

**LAND USE REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES
TOWN OF UNITY
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2013
LOCATION: UNITY MASONIC LODGE, UNITY, MAINE**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Kenney, Tony Avilla, Nancy Zane, Don Newell, Mark Nickerson, John Piotti, John McIntire, Emily Newell

OBSERVERS: Jean Bourg, Chia Murdock, Lori Roming, Charlie Porter, Chris Rossignol

Moderator: Don Newell

RECORDER: Sherry Powell-Wilson

Meeting commenced at 6:30 p.m.

Minutes from 04/30/13 meeting accepted as read.

Results from last week's action Items:

Jim Kenney did talk with Andy Reed who declined.

Nancy Zane talked with people from Unity College. Jessie Pyles declined. Doug Fox said yes.

John Piotti talked with Tess Cleary who said yes.

Jean Bourg talked with Michelle Leavitt, the president's (college) wife, who is a lawyer.

Don left a message for Jayne Sullivan and Annie Roming, although Lori Roming is here and stated the "family is well represented."

Emily and John received one response to their notice.

John has did talk with Hofstadter from the Amish community but was declined. He is also initiating discussion with members of MOFGA.

Discussion items for this evening:

Don asked what the group would like to discuss this evening, and he asked for thoughts of what would be the next step for this group.

Chris Rossignol responded that he would like to know what kind of role outside community people would have in the Committee.

Mark asked if it had been decided which would come first, the Comprehensive Plan or the Land Use Ordinance, or would these two projects run concurrently with other.

Chia stated she would like to be included in the committee and laid out what strengths she feels she would bring to the group.

Don thought it would be a good idea for each member to discuss their strengths.

Skill Sets of Core Group Members:

Chia Murdock: I'm a business owner in town and I would be interested in playing a role that engages in whatever way the group decides is relevant to the plan, particularly to the small business community. I have a background in process design and recreation as far as fitness and exercise, and I have worked with Healthy Maine Partnerships in prevention. I'm interested in promotions, be it direct mailings in tandem with public forums or talking directly to people. I'm a good writer and researcher. Like Lori, I have a lot of facilitation training. I also have a background in education and grant writing.

Jean Bourg: What I do professionally is web programming, I'm able to set up mailing lists, e-mail lists, and use web resources to gather and disseminate information. I'm a good writer and I have time to do research.

John Piotti: I guess there are two principal areas, one is what I do professionally, which is economic development with a focus on farms for 26 years. I'm in the economic development profession. I've worked with hundreds of businesses, and I've worked on a couple hundred business plans, mostly small, but I understand those issues. Second, I have a pretty good general understanding of various community concepts. Part of that is through the volunteer work I do in Unity, on the Board of GrowSmart Maine's formation 12 years ago, I served on the Board of KVCOG for a number of years, and Friends of MidCoast Maine as well. I've been involved in a lot of those things and have had the exposure. I know a lot of the planners around the State. I'll be a keynote speaker this year at the annual planning conference in Belfast.

Nancy Zane: My specialty is recreation. I've been working in the field as a guide for over 25 years, and at the college. I'm also a fitness instructor. I really have a grasp when it comes to recreation. I also have facilitation and multitasking skills.

Tony Avilla: Jim spoke on behalf of Tony. Besides fixing cars, Tony knows a lot of people, he knows the issues that Unity presents to those people in various facets, and he's a damn good neighbor. Don also said that Tony is able to talk with a lot of people that wouldn't necessarily be at one of these meetings.

Lori Roming: I have facilitation training. I work in town so I'm not exposed to a lot of people but I am exposed to different people than are represented here. I have the ability to see connections, thinking in terms of a web instead of linear. I can do web pages. I write the newsletter for the Historical Society and update the website there. I have some administrative skills and am detail oriented.

Don commented that a big part of the plan for the community is to recognize and appreciate its history, buildings, anthropological history, all of that sort of thing.

Jim Kenney: I'm a son of Unity. Born and raised here. Fifty years ago I was walking in the jungles of Cambodia leading men into combat, earning the right to wear that (referring to a hat). I am an electrical engineer. My specialty was the space program, and you saw some of my work as a member of the team with Neil Armstrong wearing our space suit, ending up being the team leader of 120 exciting young engineers that brought the astronauts in the international space station to be able to wear shirt sleeves. I had 120 of the most excited young people one could be surrounded by. I've been a businessman in this town; I was the employer of 85 people. I've been a selectman in this town, I've been the assessor in this town, I've been the code enforcement in this town back a while ago, and that was when code was 15 feet from the property line. My skills are planning, reading, writing, leaving. I believe I have a sense of Unity.

