

## **STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**August 24, 2004**

### **Town Hall Meeting Room**

The meeting was called to order at 5:36 pm by Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager. In attendance were Linda Avery, William Donohue, Claudio Capone, Leigh Standish, James Clynch, Ralph Karanian, and Bonnie Therrien. Peter Gardow arrived at 5:40 pm.

Bonnie reviewed the charge of the Committee with the group. Leigh Standish asked if a Chairperson was needed. Bonnie said most Committees do have one and it helps her to have one point person to deal with for agendas, etc. She also explained that she would like to have the new Strategic Plan to her by the end of January so she could use this in her budget deliberations.

Ralph Karanian asked if stakeholders had been identified yet. Bonnie said no. He felt it was very important that the Committee makes a list of all stakeholders before working on the project.

Leigh Standish said that a few years ago, there was a group working on a regional task force through CRCOG that identified stakeholders. Bonnie and Leigh will look for this list, as this would be a good starting point for the Committee.

Bonnie explained the Metro Patterns forum which is going to be September 22nd at 7 pm at the Community Center. She felt it would be a good meeting for Strategic Plan Committee members to attend to hear from the public on their concerns. Linda Avery said she would drop off a copy of the Metro Patterns report to everyone's home.

Bill Donohue asked that the present Strategic Plan be updated in groupings so that things that are already done, ongoing, and needs to be done can be grouped together. This would make the document easier to read.

Jim Clynch made a motion to have Peter Gardow as the Chairperson of the Committee; Leigh Standish seconded the motion. Everyone was in agreement except Peter Gardow who abstained. Peter accepted the Chairmanship. He then took over the running of the meeting.

Peter Gardow made a motion to have Leigh Standish as the Vice Chair. Claudio Capone seconded the motion. Everyone was in agreement except Leigh Standish who abstained.

Chairman Gardow asked that the future meeting times and places be established. Everyone agreed Tuesday evenings did work well but later. It was agreed to start the meeting at 7 pm. The first meeting will be September 7th and then the 21st and then every other week from there.

Leigh Standish felt that the Committee should keep the same major division titles as the present plan as they worked so well in the past. Everyone agreed to this.

Chairman Gardow asked that the Town Manager try to obtain strategic plan processes from other Towns, States etc. so the group can review them.

Leigh Standish explained the process that was used by the original Strategic Planning Committee, as he was a member of that Committee.

Linda Avery said that it was important that the Committee touch every group in Town to receive their input.

Chairman Gardow said that in October, members of the Committee who can make it should go on "Wethersfield Live" to discuss the Committee's work and look for input.

Chairman Gardow asked that each Committee member tell each other why they are involved with the Committee and

what the goals of the Committee should be in their eyes. He said that for him, dusting off the present plan and updating the document is very important to him.

Linda Avery said that she is very process and goal oriented. She had e-mailed Bonnie with her ideas and Bonnie recommended she join the Committee. She has lived in Wethersfield all of her life and has seen a decline in the Town in perception and the attractiveness of the Town. She does not want it to slide further.

Jim Clynych said that he has attended most of the Town Council Meetings over the last 12 years. He has been instrumental in changing Town issues and he is proud of the Town. He too does not want to see the Town disintegrate any more.

Bill Donohue said that he has lived in Town 28 years and he is now retired and has the time to become involved in the community.

Claudio Capone said that this is his first foray into Town events. He is very proud of the Town and has led strategic planning where he works at a hospital. He felt he could use his skills to better the community.

Ralph Karanian said he volunteered out of fear. Over the last ten years he has become very concerned about the Town. He was on the Town Council in the late 80's. He has seen less investment in the community due to vocal people and that everyone is more concerned about keeping taxes down instead of investing in their community.

Leigh Standish said that his family has been in Wethersfield since 1635, so he has a long investment in the Town. He has seen a slow, negative change in the community. He feels he can contribute a sense of community and a strong sense of volunteerism. He wants to keep the community very strong.

Chairman Gardow said it was important that the plan have a balance, much like the last plan. He feels that at each meeting, two subject areas should be tackled.

Ralph Karanian thought that a roadmap of where we are and where we want to be needs to be discussed first and then the Committee could back into the deadline date for work to be done.

Leigh Standish said that the ranking of importance of items must come from the outside groups.

Chairman Gardow said that the report will need to go to the Town Council by their 2nd meeting in January, so by the Committee's second meeting in December, a draft must be completed. He listed some of the things that need to be done: Where are We Now, Final Report, Draft, Public Input - 2 hearings, Identify Stakeholders - these are just some items.

Leigh Standish said it was important for the Committee to get fresh ideas and do not use the current plan for people to speak on, as many things are not relevant now and perhaps the public has ideas of new things that are relevant and not listed in the present report.

Chairman Gardow said that for the next meeting, he would like everyone to report back as to where they feel we should be and what items have to be done to accomplish the Committee's goals, i.e. we will discuss developing a plan of development at the next meeting.

Bonnie said that due to a Town Council meeting, she could not be at the Committee's 9/7 meeting, so if they wish to review the status of the present plan, perhaps the Committee was willing to meeting on August 31st at 7 pm, so she could go through each item. The Committee agreed to this.

A motion was made by Ralph Karanian; seconded by Jim Clynych to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 pm. The vote was unanimous.