



# City of Westbrook

## DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

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### WESTBROOK PLANNING BOARD TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2011, 7:00 P.M. WESTBROOK HIGH SCHOOL, ROOM 114 MINUTES

Present: Rene Daniel (Vice-Chair) (Ward 1), Dennis Isherwood (Ward 2), Cory Fleming (Ward 4), Rebecca Dillon (Alternate), Greg Blake (At Large), Michael Taylor (At Large)

Absent: Ed Reidman, (Chair) (Ward 5), Scott Herrick (Ward 3)

Staff: Molly Just

**Vice-Chair Rene Daniel called the Westbrook Planning Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Room 114 of the Westbrook High School.**

*MINUTES MAY NOT BE TRANSCRIBED VERBATIM. SECTIONS MAY BE PARAPHRASED FOR CLARITY. A COMPLETE RECORDING MAY BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING ENGINEERING, PLANNING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT at 207-854-9105 ext. 220 and lgain@westbrook.me.us.*

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes

**Cory Fleming moved to approve the minutes dated December 7, 2010 and January 4, 2011 as corrected.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> by Dennis Isherwood**

**The vote was unanimous in favor 6-0**

#### New Business

**Rene Daniel** the workshop is going to be the adoption of the vision statement with our Comprehensive Plan Update - On behalf of the Westbrook Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force, the Department of Planning requests a Planning Board recommendation of approval for City Council adoption of proposed vision statements

for individual areas of Westbrook and citywide which will serve as a guide to the Task Force as they write the update of the Comprehensive Plan as required by the State Planning Office.

Do I have a motion to recess to workshop?

**Michael Taylor moved to recess to workshop**

**2<sup>nd</sup> by Cory Fleming**

**The vote was unanimous in favor 6-0**

**Rene Daniel** please take note that during the Workshop; Public comment will be accepted during workshop.

For the residents at home, the Staff table has members of the Comprehensive Plan Task force in attendance.

### 3. Recess to Workshop

**Molly Just** In the months of October, November and December a stakeholder Task Force appointed by the Westbrook City Council worked with the public to develop a vision statement for Westbrook for the next 10-20 years. The vision statement should be adopted by the City Council so that the Task Force may use it as a guide as it works to update the Comprehensive Plan as required by the State of Maine. The State of Maine requires municipalities that wish to adopt a Zoning Ordinance to create and adopt a Comprehensive Plan as a wide ranging guide for the future of that municipality. The Comprehensive Plan must be found consistent with State requirements that cover such topics such as a Future Land Use Plan, to guide the type of development and its intensity, Economy, Housing, Transportation, Recreation, Water Resources, Critical Natural Resources, Historical Resources, Agriculture, Public Facilities/Services and Fiscal Capacity/Capital Improvement Program.

The current Comprehensive Plan was found consistent by the State of Maine in 2001. As required by the State we are now updating the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan Task Force consists of residents from throughout the City, Downtown Businesses, other Businesses, large land owners, representatives from the City Council, the Planning Board, the School Committee, the Zoning Board of

Appeals and the Recreation Conservation Commission. The Task Force has been working since September and will be engaged until the Comprehensive Plan has been found consistent by the State.

The Public has been engaged throughout the process thus far. In October and November the Task Force engaged the Public in small town hall style meetings. The purpose was to engage residents and businesses with common interests and/or geography in a discussion around a series of questions developed by the Task Force for the purpose of determining community preference for the future of individual areas of the city and for Westbrook as a whole.

A questionnaire was also distributed and posted on the project web page in order to reach a wider audience on these questions.

This effort culminated in a communitywide visioning session on Saturday, December 11. Break-out sessions based on geography and the required topics to be covered in the Comprehensive Plan were conducted in an effort to help to ensure productive and satisfying participation.

The Public process generated the vision statements before you now. The vision statements were unanimously adopted by the Comprehensive Task Force, which includes a wide variety of people on the Task Force representing a broad range of interests in the Community. So I think that is a huge success.

I would like to thank the Comprehensive Plan Task Force sitting with me at the table, some sitting at the Planning Board table up front and some at home who could not make it. I would especially like to thank Dave Haskell, our Chair of the Task Force, and Molly Sinclair, our Vice-Chair, for their leadership. I would also like to thank all the people who attended our public meetings and completed the questionnaire.

We have been greatly assisted by Craig Freshley from Good Group Decisions as a professional meeting facilitator. He has made sure that our meetings have gone well and topics have been covered and that everyone has been heard in a fair manner.

To sum it up on behalf of the Westbrook Comprehensive Plan Task Force, the Department of Planning requests a Planning Board recommendation of approval for City Council adoption of proposed vision statements for individual areas of Westbrook and citywide which will serve as a guide to the Task Force as they write the update of the Comprehensive Plan.

The subject request let me be clear is not a Comprehensive Plan Amendment this is an adoption of a vision statement. Ultimately the City Council will adopt the vision statement as part of the larger document; right now we just want to adopt the vision

statement to guide the work of the Task Force. This is not a formal amendment to the Comprehensive Plan at this point. We just want to show the Task Force that their work, their efforts, their vision or thinking is heading in the right direction. The City Council adopting the vision statement will do that.