Charlie Porter: What do you want to know? I moved to Unity 42 years ago, with 20 years before that in the hardware business. I bought a hardware store two years later right up here. It is now the CrossTrax restaurant. I had a hardware store there for 23 years until I had a heart attack. I asked my kids if they wanted the business and they said no. I retired and then that fall Phil [Jarvis?] had a lot of troubles with his kidneys and stuff, and he resigned and I took the job and I ended up taking Burnham and Troy and Thorndike, and here I am 16 years later. I've been a fireman for almost 50 years, well, over that. Forty two years in Unity, ex-chief.

Mark Nickerson: My background is 28 years with the Maine State Police. I've been retired for eight years so I don't have a lot of interaction with the people like I used to. But, again, the people I had dealings with most of the time were people who would never show up at these meeting. A strong point that I had in that job that would be helpful in this setting is that I was a good negotiator and that's being able to listen to all sides and reach a peaceful resolution. Back in the 80s, I was a small business owner with my wife back then.

Don added that Mark is also a writer and is working toward publishing his first book.

Don Newell: I consider myself a jack-of-all-trades but I think the strength I bring is I've been trained in this community as our town moderator, and so I've gotten to know a few folks in that position. I think our annual meetings are a very, very positive interaction compared to other towns, and I've moderated for other towns. We really get a lot done. We hear from a very broad cross-section of people and we allow that to happen in a nice, comfortable, and civilized way. I'm very proud of that. I'm a real estate broker. I was a professor at Unity College for a bit, an administrator, and shot up through the ranks to be acting president. I know the College well and appreciate what they bring to our community. As a realtor, I have given back to my association as a mediator. I have been president of the Association for Realtors and once I got through that duty and worked at that level, I became a mediator. I took extensive training in how to do that and it has changed me as a dad, as a real estate agent, and as a moderator. I feel comfortable in this position and I work really hard to try to have everybody be equally engaged in the process. We certainly won't be able to make that decision with regard of who will be the chairman of the group but I think I bring some reasonable skills from the variety of different areas that help one to be a good moderator or chairman. I've been chairman of the board of the local school district, a 3-year term and that was a good lesson for my skill set. Football was my undoing. I have a lot of history with talking with folks about what is special about their home and their community. I think I'm acutely aware of what their issues are, the folks walking up and down the street, the level of noise, the architectural style, the fields, the brooks, the quality of water – all of those issues I deal with on a day-to-day basis, and all of those issues are what make up a Comprehensive Plan.

John Piotti: Commented that as someone who has attended 25-28 Town Meetings in different towns, how Town Meeting in Unity is not the norm. We are very fortunate.

Emily Newell: My interest is definitely in Unity's development. I moved to the city, I wasn't there two weeks and I wanted to come back to Unity, and that must've happened for a reason. What I can bring is that I'm a detail-oriented personality.

Nancy added on Emily's behalf that she brings a lot more to the table, such as her youthful perspective, her commitment to the fire department. Nancy stated that Emily is a 'breath of fresh air' and a compliment to this group.

John McIntire: I come to this from the perspective of a homesteader. I repaired automobiles for 30 years and I left that behind and I'm happy. Looking at it from that perspective and how all of this planning will allow for small holders to continue to exist in a small way in Unity, I think it's the small people here and there, and people up and down my road fill in the gaps and make all these other things possible. I think I'm a pretty good listener, I'm a very good observer of

what's going on and I can put two and two together often in ways that don't come up before. I'm not bashful about saying it or apologize if I stick my foot in it too badly.

Tony Avilla: Don said I can speak for those people who don't come to meetings and stuff. I guess I have a way to talking to people and they open up to me. I deal with people all the time at the shop. Being a small business owner and knowing what it takes to start up and keep going is a key factor. The fact is that I came from a bigger city (Providence) to a small town to escape all of the red tape when it came to zoning and ordinances. It's like they forgot the small guy. People I knew who owned property couldn't put a subdivision in because of some issues, but Home Depot came in and did whatever they wanted, and it was the same piece of land. I want things to be fair across the board.

Agenda Items:

Don Newell: Next up, which comes first, the Land Use Ordinance or the Comprehensive Plan?

Jean stated that it was her understanding that the decision had been made in the last couple of meetings that the Comprehensive Plan has to be done first. It doesn't make any sense to do the Land Use Ordinance first.

Jim stated that he sees it slightly different, in that the Comprehensive Plan needs to be started first, and shortly after that, the Land Use Ordinance could be adopting the items that have been discussed, worked out, and agreed upon in the Comp Plan just to get that going. He feels this group should be able to go to Town Meeting next year with both in hand.

Jean suggested that in doing that, one or the other or both could be voted down.

