



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
TOWN OF FOSTER
Benjamin Eddy Building, 6 South Killingly Road, Foster, RI
Saturday: March 31, 2012
9:00 a.m.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORKSHOP

A. Call to Order

Called to order at 9:05 a.m.

B. Roll Call

Present from the Planning Board were Tom Mercier, Chair; Julia Parmentier, Vice Chair; Helen Hardy, Secretary; members Sisan Smallman, Mike Carpenter, and Ron Cervasio. Member Susan Mara was excused. Also present were Ann-Marie Ignasher, Town Planner and Housing Board members Diane Potter and Fran Gast.

C. Goals, Objectives, Policies and Actions

Discussion / Action

Housing Element

Fran Gast summarized the work on 2 principle goals

- 1) The need to increase affordable housing units
- 2) The need to increase affordable housing for elderly and young people

Sisan asked how this would be implemented on the second goal.

Fran answered with accessory apartments

- Residential compounds
- Land Trust land
- Housing Board
- Building rehab and conversion

Julia asked if we could add as a goal to educate the state on needs for affordable housing in rural communities.

It was noted that Ann-Marie is already part of group that has / is trying to coordinate with other rural communities to get the State to recognize the needs of the rural communities.

Fran suggested a goal to achieve change in state statutes for affordable housing to recognize the particular demographic and topographic needs of rural communities in Rhode Island.

Mike explained that legislation is important as a critical goal - this must be accomplished by "critical mass" of involving other communities in the same predicament. Mike suggested as an action or goal, an annual review of the affordable housing status at the town level and regional cooperation.

Tom suggests that citizens of the town be educated about the issues here so that more people are actively lobbying.

Ron asked about coordinating with the Providence Water Supply Board as the board has political power and that they could be a strong partner, if they were on our side.

Helen suggests that an objective to utilize General Business Mixed use zone to create new affordable units be added.

Fran will reorganize what has been discussed. There was some discussion about policies and actions.

Policy – annual review of affordable housing data

Action – assigning someone to implement this policy

Circulation Element

The board read over these goals, objectives, policies and actions – though there was little discussion as Susan Mara was not at this particular workshop.

Natural Resources

Sisan asked if it should include within the context of the development that's occurring in the town.

Sisan suggested adding as a goal; allowing for responsible development that is consistent with protecting and preserving the environmental resources of the town.

Ron added that we should add that the community gets no credit for protection of the water supply (Scituate Reservoir) from the state.

Julia discussed that the board add a policy on developing an energy resource policy.

Land Use

On the first objective – need to create standards for development

On the second objective – move it down to general business mixed use development

Policy – develop building standards consistent with rural character.

Action – partner with Foster Preservation and Planning.

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There was some discussion on utilities for public and private entities; objective including but not limited to the water supply board, national grid and other such entities. Develop policies that address land and easements owned by public and private entities which provide water, energy and communication services.

Communities Services –

Ann-Marie felt that we should add the EMA into the objectives

Julia asked if we should add that our emergency services are volunteers and this is the basis of our system.

Mike suggested adding and evaluating the Traffic Court.

Ron asked that the board reconsider the number of fire stations. Mike notes that because it's a volunteer dept that resources are important.

D. Time frame for section(s) progress

Discussion / Action

1) Make the 4/28 Public Meeting into another Planning Meeting at 9 a.m. at the Ben Eddy.

2) Get updates and edits of the goals, objectives and policies into Ann-Marie by 4/18, so she can get them done in time for the workshop on 4/28.

E. Allocation of funds for Planner's work on Comp Plan

Discussion / Action

Julia asked about Ann-Marie's time spent exclusively on Comprehensive Plan. Ann-Marie said that she could get into the office on Monday's to work exclusively on the Comp Plan. The Planning Board will write a letter to the Town Council addressing the need for Ann-Marie to work extra hours to work on the Comp Plan. The goal is an additional 7 to 8 hours per week.

F. General Business

Discussion / Action

G. Future Agenda Items

April 4 – Planning By Laws

5 year road plan

April 28 – changed to Planning Board workshop 9 a.m. at Ben Eddy Building – Comprehensive Plan

H. Adjournment

Sisan moved to adjourn at 11:13 a.m. motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Hardy, Secretary