



Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting Minutes
Meeting #1
Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
Meeting Held at the Bristol Consolidated School Gymnasium

Committee Members Present: Alfred Ajami, Alex Beaudet, Thomas Bishop, Rebecca Cooper, Robert Davidson, Paul DiMauro, James Doherty, Peter Fischer, Richard Francis, Brittany Gill, RoseAnn Holladay, Patricia Jennings, Kenneth Kortemeier, Leon MacCorkle, Jason Sewall, John Stolecki, Dan Sullivan, Jessica Yates

Committee Members Absent: James Barnes

Also present: Chad Hanna (Selectboard Chair), Kristine Poland (Selectboard), Paul Yates (Selectboard), Christopher Hall (Town Administrator), Jessica Westhaver (Treasurer), Rachel Bizarro (Clerk), Lynde Dodge-Welch (Deputy Clerk), Lara Decker (Parks Director), Jennifer Ribeiro (BCS Principal), Robert Faunce (Planning Consultant)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

New Business –

Chad Hanna welcomed the committee and reminded everyone a vote was passed at Town Meeting 2021 to review the Comprehensive Plan. The charge to the committee is to update, make revisions, and insert additional information into the plan as needed. While the hope is to have the plan approved by the State of Maine as consistent with state standards of the Maine Growth Management Act, the ultimate goal will be to create a plan suitable for the taxpayers of Bristol. This process will take time and will require large amounts of information. Consultant Robert Faunce was on hand at the meeting to help give guidance for what the State will require for a consistent plan. The last Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2002, and was found inconsistent by the State, though approved by the voters of the Town. Items that will take place at the second meeting:

- Establish who a chair and vice chair to lead the committee.
- Discuss need for position of a secretary (*town staff will take minutes*).

Hanna reiterated the plan is to have all departments involved in this process, to include the Parks Department, the School Department, the Fire Department, as well as committees of the Town.

Robert Faunce introduced himself and shared he has worked on many projects with the Town in the past, to include the previous Comp Plan through the LCRPC. Faunce presentation reviewed the process expected:

- What is a Comprehensive Plan
- Why Comprehensive Plans Exist
 - 1989 State of Maine enacted the Growth Management Act. This was to control the uncontrollable growth happening in communities. Towns are not required to

adopt a Comprehensive Plan, however, if the State determines a plan is consistent with the act, it can provide assistance to the Town.

- State Growth Management Act Goals
- Incentives of a Plan found consistent (there many special grant programs anticipated in the near future, but priority will be to award them to Towns who have a consistent plan approved by the State)
- Community Benefits
- Comprehensive Plan Criteria Rule
- Components of a Comprehensive Plan
- Topic Areas Required for State Consistency
- Next Steps:
 - **Review of Data sets**, which are available specifically for Bristol that contain most of the information needed. These can be found at https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/comp_plans/planning_data.shtml.
 - **Community Survey** is crucial and should be completed as a first step to gather data on what the community is looking for. Faunce will provide copies of surveys from other communities to give an idea as to what should be included. He will also share links to other comprehensive plans recently completed. The next meeting the committee should start having an initial discussion of what the future of Bristol will look like, where they want to go. This needs to be a picture for the entire Town. This will be the Vision Statement. Somerville and Westport Island are good examples of Lincoln County Towns who recently completed this process.

Faunce believes Bristol is under pressure due to its recent growth and this is a good time to start the process.

Questions:

- Alfred Ajami - Looking at our existing plan, are we looking at recreating it or modifying this one? Why was the 2002 plan found inconsistent with the State?
 - Faunce stated it is a 20 year old plan and he has not reviewed Bristol's plan recently. If the goal is to get it approved as consistent by the state, there will be a lot of work. If you just want one that is best for the Town, we can work with the current plan. Damariscotta is the smallest "service center" in the state. Their last plan was 2013. It was found consistent by the state. We need to look at what has changed since then, in the plan and in the Town. The crash in 2008 changed many things and could have an effect on the 2002 plan. We will also be receiving information from the Department of Education. Hanna shared he did not want the committee to be constrained by the 2002 plan, but it is good historical data to review and use where appropriate. It is beneficial to see where we were 20 years ago and where we are now. Housing being a prime example, how does a young family afford housing in Bristol? Poland shared the letter of inconsistency from the State for the 2002 plan is available on the Town Website. The major inconsistency was the lack of planning around growth and capital planning. The letter can be found at: https://www.bristolmaine.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf4191/f/uploads/2003-1-31_inconsistency_letter.pdf
- Kenneth Kortemeier – Are we aiming for State consistency?
 - Hanna believed it would be an appropriate goal, but it isn't the main goal. If meeting consistency is in conflict with what the community wants, we have to follow their wishes. The Comp Plan Committee will be the group to put together the final plan to present to the community. Hanna did not believe it would be a stretch to come up with a consistent

