

Committee members in attendance: Don, Jean, John M., Ken, Sara (scribe).
Guests: Clem, Travis (from Nitro trailers).

Discussion on stakeholder engagement:

The cmte. has heard (much, recently) from folks who are not in favor of planning in general or do not want any restriction of any kind on their property (both existing zoning and codes AND any additional possib). There is some consensus around the belief that we have now sufficiently reached the pockets of the population that wish to be engaged. For example- there was a “first wave” of participants in visioning session, surveys, etc. a “second wave” has occurred with folks who may be: 1. New to the concept of planning, in general, and our planning process in particular, 2. Feeling left out of the conversation, 3. Are upset because they have been misinformed about the goals or contents of the plan and are either fearful or angry (ex. “they will force you to paint your house a certain color no matter where you live”). The forums and a forth-coming mailer are designed to meet the needs of this wave. We feel comfortable that there is not a “third wave” out there- but will continue w/ multi-media outreach efforts through completion of process.

Further Stakeholder Engagement:

How exactly will we get feedback? Mail survey, in person, etc? Hard to engage new audiences (see above, conversation for full sense of conversation). Have we reached the limit of folks who will be engaged?

Limitations:

Not all residents necessarily, doesn't reach renters (although they do pay rent but not directly), may not be voters.

A side note: after a cmte member spent time talking to over 50 individual residents, he still thinks that planning, districts, and zones are time-tested and Unity shouldn't be an exception. People may not want to move to / live in areas that there are restrictions

Discussion on FLUP revisions: city limits & walkability

Cmte needs to be locking in some small details for the purpose of getting written draft out and getting detailed feedback. Feedback is great- but need to step back, collect current feedback, re-draft- and then re-share.

Cmte member: There are two ways of flexing: kinds of retail, scope of down town . discussion on “city limits.”

- Potential “city limit” on north side – 220 intersection w/ 202- blinking light
- Potential limit on the way to LeeLynn Dr. (old Chase property, far side of Roberts residential development and include Larry Ward's field)
- Potential costs: loss of walkability possibilities
- Some notes on Walkability, esp w/ Depot st.:

- Walkability/alternative vehicles/overall betterment on Depot Street
- Perhaps limit thru truck traffic on that road
- Perhaps a breakdown lane,
- Perhaps sidewalks

The newly added development area (above) - will need to have some specific needs around performance standards so that it protects the lake

Walkability concerns: Parking needs expressed at forum. New development coming into downtown will be responsible for parking, perhaps? Example of idea to defray costs for residents- specifically something like: If a business would come into town where there is a need for sidewalk or handicapped access- the business would be responsible for the cost incurred.*

* We're discussing this as a idea/concept for performance standards for new growth... Not suggesting that the town build more parking lots or but the ones is on

Discussion: Why do people live / work / own businesses in Unity?

Comment: format of forum was helpful, also helpful to be sure that scribe records speakers words as said.

Comment: some memorable points form the forum:

- Businesses need good employees and may not those folks may not already live in Unity
- We shouldn't be looking for an external savior- there are good talents, people, businesses within Unity

What are the in-town employment needs? Can we address unemployment on a municipal/community level?

Guest: mix of skills needed: math, common sense, hands-on skills
....not necessarily high level training is needed
Ex. Post-office has 14 opens within local 9 post offices

Who are the people who come to work in Unity and to live in Unity?

- They are attracted to a place where there is activity, a little village setting, have other good quality of life assets
- Many folks have moved here because of Unity College

Ex. Growth in apartments- being created, being retrofitted. Very limited vacancies-even in summer.

How do we hold onto the assets we have?

ie What parts of the old plan are good, that helped, that we should keep?

One example from the old plan that some think have been effective:

- Clustered development rules/complex planning have made it such that cookie cutter development has not come into Unity.
- Complex planning is difficult to explain

On the group examples, discussion:

Are there a lot of lots for sale in town? 15 lots open in town?

Discussion of community pride:

Instill a sense of pride... without regulation.

Ex. Gardening contest, Xmas light contest, ex. Neckdowns involved UBR, VFA, local landowner, town of Unity, Waldo County deputy. "Taken care of by..."

Activities, music, etc. to make Unity somewhere that's vibrant and "lit up"

Other towns have done this (accomplished pride, great appearance, etc.)... many with regulations.

One point from last comp plan we've heard AGAIN in this process: togetherness, collaboration, pride increase when there are opportunities to get together.

Some of these items are already in the plan and will need to be implemented.

Ex. Unity festival.

A note from first forum: we really wanted to convey that biz makes a good impact to tax base, other econ dev. Need pay attention to this conversation and questions that arise from it.

Other hub towns have higher tax rates....

The idea: when new businesses come, they can't make our taxes higher

Clem: biz being on state roads cuts town road costs. "Pay as you drive" biz that is going to use roads will need to pay.. Performance standards. How do you enforce?

Once you have grant money from the state for the roads you need to involve state in the performance standards. Can of worms. What do you do if they fail? Too many performance standards may create a barrier for new businesses to enter Unity.

*What retail businesses don't belong in town? Some are better suited out of town.

Ex: flower shop w/ greenhouses, gun shop, other limitations: sound, noise

- What happens when a home-based biz in the rural area sells?

- Need foundational language that sets stage for ordinances so that folks can sell a home based biz if they want to without the occupancy of the new owner

*Farms are exempt from this

Items that need clarification:

A couple “myths” / FAQs – there are some misunderstanding about what the plan is and does, etc. Comp Cmte may write up an FAQ to address these misunderstandings (Sara has started list). These items may be on general planning, legal requirements, Unity specific planning process to date, content of plan draft, etc.

Ex: Spending doesn’t happen at comp planning process, but in town meeting. People need to stay engaged in order to weigh in.

- What are taxes ACTUALLY used for? School, roads...

Ex: “partner with non-profits” why did we suggest this? So these ideas might be implemented by those with expertise, those able to get grants, etc.

Ex: resident may not understand concepts such as existing properties being “grandfathered” in. Need to use the list of

Next steps:

- Revise wording in FLUP
- Make a map for folks to react to
- Do we want to send out a note w/in the tax bill? - group says no, due to limited time (less than 24 hrs to prep content)

Next meeting:

- tax implementation stumbling block

Process points:

- Need to write up and collate minutes from forum, including some of the notes passed in, what was written by individuals, and what was spoken at the meeting
- Need to make space to address the home-based biz Qs and concerns