Jim asked do we take a year to do the Comprehensive Plan and then start the Land Use Ordinance? He doesn't think so. He stated that the actions that brought the desire to get the Land Use Ordinance done by March of 2014 are still there and that it can be done properly and can still be done by 2014.

Don suggested that this is something the Comprehensive Plan Committee would wrestle with as it moves forward. Don did say he personally would be shocked if the Committee opted to do the Land Use Ordinance before the Comprehensive Plan was a finished product. He stated that he went through this process, it's a step-wise function as everyone gets educated and takes on different subjects."

Nancy thought it would be hard to work on both projects in parallel. There are too many pieces to fit together, and too many people, too many ideas to pull together as part of the Comp Plan process.

Chia stated the importance of deciding on a realistic timeline. She suggested that we should be looking at what other communities have for comprehensive plans for best examples and we can draw from those.

John stated he he's a real believer of parallel processes but there are two problems as it relates to the Comp Plan and major changes to the Ordinance. One problem is that you're going to know much from the Comp Planning process in 1-2 months, you're going to be developing data and researching for a while. It's the policy strategies that come out of the comp planning process that form the Ordinance, and not the data collection. So, there probably really wouldn't be anything for six to eight months because you have to do all the data work and research and then query the public, and then talk about policy. It doesn't happen soon. For most people in town, I think they think in step-wise fashion and even with my staff. Having said that, the original problems we have with an Ordinance is that it is hard to read and not organized well, and maybe there needs to be substantial changes to it. Two tracks. I agree, there is no reason why you

can't pursue that first track, of reorganizing, make it more readable, that could be done now but the bigger things will have to wait for the Comp Plan.

Don stated that our task is to create that group of people who we're going to recommend to the Selectmen to appoint, to create this committee.

Chris likes the parallel idea because things are in your mind right then and there instead of starting another whole process.

Next action item, Don Newell brought up the next question being what is the role of outside people?

The consensus was that people from outside the community could perhaps serve on a subcommittee or be invited as certain subjects that pertain to them come up for discussion. It was stated that anyone who does not receive a Unity tax bill should not have a vote or major influence on this committee.

It was discussed that there needs to be a core group, people who have dedicated themselves and will stay on top of it. In the terms of outsiders, Don, said, I think of Marianne Hayes, who worked for KVCOG, but she was extremely active. I would think if she would make a commitment to volunteer and become a member of this committee, I think that would be a tremendous asset. She would be somebody who brings a specific skillset into this group, that will help us better understand the process. Jayne Sullivan's name was brought up. She lives in Troy, but she works in Unity.

Don called for a consensus for those in favor of inviting someone who is not a resident of Unity and, at this point in time, it is the consensus of the group to not recommend to the Selectmen to appoint people who are not residents of Unity to the Committee.

Agenda for next week:

The agenda for next week is to come back with names for the nucleus of the group. Regarding inviting people who are not residents of Unity, as we move down the road, we can deal with that issue if there is someone we think we need.

Jim mentioned Dr. Ducker who has lived in this town, he works in this town, and he now lives in another town. I think at one time we might want to bring him in.

Emily reiterated that wherever this group continues to meet, that it would be nice to have Wi Fi. Jim stated that if the host were willing, he didn't think the purchase of Wi Fi would be a problem. Charlie will bring it up at the next Lodge meeting. There was discussion of various other places in town to meet.

John Piotti talked about the desire to move the process along fairly quickly. He felt the group should begin to think about a contractor highlighting if we don't move on that, we could fall even further behind. He said we've all talked about KVCOG and he also has the names of a couple of private consultants. He felt that process could happen on a parallel track while forming a committee. Don mentioned that Barry (who is not here) had asked that we start gathering information, such as pricing, from planners. Jim would like to help in this process of interviewing planners.

Mark asked if the group is going to look at our outdated Comp Plan to decide what needs to be updated and what we can do ourselves. Jim reminded that Randy has a lot of that capability. It was also discussed that Barry would be good in that process.

Chia advised the group that she has, so far, looked at five other recently-developed Comp Plans for other towns. She discussed the fact that three of the five had no credits as to an organization developing the plan. She noted that the comp plans who were developed by strictly volunteers took the longest to develop, from 18 months to four years. She also noted that the ones who had contracted for outside help, it was for the mappings. Her concern is that, as volunteers, how much are they willing to contribute for time, and how long will that hold up the process?

John stated that we need to talk with the consultants to get an idea of what they think the steps are and how best to approach them.

Jean suggested we start gathering together comp plans from other towns and share them. There was discussion regarding file sharing methods. Don reminded the group that Unity is unique and we'll have our own Comprehensive Plan.

Don stated for next week to be prepared with names of who will be recommended to serve on the committee to the Selectmen.

Meeting ended at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sherry E. Powell-Wilson, Notary Public
Accepted: