

Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
 January 23, 2023
 7:00 PM
 Meeting Summary

Name	Attendance
John Auble	Y
Daniel Backman	Y
Crispin Bolese	Y
Emily Bryson	Y
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	Y
Erin Zwirko, Planning Director	Y
Julie Dubovsky, Assistant Planner	Y
Ben Smith, North Star Planning	Y
Logan Capone, North Star Planning	Y

I. Welcome and Introduction

The Steering Committee members, staff and consultants introduced themselves and shared how many years they'd lived in Yarmouth, their favorite places in Yarmouth and favorite things to do on snow days. There are new members of the community on the committee, decades-long residents, and those who've only known Yarmouth. Many residents highlighted natural and community resources, like Royal River Park, as well as small, intimate settings like the cemetery behind the Meeting House.

II. New Committee Information

Erin provided an overview of the technical aspects of the steering committee, which included the committee's role and responsibilities, open meetings requirements, and the maintenance of public records. The meeting date of the fourth Tuesday was confirmed; it was discussed that potential calendar conflicts, like Halloween and Christmas, will be resolved later. It was mentioned that the group may wish to consider electing a chair and vice chair at a future meeting as a best practice. The Chair and/or Vice Chair would work

more closely with the Department of Planning & Development and the consultants in between meetings to set agendas and help facilitate the Committee meetings.

The Committee unanimously adopted a remote participation policy affording in-person and remote access to Committee members and the public.

III. Comprehensive Planning Introduction and Overview of 2010 Comprehensive Plan

Erin gave an overview of comprehensive planning and the requirements of the State. It was asked who would be tasked with drafting the actual plan, which predominantly falls to North Star Planning in collaboration with the Town staff. Ben Smith of North Star Planning explained that their team is comprised of specialists and subject matter experts who will assist in collecting information and drafting elements of the plan, which will be reviewed with and by the committee. The consultant's primary role is to facilitate the comprehensive planning process and to provide project management so that they product, the Plan, is done on time and in compliance with the State's requirements under the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF). It was also recommended by a committee member that everyone review the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and that there was merit in conducting this as an update rather than starting from scratch.

IV. Review Workplan and Schedule

Erin and the North Star Planning team explained the workplan for the next 18 months. The committee's participation extends over 2 years in order to wrap up the effort locally and potentially transition to an implementation committee. In general, the committee will meet monthly, but there may be opportunities for working groups and more frequent and focused collaborations, particularly for outreach and engagement events. Ben added that we are currently in Phase 1: Inventory and Analysis, in which the consulting team and Town are working to collect all the State required data and draft a blueprint for consistent and persistent public participation. Ben indicated that the public participation blueprint would be drafted for review by the Committee at the next regularly scheduled meeting in February.

V. Discuss Engagement Strategies

Logan shared what North Star Planning had originally proposed during the RFP response and how it was revised based on lessons learned by the Town staff during the visioning process. A revised framework focuses on persistent communications and engagement throughout all four phases of the process: inventory, visioning, future land use mapping, and drafting, review, and adoption of the plan. Different types of tools could be used, such as direct mailings, and varying levels of engagement could be provided, based on the [International Association of Public Participation \(IAP2\) Spectrum of Public Participation](#): inform – consult – involve – collaborate – empower.

Questions were posed to the committee to help shape the initial blueprint, which will be presented at the February meeting. The committee discussed whether workshops or focus sessions should be virtual, in-person with recordings, or hybrid. Members noted that events, virtual or in-person, should be held multiple times and at varying days/times to meet the

needs of different people. It was also noted that it is very important to have a strong virtual and in-person presence, and for the Town website on the comprehensive plan to be a clear, centralized source of all information because not everyone uses social media. Virtual tools, including the consultants’ website for the plan, should be compatible and accessible.

The committee also discussed ideas on communication tools. Support was voiced for a mixed media approach that incorporates various tools throughout the process, across Yarmouth’s neighborhoods, and visually throughout the Town. These included:

	1-way out, broadcast information (Inform)	2-way interactions to give and receive information (Consult & Involve)
in-person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorful flyer for Town Hall and library to distribute • Presentations from subject matter experts (like Celebrate Yarmouth) • Stationary presentations located throughout Town • Use various newsletters within Town (like Chamber of Commerce’s) • Town Mascot (like Latchstring Lady) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify neighborhood contacts (like the COVID Neighborhood Taskforce) • Tag-along to community events or association meetings • Work with high schoolers earning community service credit to have tables at community events • Develop waterproof stations throughout Town for people to engage with • Collaborate with school and library on events
online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town website • Podcast (like Moth radio) • Voicemail line for people to call in, could be used to answer discussion prompts or leave questions • Utilize QR codes for quick access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with existing community discussion boards and their moderators • Surveys/polling (must work with all browsers) • Social media • Texting service for one or two question surveys

Logan conducted a live poll of the committee for their thoughts on the top five topics (of the Inventory chapters) to have smaller focus groups or community wide workshops on. The results during the evening included (but the survey remains open for the Committee members to consider for the next few days):

1. Housing
2. Parks and Recreation
3. Land Use and Public Policy
4. Economic Development

5. Public Facilities and Services
6. Population and Demographics
7. Natural Resources and Water Resources
8. Climate Change and Sustainability
9. Transportation
10. Historic and Archaeological Resources
11. Marine Resources
12. Agriculture and Forestry

The topic of childhood development and education was also suggested for inclusion. Erin also noted that while the topics of equity and resiliency aren't required by State law, they may also be included in this iteration as overarching themes. Ben noted that many communities have chosen to include public health as a topic following the COVID-19 pandemic.

VI. Public Comment

There were no members of the public in attendance. No public comments were received.

VII. Adjournment