

Natick 360
Honoring Our Past. Planning Our Future.



Strategic Planning Oversight Committee
Minutes * August 15, 2007

Present

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

Rosemary Driscoll, designated by School Committee
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 6:34 p.m. EDT 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. Minutes

The Committee considered the minutes of August 1, 2007. Mr. Heerwagen moved to approve the minutes as drafted, Mr. Mayhew seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 4-0-3 to approve the motion.

Item 2. Invoices

The Committee considered invoice 07-018 from Blackerby Associates for \$1,458.58 for expenses related to the June 8-10, 2007 Strategic Choices event. Mr. Richards moved to approve the invoice, Ms. Strauss seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 7-0-0 to approve the motion.

Item 3. Communication with Sponsoring Boards

Mr. Richards will appear in Planning Board August 29 to coordinate the Board's schedule for next several events.

The Board of Selectmen will take up the Phase 1 document on Monday, August 20; the Board is on board for the revised schedule, and will meet September 20 to consider strategic priorities.

The Finance Committee is also on board for the revised schedule, and will meet September 18 to consider strategic priorities.

Item 4. Strategic Plan Outline Draft and Instructions

In the September meetings, facilitators will guide Board and committee members to use the draft template, but participants are free to deviate from template if they need to. Use the graphic in the survey report (draft pages 7-10) as a key starting point, but the result may not look at all like the graphic. The point is that the board and committee members own whatever they decide to put in the plan, even if they focus on only two or three areas. Additional guidance should be simplicity and cohesiveness. The standard is that if they expect to allocate resources to something, it should probably be in the plan. Not everything in the plan will get funded, but if they are going to try to apply resources, it should be in the plan. Facilitators should ask, “What do you see as the priorities, and where do you see time and effort being spent?” and give participants some examples to think about (from Fountain Hills, or from Conservation Commission).” Facilitators should also ask participants: “Think about how these items tie back to the value and vision statements, so we can document that.” *Action item:* Distribute a worksheet in advance through the chairs of the boards and committees, available by Labor day (Blackerby).

Mr. Heerwagen moved to approve the draft strategic plan outline with additional introductory materials, Mr. Rochwerger seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 7-0-0 to approve the motion.

Item 5. Community Survey Draft

The random sample was almost 1,200 (1,192) responses, against a target of 800, which reduces the margin of error. Also about 100 responded to the “self-selected (volunteer) online sample.” The two samples are remarkably consistent; their differences were informative; for example, (page 11) re: senior center, random sample is 12%; self-selected sample is 28%. *Action items:* Ask Chris Tatham of ETC Institute to (a) provide a comparison of demographic information to Census data. (b) Present the random sample data in a separate section from the self-selected sample data, and describe the random sample survey methodology; in an introduction, describe the process by which people were invited to respond to the self-selected sample, and the composition of that self-selected sample. (c) Some of the labels also need to be fixed, to more accurately reflect the language from the survey instrument; for example, page 6 label about public safety. (d) Guide to interpretation, with description of margin of error of the random sample. (e) On page 3, why does self-selected sample not reflect choices one through four. (f) Clarify language about age of respondent and age groups of household members. (g) Highlight items of note that are statistically meaningful. (Ross)

A conference call with Mr. Tatham will be scheduled in the next week or so, when members of boards and committees will be able to ask questions and get answers from Mr. Tatham. He will be able to come and give a presentation, but not until September, and in a public forum. Board and Committee members who want to get an early peek at the information may participate in the conference call. So long as no quorum of any Committee is on-line at any time, this conference call would meet the requirements of the open meetings law. ETC will be asked to auto-dial the people who responded to the survey to announce the September forum, and to hold the forum at Wilson Middle School auditorium. Boards and committees do not have to approve the report.

Item 6. Warrant Article for Fall Town Meeting

Deadline is this Friday to put something on the warrant for Town Meeting; Town Moderator and Town Administrator recommend adding an item for the warrant. Proposed language is:

To hear and act upon an interim report of the Natick 360 Strategic Planning Oversight Committee.

Mr. Heerwagen moved to approve the warrant language, Mr. Mayhew seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 7-0-0 to approve the motion.

Item 7. Natick Days Discussion

The Committee discussed ways to use Natick Days as an opportunity to promote the later survey presentation event. Need four volunteers, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Expecting 6,000 attendants. Committee members discussed different ways to present information in this type of forum. Include on the flyer a notice of the public meeting presenting the survey report and a link to a web version of the final survey report. *Action item:* Mr. Rochwerger and Mr. Parish will organize and execute the Committee's presence at Natick Days.

Item 8. Other Business

The next meeting will be in the School Committee meeting room, 3rd floor, Town Hall.

Mr. Parish moved to adjourn, Mr. Richards seconded the motion, and the Committee voted 7-0-0 to adjourn. The committee adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Summary of Action Items

Distribute a worksheet in advance through the chairs of the boards and committees, available by Labor day (Blackerby).

Ask Chris Tatham of ETC Institute to (a) provide a comparison of demographic information to Census data. (b) Present the random sample data in a separate section from the self-selected sample data, and describe the random sample survey methodology; in an introduction, describe the process by which people were invited to respond to the self-selected sample, and the composition of that self-selected sample. (c) Some of the labels also need to be fixed, to more accurately reflect the language from the survey instrument; for example, page 6 label about public safety. (d) Guide to interpretation, with description of margin of error of the random sample. (e) On page 3, why does self-selected sample not reflect choices one through four. (f) Clarify language about age of respondent and age groups of household members. (g) Highlight items of note that are statistically meaningful. (Ross)

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