

Swans Comprehensive Planning Committee  
Minutes  
April 17, 2018

Present: Bill Banks, Keith Harriton, Christal Applin, Dexter Lee, Sonny Sprague, Sarah Lane and Sue Estler for the Committee and guests: Jennifer Helman, Jil Lewis, and Ben Tongue. Excused: Sonja Philbrook.

Christal Applin called the meeting to order and read the minutes from the last meeting. Keith raised a concern re: interpretation of his comments in the minutes and Sue proposed a revision. Keith Harriton moved and Bill Banks seconded approval of the minutes as amended. All approved.

- In the absence of a volunteer for the position, Sue Estler agreed to take minutes for the meeting.

- Suggestions for adding new committee members: David Lemoine, Belva Staples, Abby Dy, Carrie Joyce, Tom or Bev McAloon, Jennifer Helman and Jason Matthews.

Review of outreach efforts and effectiveness of questions:

There was discussion re: the "Dream Big" elaboration of one of the questions with some suggesting it encourage thinking "outside the box" while others felt it led far afield. The committee agreed to leave it in.

Sarah Lane went to MAC and the Women's Group, Sonja did the ENTS, and Christal went to the Educational Society. – (my notes do not reflect outcome of: Review "Questionnaire for Committees" - is the questionnaire giving us the feedback we hoped it would, or at least useful feedback? Do the questions need to be reworded?)

- Review tier 1 and tier 2 Outreach – Bill Banks will go to Underwater Taxi, Atlantic Apartments, and Kents Wharf; Christal Applin to the Mill Pond Park Comm, Fisherman's Coop, and Church of God, and Keith Harriton will go to the Baptist Church.

- Discussion affirmed the use of Survey Monkey for the survey in addition to offering paper copies to those who want it. The \$99/month cost allowed no limits on the numbers of questions, or number of responses. It also provided for 24 hour customer service.

- Sue: Reported re: conversation with Evan Richert in Orono (One of the authors of the Comprehensive Planning Manual): His response was comprehensive, and well focused with many useful pieces of advice both in considering our process and what to consider in hiring a consultant. See attached notes. Committee members inquired whether Richert himself would be a candidate for consultant. Sue agreed to follow up with him. /

- The committee reviewed the second proposal from Anne Kreig that lowers the cost to \$10,000. Sonja indicated that she will research Anne further contacting the towns with which she worked and will report back at the May meeting.

- There was discussion re: hiring a graduate student from a related graduate program..In Sue's interview with Evan Richert noted that relevant grad programs in the state no longer exist and that a student will have limited skill sets for the range of tasks involved. Both Keith and Ben Tongue spoke to possibilities out of state. Sue spoke, as a faculty member who supervised interns over the years, re: the challenges

for a student to hit the ground running given the range of skills and knowledge required for this particular role. There was no motion resulting from the discussion.

- Volunteers to call the three companies that Anne Krieg recommended so we can have a few proposals to choose from. Keith agreed to follow up with Jane Lafleur, at the Community Institute, Judy Colby-George, Principal, Spatial Alternatives and with Bob Faunce at Sue will follow-up with Evan Richert and the Island Institute.

- Sonja will research Anne and contact the towns she worked with and report back at the May meeting

- Discussion of topics for vision meetings was deferred until July after completion of soliciting preliminary information and getting a consultant on board.

- The school has been reserved for the evening of October 10th for a vision meeting

The Meeting adjourned at 7:30 and the next meeting is scheduled for May 16..

Sue Estler Notes from conversation with Evan Richert  
Former Director of the ME State Planning Office  
And Town of Orono Planning Director  
April 16, 2018

I gave background on the Swans Island Comprehensive Planning effort and a little about the island and the community. I indicated our interest was around identifying needs related to a consultant and process for finding one/some.

The meat of it re: a consultant and costs:

Identify your driving issues: e.g. economic development, socio-economic disparities, community finance and services, economic diversification etc..

There are 3 or 4 major expense centers for the project that could involve a consultant.

1) **Public outreach and involvement:**

- a. Can it be done by volunteers or better by a consultant to surface issues and to challenge people to really try to focus= on problems and opportunities? (he noted that there is a danger of polarization in going too soon to discussion of solutions vs. in depth understanding and agreement on the issues. There are skills that a professional, especially one with experience, can bring to teasing out and reflecting on information yielded in a group setting.

2) **Inventory analysis** (to inform growth management strategies) (all those categories)

- a. Many systems come together and overlap: e.g. economic, geographic, environmental, natural resources; basic level e.g. mapping, fisheries, available in existing sources e.g. state, island institute (consultant could help id and solicit vs. doing it all)
- b. Economic analysis is a big one: demographics, socioeconomic data, etc.
- c. All require some level of documentation.
- d. Emphasis will depend in part on the number and nature of core issues that appear to be facing the town.
- e. Data produced in these inventories central to understanding problems and opportunities in the town moving forward in a planful manner.

3) **Developing policies/strategies** to address the issues and opportunities facing the town

- a. Lots of work and the coming together with committee, outreach outcomes, deep thinking regarding this place, its history, infrastructure etc. are there analogous communities that might inform our thinking through their experience?
- b. Translation of inventories and public input into implications, policy recommendations

4) **Production**

- a. What do we want the report to look like?
- b. Compilation and write up
- c. How to provide access: Hard copy and digital

If contracting it all out really expensive, especially with travel etc. could easily run \$50,000. If committee willing to do lots or some of the legwork, and issues more limited (we're not a large city). "Community driven plans can be quite good."

Team approach would involve working with someone like Anne, who has experience, with Anne doing overall coordination, facilitation of large meetings, and producing final document. With inventory coming from multiple sources. Committee members documenting things like municipal services, island assets, history etc. Consultant working with committee re: policies and strategies.

Wrap up: His approach

Important: public forums, public hearing, planning board meetings, meetings with local groups: treat them as experts...

Have committee/consultants among themselves get some factfinding done to ID issues and opportunities. don't go public too soon, before having a sense of the issues.

•What he does with public outreach:

**1<sup>st</sup> forums:** Issues and opportunities ONLY. NO SOLUTIONS (even includes a sign) Solutions are polarizing, people start labeling one another, makes it hard to come together later when folks are wedded to a particular solution vs. working thru a problem together and consider a range of solutions and the trade-offs associated with them. If you can't agree on issues and causes, what are the facts, e.g. re; housing, natural resources etc.?

First forums: "help us understand these issues and what's driving them" Later we focus problems and opportunities

**Second round of forums:** "Do we have it right? (in identifying problems/issues)

THEN, start talking about how to address them. What are trade-offs? With each proposed solution (to give a dose of reality)

DRAW ON folks' experience and knowledge...they'll have important perspective

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•By way of background, I indicated we were working with a proposal from Anne Krieg of the Hancock County Planning Office and had a suggestion to consider a student intern.

He knew Anne and while I didn't put him on the spot for a reference he indicated he knew her, she had good experience though he'd not seen plans she'd worked on, and he felt she'd bring familiarity to the project given experience as Bar Harbor Director of Planning.

Re: a student intern, he pretty quickly indicated problems: the only programs in the state that would have been suitable have been discontinued. Related programs e.g. natural resource economics would only address a portion of the skill set typically required.

He spoke highly of prospects for parts of the project which could be addressed through the resources of the Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Island Institute. He thought the island institute might have a pool of qualified consultants with appropriate expertise and experience especially re: marine and fisheries related issues—(he said go there first).

