

Natick 360

Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.

Strategic Planning Oversight Committee Minutes * May 21, 2008



Present

Rosemary Driscoll, designated by School Committee
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
Andres Rochwerger, at-large member
Craig Ross, Co-Chair, designated by the Finance Committee
Harlee Strauss, at-large member

Absent

Terri Evans, at-large member
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. EDT by the Co-Chair, Mr. Ross, in the Community Room at the Natick Police Station, Natick, MA 01760. A quorum was present.

Item 1. Review Final Recommendations to Sponsoring Boards document

Mr. Ross led the discussion of the "Final Recommendations to Sponsoring Boards" document. Committee members made a variety of suggestions and revisions to the document which will be circulated to the sponsoring boards and committees. The liaisons agreed to bring the document to their respective boards and ask to have the document included as an agenda item at the boards' earliest convenience. A motion to accept the Final Recommendations document (with all changes) was made by Mr. Heerwagen, seconded by Mr. Richards, and the Committee voted to accept the motion 8-0-0.

Item 2. Discussion of Suggestions for Future Strategic Planning Process

All members of the Committee offered suggestions for improvement of future strategic planning processes undertaken by the Town of Natick. About a dozen suggestions were made which will be made part of the Committee's documents for use when the process is replicated in five years' time:

1. Shift the balance of time and resources to allow adequate attention to Phase 4 (Phase 4 seemed out of balance relative to earlier phases.)
2. Include a public forum at the end of the process to provide input to final strategic plan.
3. The timeframe may need to be expanded to a full two-year process (versus 18 months).
4. Consider shortening Phase 1 since much of the preliminary work can be carried over or simply updated.

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5. Phase 2 can be more efficient because of all the foundation work done on developing the Vision and Value statements.
6. Consider adding enough to the budget to fund a community organizer/advocate whose responsibility would be to coordinate all community engagement efforts.
7. Include more expert assistance in developing strategic options.
8. Involve members of the sponsoring boards as part of the actual oversight committee to create more ownership of the process.
9. Work to make the different facilitators more consistent in how small group sessions are implemented.
10. The community survey was an extremely beneficial aspect of the process.
11. The Phase 3, developing and costing out of strategic options as a way to choose among options in the facilitated forum process; could have been stronger use of the workshop, to result in fewer actions and better choices.
12. The survey was very beneficial in bringing it all back together, and helped address the weakness in #11 above.

Item 3. Review and Approval of Website

Mr. Rochwerger and Mr. Mayhew led the discussion of the Natick 360 website. Mr. Rochwerger assured the Committee that all received input will be consolidated and submitted to Mr. LeFrancois, the town's Director of Information Technology. Mr. Rochwerger was asked to express the Committee's gratitude for Mr. LeFrancois' assistance over the past months in facilitating the migration of the website over to the Town of Natick.

The Committee approved publishing the website with the changes discussed during the meeting.

Item 4. Update on Town-wide Final Mailing

Mr. Ross updated the Committee on the planned town-wide mailing to distribute a four-page summary document of the final Natick 360 Strategic Plan. Mr. Ross has secured permission to use the Town of Natick's bulk mailing permit, saving a significant amount on postage. It is expected that the total printing and mailing cost will deplete the remaining funds donated to the Natick 360 process. Mr. Ross assured the Committee that all outstanding bills have been paid and there are no outstanding liabilities.

Item 5. Review and Approve Final Meeting Minutes

Ms. Driscoll read the minutes of the final meeting of the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee, May 21, 2008. Ms. Strauss moved to accept the minutes as read, seconded by Mr. Parish, and the Committee voted the motion unanimously, 8-0-0.

Item 6. Vote to Dissolve the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee

Mr. Rochwerger move to dissolve the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee, seconded by Mr. Heerwagen, and the Committee voted the motion unanimously, 8-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8PM.