

**TOWN OF YARMOUTH
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING**

March 28, 2023

7:00 PM, Town Hall Community Room, 200 Main Street, and via Remote Meeting

<https://meet.goto.com/451872165>

Join by phone: 1 (872) 240-3412, Access Code: 451-872-165.

AGENDA

- I. Review Meeting Summary from February 28 (5 minutes)
- II. Review the Findings of the Imagine Yarmouth Visioning Initiative (20 minutes)
 - a. Discuss how this information should inform the Steering Committee's efforts
- III. Review Inventory Chapters (60 minutes)
 - a. Housing
 - b. Recreation
 - c. Transportation
 - d. Marine Resources
- IV. Public Comment (5 minutes)
- V. Adjournment

Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
 February 28, 2023
 7:00 PM
 Meeting Summary

Name	Attendance
John Auble	Y
Daniel Backman	Y
Crispin Bolese	Y
Emily Bryson	N
Shanna Crofton Mitchell	N
Judy Colby-George	Y
Hildy Ginsberg	Y
Miriam Markowitz	Y
Tim McGonagle	Y
Karin Orenstein	Y
Neena Panosso	Y
Todd Rich	Y
Bill Richards	Y
Lynn Seeley	Y
Sophie Wentzell	Y
Jamie Whittemore	Y
Sarah Witte	N
Erin Zwirko, Planning Director	Y
Julie Dubovsky, Assistant Planner	Y
Ben Smith, North Star Planning	Y
Logan Capone, North Star Planning	Y

I. Review Meeting Summary from January 23

Motion to accept moved by Bill Richards and seconded to approve by Daniel Backman. The Committee unanimously approved the meeting summary from January 23.

II. Election of Co-Chairs

Motion to accept nomination of co-chairs by Judy Colby-George and seconded by John Auble. The Committee unanimously approved Bill Richards and Hildy Ginsberg as steering committee co-chairs.

III. General Discussion on Comprehensive Plan with Planners and Consultants

Steering committee members asked questions of the Erin and the NSP team pertaining to the purpose and scope of the comprehensive plan. They explained how the comprehensive planning process is framed by Maine's Growth Management Act with certain requirements (data collection, analyses, strategy alignment, and goals) to assess existing conditions and plan for future growth. Although it originates in land use, it is all interrelated with the facets

of communities and balanced with future needs and demands, state and regional policies or plans, and the community's goals. Questions included:

1. Is most of this effort about managing land use? A. The Community Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, also known as Maine's Growth Management Act, is based in land use but the overall purpose is to consider how a community functions and will do so in the future. Various elements come together in a comprehensive plan including "10-year projections of local and regional growth in population and residential, commercial, and industrial activity; the projected need for public facilities; and the vulnerability of and potential impacts on natural resources. "
2. How does land use planning here affect zoning? Or related? A. Recommendations for zoning ordinance changes can come out of the comprehensive planning process. They can be specific revisions or broad; the Planning Board and Town Council would then choose whether or not to implement the recommendations. A committee member pointed out that the comprehensive plan is not a legally binding document, and Erin reiterated its purpose about guiding policy and investments, and consistency with regional and state level planning.
3. How does Yarmouth fall under the discussion of growth and available land? How are we seen as a Town? A. Ben pointed out that this question will come into play during the required Future Land Use section. The 2019 Open Space Plan analysis that NSP conducted for the Town showed that Yarmouth is one of the most densely populated municipalities in the region based on population and Town size, but there will likely be continued growth pressure that requires assessment of the Town's ability to grow based on infrastructure, services, and community needs.
4. Is it more than residential growth? Also commercial? A. Yes and the NSP team includes consultants researching commercial and market analysis and housing demand. There are required analyses for future population, residential, commercial and industrial growth.
5. How do our recommendations influence the capital budget for the Town? A. The plan requires an assessment of capital facilities and public facilities necessary to support growth and development, and to protect the environment and health, safety and welfare of the public and the costs of those facilities and services. It is important for the plan to be grounded in fiscal responsibility since the plan can inform decisions about operations and capital investments.
6. Will we be addressing community input in the process? A. Next discussion on the agenda is the draft blueprint for a Public Participation Plan. A state requirement for the comprehensive plan is to include a summary of the public participation process. Erin asked that if anyone is especially interested in this topic and implementing a PPP to contact her.
7. To what extent should a comprehensive plan consider neighborhood communities, tie into regional plans, or the plans of other towns? A. The plan must include a Regional Coordination Program about shared resources and facilities, and each Topic Area section of the inventory must also contain consistency with respective state goals and policies, or highlight adoption of a regional plan in a topic area, like a regional housing plan.

