

Natick 360
Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



Strategic Planning Oversight Committee
Minutes * March 21, 2007

Present

Terri Evans, at-large member
John Heerwagen, at-large member
David Parish Co-Chair, designated by the Board of Selectmen
George Richards, designated by the Planning Board
Craig Ross, Co-Chair, designated by the Finance Committee
Harlee Strauss, at-large member

Absent

Rosemary Driscoll, designated by School Committee
Matthew Gardner, designated by the Conservation Commission

Consultants Present

Phillip Blackerby, Blackerby Associates (by telephone)

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. EST by the Co-Chair, Mr. Ross, in the Ed Dlott Meeting Room, 2nd Floor Town Hall, Natick, MA 01760. A quorum was present.

Item 1. Approval of Minutes: Mr. Parish moved to modify the draft minutes of February 21, 2007, and to approve those minutes as modified. Mr. Richards seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 5-0-0 to approve the minutes of February 21, 2007 as modified.

Regarding the minutes of March 7, 2007, Mr. Heerwagen asked to add language about business forum Friday, April 13, 2007, at 8:00 a.m. at the Morse Institute Library. The Committee decided to table these minutes to a future meeting, and to work out the appropriate language in the meantime.

Mr. Parish moved to approve the minutes of March 12, 2007, Mr. Heerwagen seconded the motion, and the Committee voted to approve minutes 3-0-3; as the motion did not pass, the Committee will take up these minutes at a future meeting.

Item 2. Phase III Update:

March 12 meeting nailed down approach for soliciting input from sponsoring boards and committees. Mr. Ross summarized the Natick 360 process, with emphasis on the Phase 3 activities, including the June 8-10 Strategic Choices weekend.

Email list is growing; last email was opened by largest number so far; click-rate was also very high. Seventeen members of the public have started filling out the survey with specific ideas how to help Natick achieve its vision.

Item 3. Coordination with Sponsoring Boards

The Committee considered the timetable, and asked members to contact members of their representative boards and committees to urge them to provide their input through the Survey Monkey survey facility. About six of the 41 board and committee members have logged on and begun providing input.

Item 4. Update on Community-at-Large Posting

Fred Witte had to resign after being appointed Town Comptroller. A notice for applications for a replacement has been posted, and Mr. Ross urged members of the public to consider applying. One application has been received, and another individual has indicated considering applying. A letter of interest is all that is required. Committee would like to see a large pool of applicants; may consider appointing alternates if the applicant pool is sufficiently large.

Committee may not meet at the regularly scheduled time of 6:30 p.m. on April 4, due to scheduled meetings with the sponsoring boards and committees. The Committee will take this scheduling concern under advisement.

Item 5. Update on Natick High School sessions

Mr. Gardner met several times with social studies classes at Natick High School in the last two weeks. He has extensive notes, which he will share with the Committee members. The Committee thanks the High School for its help and cooperation.

Item 6. Focus on Natick

Flyers have been distributed around town promoting the Focus on Natick photography exhibit. Members of the public are encouraged to participate. Photos will be displayed at TCAN on April 28. Go to TCAN web site www.natickarts.org. Gallery section or www.natickarts.org/natickphotos/. Photos can be current or historic; anything that captures people's perceptions about Natick. Deadline is March 30. Photos may be submitted on-line or at TCAN offices.

Architects working through KidsConnect and Natick Center Associates to teach kids about modeling and design, KidsDesign, about what Natick Center should look like.

Item 7. Strategic Choices Weekend, June 8-10

Public invited to Kennedy School to give opinions on priorities of strategic choices. Each item will have costs associated with each of the strategic choices. We had 327 people attend in October; would like to have all 327 return, and bring two friends, so that we would get nearly 1,000 participants. Committee plans to do the same publicity activities as last time, and consider additional activities.

- Reach out to Natick Center Associates.
- Reach out to people recreating during Memorial Day weekend.
- Opening of little league season.
- High School graduation is a big event the first weekend in June.
- We were too late to get into the Senior Center newsletter; look for their publication schedule.
- Election Day is next Tuesday, March 27.
- Have already submitted an item for the Town newsletter.

- Town Meeting is another opportunity to provide notices.
- Be more active in passing out information at train stations.
- Backpack notices earlier and more frequent.
- We did get on cable TV, and we should set that up again.

Committee was rushed, due to late start, in October. Now have about 10 weeks, so may try to do things that the Committee did not have time to do then.

Committee discussed the design for the weekend. Anticipate a keynote speaker for Friday evening, and a series of 2-hour workshops for Saturday and Sunday.

Item 8. Community Development Committee housing conference

Committee decided to table this issue; status of the conference is unclear.

Item 9. Other Business

Committee will be sure to invite business sponsors to attend the Strategic Choices Weekend.

Business forum is April 13, 2007, at 8:00 a.m. in the Morse Institute Library. Natick businesses are encouraged to participate in the forum to help with ideas for how Natick can achieve its vision. Interested businesses may contact Mr. Ross for more information. The Committee will deal with the logistics if many people show up to participate.

Congregational Church is planning a strategic planning process, starting in late March, and would like a Natick 360 representative to speak; Mr. Parish has volunteered. Other groups that may want a volunteer speaker from Natick 360 should contact Mr. Ross; Committee members are happy to speak to groups to report on what is going on with Natick 360.

Fundraising: Three grant applications are outstanding totaling \$20,000. If all are successful, the Committee would exceed its fundraising goal.

Chris Bradley, Town of Natick Purchasing Officer, has indicated that a full bidding process is not necessary for a survey firm, if a firm is selected that the Town has used previously.

Ms. Evans moved to adjourn, Ms. Strauss seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 6-0-0. to adjourn. The Committee adjourned at 7: 50 p.m.