



Acton 2020 Committee
Minutes
June 30, 2011 – 7:00 PM
Acton Memorial Library Meeting Room

Margaret Woolley Busse (Chair), Paulina Knibbe (Associate), Sahana Purohit, Celia Kent, Jim Snyder-Grant (minutes-taker), John Sonner (BoS rep), Kristin Alexander (staff). Consultants from “The Collaborative” (formerly known as “Planner's Collaborative”) Daphne Politis, Jim Purdy.

I. Approve minutes from 6-15-11

Sahana moves to accept June 15 minutes, Celia seconds, approved with one abstention.
One change: \$125 → \$125K (price per acre used in land purchase calculations for Alternative 2).

II. Discuss feedback/results from June 23rd meeting

Question about the recent rate of land protection in Acton. (acres / year)

TODO Jim P to research this rate and report back. Committee discussed the type of protection. (cluster zoning, land purchases, etc.)

Summary of meeting: See PACKET - “Preliminary Write-up”.

Certainly Alternative 3 (concentrate growth) was far preferred in any way to measure it. Additional discussion includes these ideas:

-Because we didn't discuss mechanisms very much, many folks were concerned that Alt 3 was not obtainable. Or wouldn't protect open space enough. Or would be too dense. Or there wouldn't be enough design review. Next stage: need images. And let's not over-promise. Even with site control, you can only keep stuff out. You can't force a business in if their market studies don't say it will work.

-Discussed transfer of development rights, and its options, including “banking” the rights by the town, and/or the town making contributions to such a bank. Reviewed some previous precedent to start learning from it: EDIC formed but not funded. Kelly's Corner plan proposed at town meeting, and voted down by organized local residents.

-The desire for Alt 3 was most strongly about connections, secondarily about ecology.

Discussed pros & cons of the various centers/villages as targets. (mostly Kelly/West Acton/South Acton). It was generally agreed that prioritizing them one at a time with a prioritized order was a good idea, with an understanding that the town will need to be flexible and multi-focused so it can take advantage of fortuitous circumstances. Next stage of committee discussion will include BIG maps so we can get in to details. Discussed the concept of a more or less formal village study, to understand the role of each village. Discussion of how deep and formal we need to go before we can proceed. Eager to start making progress now.

-Political will can be developed with a well-supported and well-communicated vision.

-FYI: Kelly's corner has multiple large owners. Reviewed who they were. There is a need to bring them together to share rewards and incentives, such as a business improvement district.

-Discussed the use of the words 'village' vs 'villages' vs. 'town center'. We agreed that Kelley's' Corner is not a village, and we don't want a village there – it's a Town Center.

-2A is where most businesses are most initially comfortable when they look at Acton's options. But Kelley's'

corner could be an easy sell because of car access, AND sewers. 2A == no sewers.

Wildcard review: discussed rotary traffic patterns, how that impacts 2A, and how any rotary redevelopment would impact that.

-Future resilience comments: also leaned strongly toward Alt 3, except for natural environment, where groups seemed to figure that Alt 2 would address protecting land more directly & successfully.

And see the detailed reports in DocuShare for more.

Also discussed other topics related to Acton's future:

-Discussed Senior Center / Community Center. A new committee has been charged to research it, possibly leading to approval for funding for engineering at April 2012 town meeting. (approx 150K). Discussed location. Arlington Street used to be popular location, but schools not interested in having a center there. Next spot is next to Nara, existing land, or maybe (speculation) buy Rex Lumber. Discussed use pattern: seniors generally have and want activities during weekdays, rest of community wants activities on nights and weekends.

Discussed open space – what do people mean when they say they want open space? Do they mean active or passive recreation? Do they mean only uplands or only wetlands, or both? In terms of active recreation: Morrison Farm plan had really good detailed look at active rec needs – Jim S-G is seeking to meet with Cathy F. (rec director) to discuss perhaps updating that info, for both OSRP and Acton 2020.

Reviewed the Town's overall financial flow: little state aid, little commercial revenue, most income from property taxes, mostly going to schools.

III. Plan for additional feedback (30 min)

a. Blog/facebook

Summarize results publicly as soon as revised results document is ready. Use blog and facebook to move the discussion forward, not a rehash, since meeting results were so definitive. Drop previous plan to re-do the entire June 23 question stream in a survey. Forward-moving questions instead might include posts on uncovering thoughts on pros & cons of how to prioritize each area, and what to focus on in each area; and which of the features from each alternative to carry forward, and why.