- plan that works for the community. Poland stated the outcome will become clearer as we progress. The amount of time that has lapsed since our last Comp Plan, the States requirements have become more relaxed. Faunce stated the problem with the 2002 plan was Bristol accelerated growth at the time and the State felt there should be zoning or a plan directed for helping with growth of the Town. The State is now more relaxed that if the Town believes their plan can handle the growth; the State will take this into consideration. The Town can work with the State for input on where we need to adjust to be consistent.
- In response Thomas Bishop - Faunce stated the development in Bristol will be a focus as it is currently booming. The State will want to know if the Town is looking to preserve the current aesthetic of the Town and how so, or if the Town has a new vision for the future. Once a plan is approved, no board is required to enforce it, it is used as a guidance tool for moving forward.
- Leanon MacCorkle – Once the survey results are finalized is it possible the residents would want the plan to not be consistent? Faunce stated yes, it is possible, though it is important for the survey to be distributed as wide as possible, to include year round residents, part time residents, seasonal residents, and businesses. It is important to get a diverse view of the hopes for the future of Bristol.
- Jessica Yates – What are the teeth associated with the plan? How do the Selectmen use the document to guide their work? Will the plan count for something? Faunce stated one of the things that is required by the State is a generalized schedule of when things will be accomplished. Items such as capital improvements (replacement of fire trucks, town vehicles, buildings, etc.). The plan is used as a capital planning guide for the future. Once an approved plan is in place, each town department will be tasked with making sure we follow the plan specific to their area of concern moving forward. This document will be used as a guide.
- Christopher Hall – The Town does not have a large budget set aside for this committee (\$5K), and Faunce will be compensated for his time. Would it be appropriate for Faunce to be present for the initial meetings, then come back towards the end? Faunce believes the Town would not necessarily need to have a consultant. He thinks the committee will find once a chair and sub committees are established, the process will start moving on its own. Faunce will be available for phone calls, and meetings when needed as a resource.
- Jessica Westhaver – Is the Lincoln County Regional Planning Committee (LCRPC) an appropriate resource for the Town in this planning? Faunce stated the LCRPC will provide input as a part of their non-cost services available to the Town. Their expertise will be with the transportation section.
- Richard Francis – Believes the next meeting should be focused on the committee having a discussion amongst each other to really understand the process. Right now it is possible many members are feeling overwhelmed by the information in front of them.
- Hall stated the chapter headings are a good start for sub committees. For the plan to be of operational use, it needs to focus on specific and complex ideas, items such as is there a need to build a new school in the next 10 years? This would be an extreme cost to the Town. We also have a creeping crisis of lack of access to trails and shoreland. Informal rights of access for hunting and snowmobiling are eroding, and as new owners acquire land, are closing this access. Point being is the outline for the 2002 plan should not be the limit the committee, while the State is looking for consistency, we can add on additional sections the Town would benefit from. Faunce stated there is no limit as to what topics the plan can cover.
- Hanna stated there should be no stress to complete the plan for the next Town meeting We will take the time we need and will set goals that are appropriate.

House Keeping –

- Meetings will be scheduled for the second Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 11th at 7pm (*location to be determined*).
- Hall and Westhaver will gather data before the next meeting. Everyone should review the sample surveys and email questions that members believe are most critical to Hall. It would be beneficial to have an announcement about the survey sent out with the tax bill mailing.
- Committee members should begin to consider what areas are of interest as to decide which sub committees they would enjoy working on.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Westhaver