8. Would we be looking at the top 10 or 15 tax payers in the town to determine their long-range plans? A. Economic chapter does look at the Town's largest employers, but primarily from employment numbers and impacts on the local economy. NSP will coordinate with Camoin Associates on how the Town can be positioned to take part in those employers' long-range planning, perhaps through a Strength Weakness Opportunity Threats (S.W.O.T.) analysis.
9. Are we building on the shoulders of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan? A. Erin noted that this should be a group discussion at a future meeting; there is a lot of good information in the 2010 inventory and there are individuals who were involved in its development on the current committee. However, many conditions have changed since 2010, hence the purpose of an expiration date on plans. Much from the 2010 plan was achieved, so pertinent to review what can be updated, what still needs to be advanced, and what must be revised to reflect current conditions.

IV. Review Inventory Chapters

Logan gave a demonstration of how to use the Adobe tools to review and comment on the draft chapters; all the comments are due by May 1st. For any technical challenges, members should reach out to Logan and Erin. The inventory chapters will be released for review in batches; steering committee members are encouraged to review them as they are distributed rather than waiting for the entirety and coming up against the deadline. The NSP team are looking for high-level feedback and to ensure that the chapters are factually accurate and complete. They also plan to add a page before each section, like in the 2010 plan, with a summary and the key 10 takeaways. Erin suggested that a separate document be created as a repository for the forward-thinking questions to make sure that they're discussed during the public engagement process. As there is a wealth of data and information in the inventory chapters, the committee discussed ways to make them more easily digestible to the public, including noting any underlying factors (like COVID) affecting the data. Erin recommended adding a temporary table of contents to provide a framework for the larger layout.

V. Adopt Engagement Plan

Logan walked the committee through the draft plan and Ben reiterated that it is an outline and blueprint that will be regularly evaluated during implementation. The NSP team asked for feedback overall and specifically on the idea of holding topic-based or place-based workshops. The committee discussed this strategy and voiced concerns with segregating conversations or becoming myopic. They found consensus on holding topic-based workshops with skilled facilitators who can deftly connect the topics to various parts of the town. Ben offered that maybe specific events, like a walking tour, could be place-based and issues associated with those places separated from the larger town-wide conversations. Erin encouraged anyone interested in public engagement strategies to contact her.

VI. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

VII. Adjournment

DRAFT



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To: Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
From: Erin Zwirko, Director of Planning & Development
Re: Background for February 28, 2023, Steering Committee Meeting
Date: March 21, 2023

Please see the following notes to help you review and be prepared for the March 28, 2023, Steering Committee meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Review Meeting Summary from February 2023

Attached is the February meeting summary from the Steering Committee's previous meeting for the Committee to review and approve. Please let us know if you have any revisions to the meeting summary.

Review Findings of the Imagine Yarmouth Visioning Initiative

The Department kicked off the [Imagine Yarmouth Visioning Initiative](#) in May 2022 with assistance from consultant, Berry Dunn. The purpose of this project was to identify common values and priorities for the future through community input in a fair and representative engagement process. To guide the development of a vision for the Town, a robust public engagement effort was conducted to obtain input from as many Town residents and stakeholders as possible. The purpose of this effort was to understand community values, priorities, and goals for the Town's future.

The purpose of conducting an engagement and visioning effort prior to initiating the comprehensive planning process was to involve the community and focus attention on the big picture vision for the Town's future. A plan should be rooted in the Town's values and guided by a vision that is truly the community's vision. The following values were expressed by residents and stakeholders throughout the visioning process. While not all participants agreed on how the Town should move forward, there was consensus on the community values that are fundamental to the Town's identity. The subsequent draft vision statement attempts to unite these values into a clear vision for supporting and enhancing these values in the future and will be revisited as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

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Community Values

COMMUNITY VALUES

We value the **natural environment**, including the numerous parks, open space preserves, rivers, and Casco Bay, and prioritize preserving and protecting these areas for enjoyment by all and as critical ecosystems.

We value a **connected community** where residents have strong social bonds through a shared commitment to civic engagement, and where community members can safely and easily access services, amenities, recreation, jobs, and social opportunities within the Town.

We value the **history and culture** of the people and land that is now the Town of Yarmouth and the physical environment that embodies that history, from the natural land and water features to the built environment.

