

TOWN OF NORTH KINGSTOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RE-WRITE

Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting Notes April 9, 2015

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Steering committee members were asked to interview and introduce each other to the group and state what they LOVE about North Kingstown and what their PRIORITY is for the plan.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

1. April Williams McCrory (North Star Marketing) – Love: ocean, Wickford; Priority: implementation.
2. Kerry McKay (Council, business owner) – Love: location and business; Priority: actionable solutions.
3. Harriet Powell (Groundwater committee member, former Planning Commission) – Love: the people and relaxed nature, open space and room to move; Priority: reworking wastewater treatment regulations to accommodate business uses.
4. Chip Palmer (Chair of Planning Commission) – Love: ability to raise a family, good education and recreation, good government; Priority: more clarity to counteract misinformation about planning in town.
5. Meg Kerr (resident) – Love: Normal Rockwell way of growing up, walkable, beach; Priority: talking about and preparing for climate change
6. Sheila Brush (Grow Smart RI) – Love: historic character of town; Priority: historic preservation, affordable housing, farmland conservation.
7. Greg Mancini (lawyer, resident) – Love: community; Priority: maintain good schools and rural character.
8. Sandra Dobson (lawyer, resident) – Love: sense of community and programs; Priority: more organized process.
9. Palmer Beebe (Wickford business owner, economic development representative) – Priority: sewer and traffic, keep existing businesses and promote new businesses.
10. Frank Fede (resident and business owner) – Loves: “diamond in the rough” – we’re underappreciated and have more to offer; Priority: business on Post Road.
11. Michael McGauvran (resident, conservation committee) – Love: neighbors, access to the sea; Priority: process.
12. Jan Hall Stinson (resident) – Love: sense of community; Priority: good land use and open space.
13. Bjorn Wellenius (resident, representative of economic development commission) – Love: water; Priority: economic development
14. John Gibbons (resident, served on committee for last comp plan) – Love: quality of life, comfort, safety, serenity; Priority: prepare for the future, make it easier to have a business in town.
15. Jim Halley (representing Arts Council, former superintendent of schools) – Love: quality of life, committed people; Priority: get people and organizations together.
16. Keith Finck was in attendance but arrived late after introductions.

TOWN COUNCIL:

1. Ellen Waxman
2. Jason Albuquerque
3. Kevin Maloney

PUBLIC:

1. Rick Thompson (resident)
2. Lisa Hunter (resident)
3. Teresa Crean (University of Rhode Island)

PLANNING TEAM:

1. Nicole LaFontaine (North Kingstown Dept. of Planning)
2. Rebecca Lamond (North Kingstown Dept. of Planning)

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3. Maura Harrington (North Kingstown Dept. of Planning)
4. Scott Page (Interface Studio)
5. Stacey Chen (Interface Studio)

II. OVERVIEW

Scott Page of Interface Studio presented the project team, planning process & Steering Committee role.

Questions and comments that arose are as follows:

- Over the last few years a number of collaborative planning efforts have taken place such as Healthy by Design and Rhode Map. This process should incorporate the collaborative mapping and input from those processes.
- There is the potential to use analytics to review Town documents to uncover themes.
- Will data be public and searchable? Interface Studio will collect and interpret data for presentation to the Steering Committee and public. Raw data will also be available. The Planning Department will need to determine the best place to house such data, for example the Town GIS website might be an option.

III. PUBLIC OUTREACH AND SCHEDULE

The Steering Committee discussed the potential range of outreach tools & elements of a Community Participation Plan.

Questions and comments that arose are as follows:

- Events that would be good for reaching people include the summer concert series, school open houses in September, farmers markets, church functions, the high school is a community hub that draws from the entire town.
- The best tools for outreach include participatory budgeting where the community is involved in actually setting priorities, walking tours in location around town so that people get engaged in specific areas that affect them directly, bringing the plan to the neighborhood level (the Wickford tour was very successful)
- What about reaching people who left North Kingstown or businesses that chose not to locate here to find out why? How can we find these groups?
- We need to figure out who gets what information and when. The Steering Committee is meant to serve as a filter to review materials before they are presented to the public.
- Council would like to create the infrastructure for reaching the community on an ongoing basis. Can the planning process help create this infrastructure?
- What is the best communication platform for sharing information with the Steering Committee? Basecamp? Dropbox?