

MPWG – Proposal for Implementing the Vision – Meryl Mandell

In follow up to our meeting on 8/3, I am proposing the following approach to begin the task of implementing the Vision. While the importance of trying to clarify the town's fiscal and demographic future is an important piece of future town planning, there are so many uncertainties and variables in completing this task that I think this effort should be undertaken separately from Vision implementation. I would support the Selectboard starting a concurrent project with (and/or assigned to) the Finance Committee and other relevant town groups to try and answer the long range planning questions voiced by Mike Vinsky and Tim Logan.

My approach is to explore key Vision themes, in the form of new town committees, at each of our upcoming meetings:

- Fiscal Sustainability Committee – what does this mean? We will try and define this topic, then explore ideas noted in the data such as grant writing, shared municipal services with neighboring towns, a town solar project, etc. Implementation of this complex topic would start with the BOS setting up a committee to explore related issues in detail. The MPWG would write up a charge/mission for the committee, suggest membership size, identify generally who should be on the committee (eg. include a FinCom member), and mine the Vision report data, brain storm ideas, then summarize a list of key issues for the group to investigate.
- New Community Space Committee – possibly a meeting hall/library/senior center/archive that invites people to be there. We know this topic is a trigger issue for some in town so a well thought out, and sensitive approach to this topic will be critical to its success. This is certainly complex enough to start a committee, probably with representatives from the Library Board of Trustees, Building Committee, Seniors, and others. The MPWG would develop a mission statement and one page committee description, then present it to the BOS. The initial step could be to work with the Building Committee to conduct a thorough documentation of town buildings and determine if any of the identified community needs could be met in an existing/possibly rehabbed town space.
- Short Term Improvements (Low Hanging Fruit) Committee – this committee would be charged to investigate low cost, high result changes in any area of town operations and government. The key to selecting the improvements would be that they require minimal resources but have a high return. The MPWG would develop a mission for the committee, an approximate membership size, then a brainstormed list of initial ideas for the group to investigate. The committee charge would include developing and soliciting their own future improvement ideas from a variety of sources. Initial suggestions (thanks Allen) would be community gardening on Lot O-32, utilizing underused areas as available at SES, interviewing the Town Manager from Keene, NH for ideas to encourage civil behavior in town (he has a training element he distributes to committees and boards that encourages civil discussion), and supporting the new Neighborhood Safety Net sponsored by the Board of Health.