

DATE APPROVED _____

CHAIRMAN _____