

**NEW LONDON PLANNING BOARD
WORK SESSION & REGULAR MEETING
MAY 13, 2008**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Ebel (Chairman), Dale Conly, Celeste Cook, Michael Doheny, Jeff Hollinger, Kenneth McWilliams (Planner), Larry Ballin (Selectmen's Representative), Alternate Michele Holton, and Alternate Deirdre Sheerr-Gross Tom Cottrill arrived at 8:00 PM.

Chair Karen Ebel called the **MEETING TO ORDER** at 7:30 PM. Chair Ebel asked Alternate Michele Holton to sit in for PB Member Tom Cottrill, who was expected to arrive late.

I. ANN HARRISON-LIS ANN'S – Concept Site Plan Review: Change of Use from Restaurant/Tavern (Snyder's) to Retail – Need for Site Plan? (Tax Map 85, Lot 44)

Mary Beth Donegan, Manager of Lis Ann's, said that Lis Ann's had been notified that it needed to move. Ms Donegan said that Lis Ann's wanted to move from the 1500 sq. ft. space in the New London Shopping Center to a 1600 sq. ft. space at 420 Main Street, the former location of Snyder's Tavern. She said that the proposed location would provide retail floor space and a small office.

Ken McWilliams reported that at the meeting with municipal department heads, Fire Chief Jay Lyon had advised that the property owner should maintain the alarm system. He said that Chief of Police Dave Seastrand had advised that delivery trucks should not park so as to block access by other people arriving at the property. Mr. McWilliams pointed out that the change in use from restaurant to retail would decrease required parking from 21 spaces to 7 spaces.

Ms Donegan stated that she had been in discussion with KIMCO re buying Lis Ann's and taking over the rental space when suddenly the talks stopped and the space was rented out from under Lis Ann's. She said they had been notified that Lis Ann's would have to be out by May 31, 2008. She said that no notice had been given.

Chair Ebel asked if Lis Ann's was the only tenant that had been notified in that manner. She said that the PB had heard concerns expressed by other tenants. Ms Donegan replied that Lis Ann's operated on a short lease and was reluctant to sign a five-year lease due to the age of the owner. She opined that KIMCO was only watching the bottom line without giving consideration to other factors. Chair Ebel recommended that the Board of Selectmen contact KIMCO. PB Member Hollinger reminded the PB that KIMCO had originally talked about upgrading the strip mall. Chair Ebel said that the Board of Selectmen could inquire about KIMCO's plans. Ms Donegan said that rumors were flying.

It was **MOVED** (Hollinger) and **SECONDED** (Conly) **THAT NO SITE PLAN REVIEW BE REQUIRED FOR A PROPOSED CHANGE IN USE FROM RESTAURANT/TAVERN TO RETAIL AT 420 MAIN STREET, TAX MAP 85, LOT 44, AS PRESENTED BY LIS ANN'S.** The **MOTION** was **APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II. MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Chair Ebel asked Ken McWilliams, Town Planner, to lead the discussion regarding the review of the re-draft of the Community Survey crafted to solicit information from the public for the Master Plan Update. Chair Ebel asked if the Conservation Commission's comments had been included in the re-draft. Mr. McWilliams responded affirmatively. He also advised that he had worked with Chad Denning, Recreation Director, regarding trails.

Growth & Development: PB Member Ballin asked if there was any way to update the population numbers presented in Question 4. He opined that the 2000 Census data was outdated. Other PB members agreed that more up-to-date numbers would be preferable. Mr. McWilliams said that he would update the numbers.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Question #1: Resident Les Norman opined that some of the items in Question 1 did not apply. He opined that the question asked two things and should be split into two questions. PB Member Sheerr-Gross agreed. PB Member Doheny recommended deleting "apply and" and leaving the remainder of the question as printed. A suggestion was made to separate "commercial goods" and "professional services" in item i. Chair Ebel suggested adding "including health care" in parentheses.

Question #2): PB Member Cook recommending re-ordering the list so that “retirement community” would not be the first item encountered. She suggested that it could be item f.

Town Administrator Jessie Levine recommended deleting “more” in item b.

PB Member Ballin stated that he did not like the wording of the question. He opined that it should be noun-based. Town Administrator Levine suggested deleting the verbs, such as “encourage” and “attract”. PB Member Sheer-Gross recommended asking what the town’s objectives should be instead of what type of town people would like New London to become. Chair Ebel advised that she had in hand a copy of a questionnaire used by the town of Berlin, New Hampshire in which each sentence began with “ing” words.

PB Member Ballin opined that the last two items were leading. He recommended dropping “No” from items i. and j. PB members recommended replacing “No further” with “Limiting” in item i. and replacing “No” with “Restricting” in item j.

