

Natick 360
Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



Strategic Planning Oversight Committee
Minutes * May 2, 2007

Present

Rosemary Driscoll, designated by School Committee
Terri Evans, at-large member
Matthew Gardner, designated by the Conservation Commission
John Heerwagen, at-large member
Bill Mayhew, at-large alternate 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
Andres Rochwerger, at-large member
Harlee Strauss, at-large member

Absent

None

Consultants Present

Phillip Blackerby, Blackerby Associates (by telephone)

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. EST by the Co-Chair, Mr. Ross, in the School Committee Training Room, 3rd Floor, Town Hall, Natick, MA 01760. A quorum was present.

Item 1. Minutes

Action item (a): Mr. Ross will circulate minutes to the Committee members. They are all posted on the project web site, at www.BlackerbyAssoc.com/Natick/.

Item 2. Invoices

The Committee considered invoice no. 07-012 from Blackerby Associates, Inc., in the amount of \$8,550.00, for April project management and facilitation. Ms. Strauss moved to approve the invoice, Mr. Richards seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 8-0-0 to approve the motion.

Item 3. Coordination with Sponsoring Boards

a. Update on status of Phase III document

Planning Board met last Wed. April 28th; they are receptive to the document; Mr. Richards will follow-up tomorrow with emails, to address some questions before the Planning Board considers the report on Wednesday, May 9.

School Committee: Ms. Driscoll met with new Chair, who was receptive to the Strategic Options report; he wanted to be more general in the language of the goals, with examples of more specific actions. Ms. Driscoll drafted alternative language for the Committee to review. Regarding the Phase 1 report, School Committee members are concerned about the conclusions, and some data are inconsistent with other sources; the School Committee will consider accepting the document on Monday, May 7, with a caveat that they do not accept the conclusions. The SPOC members expressed no objection to acceptance with caveat. Mr. Ross will attend for Ms. Driscoll.

Board of Selectmen: Mr. Ross met with new Chair, who suggested some minor language changes; she noted that this is not a final document, but is a first round, and as such the document was well-received. The Board of Selectmen will consider the document Monday, May 7.

Finance Committee: Mr. Ross met with the Chair and also discussed the Phase 1 report. The Chair is stepping off the Finance Committee soon. A new Moderator will likely be appointed Monday, who will then name the new Finance Committee Chair, expected to be Rick Jennett. The Finance Committee will consider the Strategic Options report on Tuesday, May 8.

Conservation Commission will take up the Strategic Options report tomorrow, Thursday, May 3.

All the boards and committees will likely have minor changes to the document. All those changes will be incorporated into the next version of the document that the boards and committees will see later this month.

Item 4. Strategic Options Workshops Weekend June 8-10

a. Review of Proposed Format

Mr. Blackerby reviewed the draft outline of the Strategic Options Workshops Weekend events.

Questions:

How will you summarize from the small group and large group reports to a single report? Mr. Blackerby responded that the key assumption is that a vote for a small group's report is a vote for all of the items in that small group's report. All reports are arrayed in a single worksheet, showing the number of votes for each report and for each item in each report.

Rep. Linsky has had some success in getting more State money added to the State budget for local aid. Also, the impact of Mall on property tax could be much larger than anticipated. Consequently, an override next spring may not be necessary, or may not be as large as previously estimated.

Order of Friday evening event: put speaker closer to the start, and have audience Q&A closer to the speaker.

Concern that too much time spent on process and background; be efficient in process and background, to get to the substance quickly.

Get the full document out to the registrants as quickly as possible after board and committee acceptance at the end of May, hopefully before Memorial Day weekend.

Emphasize that Natick is not unique in its financial situation; all other Towns have endured the same situation; it is not due to government mismanagement, but rather to structural influences.

Suggestion that the raffle tickets be distributed Friday night, but the raffle be held Saturday.

Will the detailed items under the goals be presented? Yes, they will be in the detailed document; we will be able to receive input on the detailed items, but want to focus people's attention on the goal level.

In general, the Committee felt the process is on the right track.

b. Keynote Speaker

Governor won't let us know for another two weeks, which will be too late for the publicity. Some members suggested putting "(invited)" after his name on the agenda. The list of suggestions was very long.

The purpose of the keynote speaker is to attract attention and legitimacy to the strategic planning process, and to put the *Natick 360* strategic planning process on other people's agenda. *Action Item (b)*: The Committee decided to focus on Doug Rubin, Governor's Chief of Staff and Natick resident, to get (a) the Governor, (b) the Lt. Governor, (c) Mr. Rubin himself, or (d) another member of the Governor's Cabinet to be the keynote speaker. Mr. Ross and Mr. Parish will contact Mr. Rubin.

c. Publicity

Action item from the previous meeting was for everyone to send an email to someone asking what they can do to take on one of the tasks.

Action Item (c): The Committee went through all the items on the "Lead-up Schedule" to assign tasks. Ms. Evans recorded the assignments. An emphasis was on the events at which Committee Members will distribute flyers. Committee members volunteered to recruit a representative from each Precinct to contact all Town Meeting members and urge them to attend.

Kids Connect will be presenting their model for Natick Center on the first night of Town Meeting.

Registration incentive prize will be four tickets to Red Sox game against Anaheim in August.

The Committee decided to remove all sponsors from banner, and find other ways to acknowledge the sponsors.

Blackerby Associates will be responsible for all written materials and dots. Packet assembly party will be scheduled for Wednesday evening, June 6, at 6:30 p.m.

Item 5. RFP for Community Survey

The RFP, with a budget not to exceed \$24,500, has been distributed. Two firms have expressed interest so far: Lynne Sweeny of Needham (real estate planner), and ETC Institute of Olathe, KS. List of questions has been received from Ms. Sweeny today; responses will be next week. The final RFP will be circulated to Committee Members. RFP does ask for unit cost if an additional \$5,000 becomes available.

Item 6. Focus on Natick Update

Exhibit is up at TCAN. Reception will be May 24. Newsletter will be distributed soon. Wide variety of photographs were entered; the exhibit is very impactful.

Item 7. Other Business

Mr. Heerwagen sent out a letter to the business community asking for contributions, and got several positive responses.

“MetroFutures, Making the Boston Region Greater” meeting was attended by Mr. Ross and Mr. Parish; it was about planning, much of which ties into regional development of key centers, restructuring municipal finance; focus on education and expanding secondary education to populations not planning to attend college; consistent with Natick values and vision. Not clear where it will lead, but it has gained a lot of attention and visibility. *Natick 360* was discussed as a model for civic planning; future will happen whether you plan for it or not.

Ms. Driscoll moved to adjourn, Mr. Heerwagen seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 9-0-0 to approve the motion. The Committee adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Summary of action items noted above:

- a. Mr. Ross will circulate minutes to the Committee members.
- b. Mr. Ross and Mr. Parish will contact Mr. Rubin, Governor’s Chief of Staff, for assistance in scheduling a keynote speaker.
- c. Committee members accepted assignments related to publicity for the Strategic Options Workshops Weekend, including distribution of flyers, and contacting members of Town Meeting.