The next step would be for the Planning Board to schedule a public hearing and make a formal recommendation to the City Council and accept formal public comment at that time.

Thank You

**Rene Daniel** is there any questions from the Planning Board? Be very clear, this is just about the vision statement.

No questions

**Rene Daniel** is there any comment from Chair Haskell?

**David Haskell** I think Molly covered it very well. I would like to say, just for the edification of the Planning Board we do have two very active members, the Vice Chair, Rene has done a very good job and Dennis has done a good job about meeting with the group and as part of the members carrying on their expertise. Rene has served before, ten years ago when they had the plan go through, so he has given us fantastic information as we have gone along as we perhaps look for to do and improve on.

Molly covered it very well and I think at this particular point we're acceptable here with about five of us here this evening that can answer you questions but the committee as a whole has done a fantastic job of analyzing and asking very relevant questions which we have appreciated very much.

If the Board has any questions we would be more than happy to answer them.

**Dennis Isherwood** I attended many of the meetings and they were well attended. Each line in this statement was gone over, argued and everyone did not see eye to eye on everything, unfortunately and feelings were hurt, including mine but we came out with a very good plan that had give and take.

I need to congratulate Craig Freshly as he kept the meetings going very well. He was a great facilitator and Dave made sure everything started and ended on time. Everyone had input it was very good and the public meeting in December was one of

the best meetings I have ever been to. The things that came up were incredible. Everything was gone over, discussed and some we adopted and some we did not.

Everyone was very well represented and we came up with a very good statement.

**Greg Blake** I would like to echo Dennis's statement. This is a very nice job pulling everything together; for such a small City to put together the four very distinct areas, north, south, east and west and their different characteristics. I want to commend the committee and everyone that worked on it did a fabulous job.

My only comment on the vision statement itself is there is a lot of background and intro... the vision statement is hidden on the bottom of your memo, if that can be pulled out "bolded" for the City as a whole and for each section. I could not find each section, just an editorial statement.

Over all a fantastic job and this will serve us well in the future.

**Rene Daniel** I have been on many groups, all the way from the parking committee, downtown parking problems. The two that seem to stick in my mind... I think it is process and that was the down town traffic scape and that was the first time Molly was charged with putting that on and leading that.

Again, I think it is the outside individuals that were brought in that really guide us as they have no ownership in anything. Molly seems to just be standing in with us with a whip making sure we stay on target and task.

This one in particular the choice of the company that is leading us is very good. Craig Freshly makes sure everyone has input he makes sure that anything said is always put down, talked about, thought about and then voted on. As Dennis says, not everything that I wanted I got but maybe a good chunk of it. I think that is what is important. I think it was very, very smart of Chair Haskell and yourself Molly into asking just to have them a little longer. I think that was a good strategy.

Before I move out of this to the Regular Session, Madam Mayor do you have any input?

**Colleen Hilton** I have a great appreciation for the committee's work. Molly worked hard to populate the committee with a diverse group. We had more applications for the committee than what we could accept given what we wanted for a workable group. I

think that speaks well for the investment that the community has in outlining its vision.

When I was elected, one of the first things I did was to go to the previous Comprehensive Plan to see what the vision for the community was. It is frequently asked of the Mayor; what is your vision for the City? In my opinion, I am more interested in what is the community's vision for the City. It was a process that I really looked forward to be able to work through and see and really leave this next phase with a clear and concise vision where this community wants to go.

As Dennis said, this looks like two pages; this is really the result of probably four months of hard work, lots of debate and discussion, healthy discussion that is why we have such a diverse group. I think what became clear though the whole process is that we do have very distinct neighborhoods and the different neighborhoods had different mini visions then the larger vision.

I am really pleased and proud of what is before you and extremely pleased to have this serve as our guide moving forward.

**Rene Daniel** anymore comments from anyone? If there are no comments, I would entertain motion to leave workshop session and move back into regular session.

**Michael Taylor** so moved Mr. Chair

**2<sup>nd</sup> Greg Blake**

**The Vote unanimous in favor 6-0**

**4. Adoption of vision Statements – Comprehensive Plan Update** - On behalf of the Westbrook Comprehensive Plan Update Task Force, the Department of Planning requests a Planning Board recommendation of approval for City Council adoption of proposed vision statements for individual areas of Westbrook and citywide which will serve as a guide to the Task Force as they write the update of the Comprehensive Plan as required by the State Planning Office.

**Rene Daniel** I would entertain someone to come forward to make a motion to hold a public meeting for the vision statement.

Molly, do we have enough time to meet in two weeks?

**Molly Just** we do, March 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Rene Daniel** does it have to go into the newspaper?

**Molly Just** this is not a Zoning change or a Comprehensive Plan amendment, formally I will have time to advertise twice in the American Journal.

**Greg Blake** moved to schedule a public hearing for the adoption of the vision statement, for the Comprehensive Plan on March 15, 2011.

2<sup>nd</sup> by **Dennis Isherwood**

The vote was unanimous in favor 6-0

## 5. Adjourn

*Respectfully submitted by Linda Gain PECE Administrative Assistant*