TODO: Daphne to write final June 23 results, Jim S-G to use as base for blog, facebook & web updates.

b. Survey?

Pros & cons of doing a survey. Decided to focus on needs of next public meeting. Focus on communicating directions already agreed on. (rather than revisiting decisions already made).

c. Communicate with major committees the results?

Discussed schedule with major committees, but no dates set for meetings in the near term with BoS or planning. **TODO:** Jim S-G is still trying to set up meeting with WRAC reps, will refocus that meeting on action items / recommendations discussion, while still finishing off the overdue inventory elements discussion. Same switch needed for other committee meetings still not scheduled, such as a meeting with recreation reps. See below for more on Fall / Winter meetings with committees.

Discussed how to close out the inventory chapters that may need feedback from key committees. Example: how to get input from WRAC, and reconcile it with staff comments if they are different. If we do end up with specific disagreements on the element chapters we can bring them back to the committee to settle them. Jim P. has some particular feedback to integrate in to some chapters.

IV Discuss committee responsibilities (30 min)

We had a shortened version of this discussion, since we were missing so many committee members. We did agree these next meetings over the next few months require really high participation. A reasonable standard would be 75% or more of the next meetings over next 6-10 months. We are making decisions now. We are not going back to revisit decisions. And we need to make work assignments. Other options if current committee members can't make enough meetings: drop back and become a reviewer.

V. Agree on next steps (45 min)

- a. Agree on approximate date of next public meeting
- b. Discuss what we need to accomplish before next meeting
- c. Agree on summer meeting schedule

These three topics a-c were discussed together, as they overlapped.

Discussed pros & cons and schedule of future public meetings. Current plan: one to present proposed implementation plan, and another for final plan. Paulina especially concerned about how many tricky decisions the committee needs to make between now and getting something to BoS and then Town Meeting, but public meeting prep sucks up a LOT of committee time.

How to get committees and boards and departments on board. Meeting with them? How to get them signed up to support and own certain parts.

What is our documentation plan? Final plan includes implementation plan. Goals/Objectives/strategies/phasing. Phasing in implementation plan has to do with money and logical relationships, and urgency related to health/safety, and the possibility of some actions having quick payback to build support or build fiscal capacity. Next steps for consultants also has to include financial analysis over time, instead of just at the end of 20 years.

The proposed November meeting is NOT open ended – it would be a draft actual proposal with actual strategies, priorities, phases. Meetings between now and then are about narrowing and making specific decisions in complex areas that need to be nailed down.

When does town staff get engaged? Sep / Oct. We should ask Town Manager to take some of some of one or more of the weekly staff meetings during those times. And key committees need to be scheduled.

Working backwards: Town Meeting is in April. February formal roll-out, or maybe even early March. Let's say Mar 7 for final plan roll-out. Key committee sign-off in Jan/Feb. Let's be in front of selectmen in January for approval. Finish off writing in December and mini-presentation in mid-December to BoS. Let's say Dec. 5 for BoS. Public event in November – let's say November 9.

We need to come up with a summer meeting schedule. Polled those present.

July 13 – No: Paulina, maybe not Sahana, rest: yes.

July 27: Celia no. Paulina no, rest: yes.

Aug 3 – No Consultants, but maybe a Collaborative-less committee meeting.

Aug 10 – no Margaret, No Kristin. No Daphne, No Jim P Hmm.. NO MEETING.

Aug 24 – Yes Jim P., no Margaret, Celia no. Jim S-G no. MEETING NO

Aug 31 – Yes all of us. - meeting YES. Maybe Affordable housing? No.

Sep / Oct for meetings in which others should be there, and we may need extra meetings.

Summer Summary: we will keep with regular meetings for July (13 & 27), but August meetings will switch to 3rd and 31st.

Consultants to sketch out what topics will need to be hashed out, and specifically Margaret and Daphne will be in touch about what can be hashed out for next meeting.

Jim moved to adjourn. Celia seconded. All in favor.

Documents discussed at this meeting are in this collection in the Town's Document Sharing system: <https://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-4382>, and are listed here:

- 010 - I. - Agenda
- 021 - II. - Public Comments on Choose Your Own Acton - Relay for Life - May Fair - Senior Center - May-June - 2011
- 022 - II. - total resilience table
- 023 - II. - Preliminary Thoughts
- 024 - II. - express your preference – results
- 025 - II. - BACK_OF_AGENDAS