Ken McWilliams pointed out that the PB had decided to include the question exactly as stated in the prior community survey in order to track trends. He said that the PB needed to decide whether it wanted to track trends or whether it wanted to revise the questions.

Chair Ebel recommended revising the question to read “indicate how important each of the following objectives is in planning the future of New London over the next 15 years”. Mr. McWilliams said that he would re-work Question #2.

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

Question #3): Town Administrator Levine said that she did not understand item b. PB Member Ballin asked if the question had been taken from the prior survey. Mr. McWilliams responded affirmatively. PB Member Ballin asked if the survey could address commercial growth. Town Administrator Levine opined that on most of the town roads and state roads the strip development mentioned in item c. was “pretty much done”.

PB Member Cottrill arrived. Alternate Holton stepped down.

Zoning Administrator Peter Stanley opined that it was the PB’s function to identify where growth should occur at the least cost to the town. He opined that compromises would have to be made. PB Member Sheerr-Gross asked if the PB wanted to keep item c. PB Member Doheny recommended keeping it as “filler”.

PB Member Ballin asked about eliminating item e. PB members asked what the response rates had been for items c. and e. on the last survey. Mr. McWilliams replied that the item c. received 1% and item e. received 3%.

Chair Ebel opined that the PB needed to know what options people like. Town Administrator Levine opined that they didn’t have any choices because everything had already happened. Chair Ebel said that she would like to retain the question. She said that she wanted input from people about how they feel. She opined that it might guide the PB in drafting the Master Plan. She said that she would like to provide people with an opportunity to respond.

PB Member Sheerr-Gross recommended switching the order of items a. and b. Chair Ebel agreed that items could be re-ordered. PB Member Cook recommended adding something about what “smart growth” is. Ken McWilliams replied that item b. really relied on “smart growth” principles.

Chair Ebel advised that the Berlin questionnaire employed Likert scale rankings of 1-5 or Agree, Disagree, etc. PB Member Sheerr-Gross agreed with that approach and opined that five options should be offered. PB members agreed that Likert scale options should be employed.

PB Member Ballin opined that the town had already evolved and the question needed to be revised. Resident Les Norman opined that “evenly” in item d. seemed to contradict “scattered” in item a. Chair Ebel questioned

whether people would understand the jargon of “concentrate higher density”. Town Administrator Levine suggested using “concentrate residential development”.

Question #4): PB Member Ballin opined that asking if people wanted the town to grow without limits was not an option. PB members agreed to delete the phrase from item a. PB agreed to delete “total” from the question. Zoning Administrator Stanley said that if someone selected item c. Unfavorable, it would be good to know if growth was unfavorable because it was too high or because it was too low.

Town Administrator Levine recommended keeping all related questions and comments together in one section of the survey.

In response to various comments, Chair Ebel explained that the PB had deleted “Other” as an option in all questions. She advised that an opportunity to make comments would be provided at the end of the survey. PB Member Sheerr-Gross opined that someone might forget her/his comment(s) by the end of the survey. PB Members Cook and Doheny asked why not have a comment line after each question.

PB Member Cottrill opined that the question required some guidance, such as “current rate of growth okay as is”, “discourage growth”, “encourage growth”.

Question #5): Town Administrator Levine asked if “pressure to expand” was a given. She suggested asking “how should New London plan?” PB Member Sheerr-Gross opined that the first question should be “should New London expand” before asking how it should expand. Chair Ebel responded that there was pressure from surrounding towns. PB Member Cottrill recommended deleting “the” before “pressure”. Zoning Administrator Stanley suggested asking “should New London expand” and then offering the three options.

Town Administrator Levine said that she would be concerned about trouble with New London’s economy if there were no expansion.

Question #6): Town Administrator Levine advised that part of Elkins was not zoned as commercial. She said the only commercial district was from the chapel to Hillside Drive, so it might be necessary to identify the area. She also pointed out that all references to Lakeside Road should be changed to Parkside Road.

Zoning Administrator Stanley recommended adding an item d. only where municipal water and sewer available. PB members agreed.

Resident Terry Dancy said that at the Master Plan workshops two areas had been discussed. He said those were the area between Seamans Road and Parkside Road and the area along County Road from Newport Road to Little Sunapee Road. PB Member asked for clarification regarding whether the development would be horizontal development behind the existing development. PB members responded in the negative.

PB Member Sheerr-Gross asked if there were any way to include a map to identify the locations. PB Member Cottrill advised that the earlier survey did not have a map. He suggested using landmark identifiers, such as from the Police Station to Peter Christian’s, etc. Chair Ebel said that the PB would work on it.

Question #7): PB Member asked about adding a transportation hub to the list. Chair Ebel suggested including it on page 6 under Transportation.

Question #8): PB deleted

Question #9): Town Administrator Levine suggested adding a question re “should New London *invest in* development of a regional fiber optic system to serve all areas of Town” that would be triggered by a “yes” answer to “should New London continue to *encourage* the development”.

PB Member Cottrill recommended including an explanation of what fiber optic is and how it would benefit the town and the people living in New London. Town Administrator Levine listed benefits of fiber optic. PB Member Cottrill opined that people might not know what the benefits are and recommended that they be explained. Chair Ebel suggested including an explanatory footnote.

Chair Ebel recommended breaking Question #9 into two questions, one regarding *encouraging* development and the other regarding *investing in* development of a regional fiber optic system.

APPEARANCE OF COMMUNITY

Question #10): PB Member Sheerr-Gross recommended that responses for each item be solicited by using a Likert scale.

Question #11): Town Administrator Levine opined that *supporting* protection of scenic views/vistas and *paying for* it were two different questions. Chair Ebel said that the list of properties cited of protection in the existing Master Plan did not state that the town would pay for it. She also advised that Old County Road had been renamed Morgan Hill Road.

PB Member Sheerr-Gross opined that people might not recognize the sites listed. Zoning Administrator Peter Stanley opined that no one could access Kidder Point; therefore, including it was not applicable. PB Member Sheerr-Gross recommended protecting vistas along Pleasant Lake or along Little Lake Sunapee and eliminating references to Kidder Point and Colby Point. Chair Ebel opined that Colby Point should be retained.

Chair Ebel asked if there were properties without scenic vistas that should be protected. PB Member Cottrill responded that the properties listed should be properties that were not already protected. PB Member Sheerr-Gross recommended leaving the question broad. PB members decided to eliminate *vistas* and to ask only about *scenic views*.

Chair Ebel asked Les Norman, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, if the Conservation Commission would review and compile a possible list of properties.

HOUSING

Question #12): Chair Ebel opined that the questions should ask people to rank alternatives rather than simply answer “yes” or “no”. PB members opined that “affordable housing” needed to be defined. PB Member Sheerr-Gross suggested that the PB might want to eliminate “affordable” and ask about housing for people who work in New London, e.g., policemen, teachers, firemen, etc. PB Member Doheny recommended using a Likert scale to solicit responses. Ken McWilliams said that he would re-work the question.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Question #13): Chair Ebel opined that the question should ask people to rank the locations.

Question #14): Chair Ebel opined that the question should ask people to rank the locations. Town Administrator Levine asked what if the Historical Society did not want to cooperate. Chair Ebel recommended deleting “in cooperation with the Historical Society” in Question #13 and “work with the Historical Society” in Question #14.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Question #15): Town Administrator Levine advised that the Town had not purchased all of the properties on the list contained in the existing Master Plan. Chair Ebel opined that there were two questions to be answered: (1) should the Town protect and (2) should the Town spend taxpayer dollars to protect. She recommended that people be asked to rank listed properties. Chair Ebel advised that the PB would ask the Conservation Commission to compile a list of properties for the PB to consider.

Question #16): Resident Terry Dancy opined that people should be asked to rank the options in Question #16.

Question #17): Resident Dancy opined that people would not know what the Conservation Subdivision Design was. Town Administrator Levine said that if the PB thought that the Conservation Subdivision Design was a good idea, why ask the question. PB Member Doheny responded that asking the question would get the

community to buy into the concept. PB Member Cottrill asked if Town Administrator Levine was recommending that the PB delete the question. Ms Levine recommended that both Questions #16 and #17 be deleted.

Question #18): Chair Ebel recommended that the responses be ranked. Following discussion the PB recommended that Questions #17 and #18 be deleted.

Question #19): Chair Ebel said that the option of requiring an alternative layout for a proposed development did not exist. Ken McWilliams responded that the regulations did not include the option for the PB to require it. Town Administrator Levine opined that the issue might be addressed through changes to the Zoning Ordinance.

Question #20): Town Administrator Levine asked if the issue was not already addressed by Question #15c. Chair Ebel, Ken McWilliams, and PB Member Ballin agreed that it was. PB deleted the question.

ENERGY

Question #21): Zoning Administrator Stanley opined that outside wood-burning furnaces could be a huge issue. Chair Ebel opined that the question was too detailed. PB Member Sheerr-Gross suggested asking people to respond to “alternate energy, such as” instead of ranking a list. Chair Ebel recommended leaving the list in a separate question. She said the question was regarding should zoning address. PB Member Doheny opined that there was a difference between commercial use and individual use. PB Member Ballin recommended deleting items i. and j. He said the town did not regulate geothermal energy. Resident Terry Dancy questioned where there would be adequate water to allow for a hydroelectric generator. He recommended deleting items f. and g. Chair Ebel recommend eliminating item h. *Commercial Hydroelectric Generator* as well.

TRANSPORTATION

PB Member Cook asked where a local hub should be located if available public transportation were to expand.

Question #22): PB Member Ballin recommended striking “in Manchester and Boston”. PB Members Hollinger and Cottrill opined that the survey should ask if people support expanding bus service. PB Member Sheerr-Gross opined that the PB needed to study the issue. Town Administrator Levine agreed that first the public had to be asked if it wanted to expand bus service.

Resident Robert Lavoie opined that people might not understand how to expand to what destinations. Chair Ebel advised that the PB would have to work on the wording of the question to cover both regional and local transportation.

Question #23): Following discussion, “developing” was replaced with “studying”.

PB members recommended adding a question about support for development of a local transportation hub.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES AND RECREATION

Question 27): PB Member Cook asked about including a connection from town to the Elkins Beach. Chair Ebel said that could be added to the list.

Question 28): PB members agreed that responses should be ranked.

Question 29): Town Administrator Levine said that the last survey had provided choices. Chair Ebel advised that the PB had decided to eliminate the choices. Ms Levine recommended doing all the options again. Chair Ebel responded that if the information was useful, the choices could be reinstated. Ken McWilliams read the question contained in the last survey. Town Administrator Levine said that she would think out the issue.

Chair Ebel asked Town Administrator Levine if she wanted to include a “pay-to-throw” question.

Resident Robert Lavoie noted that the survey was inconsistent insofar as only some of the questions asked the public if the Town should pay for something. Chair Ebel advised that the Berlin survey asked if people would support using tax dollars to support X, with X being an entire list of things.

PB Member Conly asked about including a question to solicit information regarding which conservation initiatives the public was in favor of supporting.

Question #30: PB Member Ballin stated that the educational system was not within the domain of the PB. He said the information might be interesting, but not actionable.

SURVEY DISTRIBUTION: Ken McWilliams advised that the last survey had been distributed by mailing one copy to each household. Town Administrator Jessie Levine said that using the electronic "Survey Monkey" system (information available at www.surveymonkey.com) the PB could post a notice to eligible individuals urging completion of the survey on line, but printed copies could also be made available at the town offices. Chair Ebel suggested that a postcard could also be provided by which people could request a printed version.

Town Administrator Levine said that she did not know what the PB's budget was for conducting the survey. She advised that distributing the *Link* costs over \$1,000 per issue. She said she didn't know what the cost would be for a document with as many pages as the Master Plan survey.

PB Member Ballin asked if people could be encouraged to use the computers at the library and have library employees available to assist when necessary. PB Member Cook suggested that printed copies could be made available at the library. Town Administrator Levine agreed that printed copies could be available at the library and at the transfer station, as well as at the town offices.

PB Member Cottrill asked what the response rate had been for the previous Master Plan survey. Zoning Administrator Stanley said that there had been a 25% response rate.

Town Administrator Levine said that it would be possible to compile a survey distribution list by using a combination of the list of property owners and the list of registered voters. A question arose about how to include non-residents who own or lease businesses in New London. PB Member Sheerr-Gross asked if it would be possible to color code responses. Discussion ensued regarding how to control responses. PB Member Doheny suggested using color-coded postcards. Ken McWilliams asked how the PB would be able to identify who the business people were. Town Administrator Levine suggested that business people might be sent a separate survey. PB members endorsed that idea. PB Member Cottrill asked what procedure would be required in order to permit more than one response from a single address.

Chair Ebel advised that UNH provided some survey services at no cost. PB Member Ballin said that UNH had conducted a survey for Fitzwilliam, but he didn't know if it was free. He suggested that UNH might have an intern who would come up to work with the PB.

Chair Ebel asked about the suggested postcard design and whether the PB should pay for having the completed surveys returned. Resident Robert Lavoie asked if the Master Plan survey would overload the Town's computer system. Town Administrator Levine replied that responses to a [surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) would go to a web address, not to the Town's computer system.

Chair Ebel noted that Robert Bryant, Lake Sunapee Area Chamber of Commerce, was in the audience and asked him if he would like to make any comments or suggestions. Mr. Bryant responded that he would send the PB a copy of the postcard used by the Chamber. He also said that he would forward some comments relating to survey question #5.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

A. The MINUTES of the APRIL 22, 2008 meeting were APPROVED, as amended.

The MEETING was ADJOURNED at 9:30 PM.

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

DATE APPROVED _____

CHAIRMAN _____