We value a **welcoming and inclusive environment** where neighbors help one another and a strong sense of community brings all people together, regardless of background.

Draft Vision Statement

The Town of Yarmouth is a small coastal community with a vibrant and picturesque village center. Yarmouth's identity is deeply rooted in the Town's history, beauty, and commitment to community. The walkability of the Town's historic Main Street, abundant open space areas, and active community groups all contribute to community members' sense of connectedness to the Town.

The Town is dedicated to protecting and preserving what makes Yarmouth a great place to live. At the same time, residents recognize the significant local, regional, and global challenges that the Town faces, and are committed to addressing these issues with careful consideration for the Town's history and culture and with creativity to leverage opportunities to enhance the Town's defining characteristics— beauty, history, inclusivity, abundant open spaces and recreation opportunities, and commitment to volunteerism – to build an even stronger community.

To meet the needs of residents and community members, the Town will plan and make decisions through a lens of equity, sustainability, and fiscal responsibility to ensure that the community's values and critical assets are sustained for future generations.

We've included this agenda item to give the Steering Committee background on this effort, and to make sure that the Committee has the chance to review the community values and draft vision statement as a group. As has been discussed, as part of the plan update, we will need to look back at this effort and make sure that it is still reflective of what we are hearing from the community. We also think that it will be helpful as a framework in which to review the inventory chapters.

Review Inventory Chapters

Please use the following links to access the draft chapters:

- Marine Resources: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:c22be0c1-15a7-3aef-8eb6-ca2a213200a0>
- Transportation: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:6b7c9be7-1b8d-30cc-ac8a-6566f73f4380>
- Recreation: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:8952b576-d269-390e-ac9a-643e2e9413e9>
- Housing: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:37d80ea5-93cc-30bf-8550-7e91eb8b6253>

As noted in my previous memo, consider reviewing the chapters alongside the state's [self-assessment check list](#).

Earlier in the meeting, we will have presented the big picture: the community values and the draft vision statement. When we review the various written products, we are taking a closer look at the community, and either considering the existing conditions when reviewing the inventory chapters or the future conditions when reviewing the future land use plan and policies and strategies.

The goal for this portion of the meeting is to review each of the presented inventory chapters in the context of the community values and the draft vision statement and provide feedback on the following:

1. What is important and valuable for the average Yarmouth citizen to know on each of these topics?
2. Based on the community values and draft vision statement, what should the Town be doing with this information?

For each individual topic based on the information presented, consider the following questions:

Marine Resources:

1. Can you determine whether traditional water-dependent uses are thriving or in decline in Yarmouth? What factors might be contributing to change?
2. Can you determine whether there is adequate public access to the waterfront?
3. What is the right balance between traditional water-dependent uses and public access?

Transportation:

1. What are the critical elements of the transportation network in Yarmouth?
2. Can you determine whether the existing network is efficient or inefficient? What might contribute to inefficiencies?

Recreation:

1. Yarmouth has a wealth of open space and recreation facilities, but what might still be missing?
2. How should Yarmouth appropriately plan for acquiring additional spaces? Do we have the right partnerships?

Housing:

1. Can you determine what the existing housing stock in the community is adequate or inadequate? What else might help inform the existing conditions?

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2. What are the major drivers affecting housing availability in the community?

Public Comment

The Steering Committee meetings are open to the public, and as such, we will always reserve time at the end of the meeting for public comment.

Other Attachments

1. Draft Table of Contents
2. List of Abbreviations (Please feel free to add to this list as you come across abbreviations):
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1XNrocha-2zFR0ZVpAKwVFdjVEyy9rQXc2OZ94a5B330/edit?usp=sharing>

Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan: Draft Outline

Part 1: Comprehensive Plan

Plan Introduction

Summary of Past Planning Efforts

Priority Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Public Process

Visioning & Values

- Core Values
- Vision Statement for Yarmouth

Future Land Use Plan

Regional Coordination

Plan Implementation

Performance Measures

Part 2: Appendices

Appendix A: Inventory Chapters

- Historic & Archaeological Resources
- Natural Resources
- Water Resources
- Marine Resources
- Recreation
- Population
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economy
- Fiscal Capacity
- Public Facilities
- Existing Land Use

Appendix B: Imagine Yarmouth: Community Engagement Summary and Draft Vision Statement

Appendix C: Summary of Public Participation

Appendix D: Summary of Future Land Use Workshop

Appendix E: Complete List of Goals, Policies, and Strategies