

MINUTES
10-Year Strategic Planning Committee
Wednesday, June 11, 2014 @ 7:30pm
Norma Drummer Room/Seymour Town Hall

Members Present: Jeff Dussetschleger, Trish Danka, Kathy Vrlik (7:45 PM), Kristen Harmeling, Rory Burke, Bruce Baker, Don Smith

Members Absent: Rick Belden, Jen Magri

1) Call meeting to order.

The Meeting was called to order at 7:37 PM.

2) Pledge of Allegiance.

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) Public Comment

There was no public comment

4) Approval of minutes from May 14, 2014 meeting

Motion: Jeff Dussetschleger Second: Kristen Harmeling

Motion passes 4-0

5) Discussion of meetings conducted June 10

Town Clerk – Most of what the Town Clerk's office does is mandated by the State of Connecticut in terms of how records are collected and maintained as well as their retention periods. They are doing more than necessary in terms of digitizing records and are eager to continue and even accelerate the process. They want to seek more grant money to do so. They experience a backup around elections because they are required to do a lot of work with absentee ballots and arranging logistics for local elections. They mentioned involvement in professional development and professional networks, which is great and is a model for everyone. They are very customer service oriented as well and take great pride in their office.

Elderly Services – Director pointed out that most people assume she is responsible solely for programming at the Senior Center. She points out that she is also responsible for assessing the state of affairs for seniors in Town with regards to housing, assistance and welfare. She spoke about the position of Municipal Agent, how it was a role she used to fill, and how it is currently for 4 hours per week. She explained that she has been without an assistant for almost a year and that this is placing a significant burden on her and leaves her spread thin. If she goes on a trip, someone from Recreation has to cover if they are available. Otherwise the center is closed. She believes that by labeling it a "senior center" the Town is scaring away people who might otherwise attend programs because of the connotation it has. She believes that rather than Elderly Services and Recreation it should be a true community center without programming restricted by age group. She discussed the possibility of a common receptionist/secretary for the community center. She also expressed displeasure at the idea of charging an annual membership fee for programming and restricting access to members. She feels this will cut into program attendance. She also expressed interest in having more interaction with the library staff, a desire to air condition the gym so that

it would be safe for seniors to use during the summer months, a need for printers for those that come to use the computers because they don't have any at home and a concern at the availability, quality and type of available housing stock for seniors. She believes that more "active lifestyle" type communities would benefit the Town.

Recreation – Director expressed a lack of space for programming now that the Boys & Girls Club has moved into the bottom floor of the community center. He talked about how the public has requested expanded programming but due to space and personnel restrictions, this is difficult. He focuses on trips for working adults and sports for children. He expressed concern at the occasional traffic issues in the parking lot due to regional bussing, events, programming and the presence of the Boys and Girls Club. At this time the committee discussed the need for a centralized and standardized information dissemination plan. He said one of their greatest needs is for sanitary facilities at Gary & Chatfield Parks for their summer program and explained why that hadn't been possible thus far.

Town Planner – Planner talked about his role and how he is one of the points of contacts for the land use boards and a wealth of knowledge as he wrote our zoning ordinances. He said one of his biggest problems is the most people are unaware of the regulations and requirements that he is responsible for and don't even know they're doing anything wrong. He spoke about the Plan of Conservation and Development and the committee will get a copy when it is available to incorporate into their plan. He spoke of Route 67 as a quandary with no easy solution. Due to increased development and the traffic that goes along with it, Route 67 will likely be a problem with no easy solution for the foreseeable future. He also spoke about frequent comparisons with Shelton and how topography and available land are very constricting in terms of possible development. Basically, the only available plots for commercial development (Route 34 and lower Derby Avenue) are limited by the location of flood plains and steep topography, a problem Shelton lacks.

Assessor – Assessor explained his role and responsibilities as ensuring a fair and equitable distribution of the tax burden by the means required by State statute. He said one of his biggest issues is legal support. He goes to great lengths to ensure that property owners are assessed as they should be and because Town Counsel is selected by the First Selectman, they are occasionally unversed in assessment law. He experiences a time crunch around budget time because of the budget process. There is unfortunately not much that can be done because State law requires tax bills to go out in July and the budget process must necessarily coincide with the end of the fiscal year. He also mentioned that there is a salary discrepancy in his department in comparison with other towns. He is required to attend professional training updates, as is some of his staff. He believes that Town Hall does not give people a good impression. He recommends investing in the Town's buildings to give people a better impression.

6) Remaining schedule and activities for 2014

The committee let Rory know their availability and he will try to schedule some interviews before the second meeting in June. Further scheduling will be discussed at the second meeting in June.

7) Open Discussion

Trish explained Town Counsel's legal opinion regarding the interviews and FOI requirements. She also mentioned the Kurt will be attending the first meeting in July to discuss project. Also, the Town will be ordering Municast ASAP in the new fiscal year.

8) Adjournment

Motion: Kristen Harmeling

Second: Bruce Baker

Motion passes 6-0

Meeting is adjourned at 9:58 PM

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rory Burke', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rory Burke
Recording Secretary