

Meeting of the
Hillsborough County Master Plan Committee

January 24, 2008 (Amended)
Bouchard Building, Goffstown, NH

Minutes of the Public Session (Amended)
(Not Official Until Approved by the Committee and signed)

Present: Comm. C. Holden, M. Castagna, L. Kaiser, D. Reidy, G. Wenger, R. Sawyer, A. Renzullo, A. Peterson, and L. Stonner.

Also Present: P. Manney, S. Griffin, and J. Sachs.

Call to Order

Comm. Holden called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was established.

D. Reidy opened the meeting with a suggestion that the Committee review the components of a Design Charrette—a planning process discussed at the last meeting. He also explained the importance of considering all the costs involved with the Charrette so that the Committee will be prepared to submit a planning cost for the next fiscal year budget.

M. Castagna inquired if a determination had been made regarding what the final product would look like from the Charrette process. He asked, “What is the global goal of what the Committee wants to accomplish?” He suggested that in the big picture the committee should be looking to identify the characteristics of the County property in relation to such issues as geo-tech, habitat, wildlife, zoning, etc. He noted that through the Charrette process the committee would be able to: Determine what is usable land or could be considered for development; discover the cost of re-use of the property; determine if the County wants to participate in development; discover revenue-generating property and opportunities; and learn what revenue the County may look to generate from its land. Mr. Wenger suggested that a Charrette process could provide the tools to arrive at those answers as well as many others and to identify potential revenue sources. He noted that the current Board is not interested in sell any additional County property.

Comm. Holden informed the Committee that it would be good to be able to generate some revenue in light of the change in the State shifting costs to the Counties; she noted that it would be important to have a plan that will guide the County for the next fifteen to twenty years and provide continuity. She explained that the current Board would not be interested in selling property, and cited the experience of selling land to the Town, which later sold a portion of that land to a car dealership.

Mr. Reidy suggested that it seemed appropriate to discuss the goals of the Design Charrette. The Committee, through discussion, identified goals to include:

- Provide a consensus-building opportunity with all the stakeholders.
- Develop a plan for re-use of the property
- Develop a plan for under-utilized land
- Develop schemes to do something with that property
- Develop a magnitudinous cost budget for re-development
- Identify alternative funding sources for projects (foundations, grants, etc.)

L. Kaiser inquired how the Committee would find the funding sources to which M. Castagna replied that it would be done through research, much of which has already done.

The Committee discussed other goals and identified the following stakeholders:

- Board of Commissioners

- Delegation members
- Executive Committee
- Select boards/Mayor/Board of Aldermen from all communities
- Citizens of Goffstown and the County, especially neighboring towns (Manchester, Weare, New Boston, Bedford and Goffstown)
- NH Department of Environmental Services
- NH Department of Transportation
- Town or State Conservation commissions
- Southern NH Regional Planning Board
- Town Zoning Board(s)
- Town Economic Development Councils
- Abutters to the County's property
- Piscataquog Watershed Assoc.
- Piscataquog River Local Advisory Council
- Local & state watershed
- Local Department of Public Works
- Utility Companies (PSNH, MWW, Natural Gas, Key Span, Verizon, Comcast, National grid)
- Local advisory groups
- County employees and users of this property, such as the Nursing Home Advisory group,
- Other users of the property such as fishermen, canoeists, kayakers
- The County Administrator
- NH Co-op Extension Service

Mr. Castagna noted the importance of involving all stakeholders in an effort to avoid ancillary issues as the County moves forward.

Mr. Wenger asked for information about what the Design Charrette team would need for the planning process. Mr. Castagna responded that it would need items such as aerial photographs (aerial maps used as base maps for the design) and site design (of any particular parcels)

L. Kaiser noted that the wetland delineation study does not show which land is usable or developed. Mr. Wenger suggested that this could be followed-up on when specific needs are identified. A discussion followed. It was noted that maps in 40 scale and 100 scale would be beneficial for future work.

Mr. Reidy asked if it would be helpful to have a small Committee charged with the responsibility of gathering all pertinent information, to which M. Castagna responded that this is not a huge endeavor and the Charrette facilitator will gather this information. He offered that the best way to run a Design Charrette is avoid providing too much information beforehand so that those attending come into the process without any pre-conceived notions. He suggested that a clear map with boundaries identified as well as any DOT information that pertains to the property and zoning requirements would be appropriate. A brief discussion regarding zoning followed. Mr. Griffin offered that the property is currently zoned as Agricultural. He suggested that he believes the Planning Board would consider a plan to amend the zoning if it is offered as part of this planning process. It was noted that the Charrette process might identify whether zoning changes are necessary.

The Committee discussed Rte. 114, noting that it is a State highway with access controlled by the State. Mr. Peterson noted that access points could be a concern and opined that the people involved need to have defining characteristics so they are not making recommendations that cannot be done, such as additional curb cuts. Mr. Castagna suggested that DOT be a part of the process and that information and the limitations be discussed as part of the process. Mr. Peterson noted that the County might have fewer restrictions as a government entity.

L. Kaiser inquired as to how the Committee will learn the limitations of the property at a Charrette and if an engineer will be a part of the process telling the Committee where it can and cannot build a road etc. She expressed her belief that part of the planning process has not been done and noted that she feels like the decision had already been made to use a Design Charrette without the Committee knowing who would be involved, how they would be paid, and why should they do this. A discussion followed. Mr. Castagna offered that a Charrette team would typically include Civil Engineers, Traffic Engineers, Architects, Real Estate professionals, and Landscape Architects-usually between 10 to 15 professionals. Ms. Kaiser inquired regarding who decides what professionals will be involved and what the cost will be. A brief discussion of the County's bidding requirements followed. Mr. Peterson noted that the professionals that will be hired are going to be able to frame the issues with the property and be able to present it so that there can be a substantive discussion and so that everyone understands what is being discussed.

Mr. Castagna provided some insight into experiences he has had with Charrettes. He noted that they usually take place over two days with the Charrette facilitator selecting a team that typically comes in the first day in the morning; it evaluates what the scope is, what the Committee is trying to achieve, and what the dynamic is. It reviews all the information, does a site walk or tour of the property to see what it is dealing with, and it gets oriented to the goal. He offered that in the afternoon there would be either one or two listening sessions (day & evening) with as many stakeholders as possible. The listening sessions will be brainstorming sessions with all the stakeholders in a controlled environment. Poignant questions will be asked to keep them on point, with a goal of learning the issues, dynamics, possibilities, and other items pertinent to the discussion. Consideration will be given to what the Committee would like to see happen during the planning. The next day the team will spend six or seven hours coming up with graphics and designing, in a broad scale, a format or schemes that define the best use of the usable property. In the afternoon or early evening of the second day, the team will make a presentation to the stakeholders. Following the two-day session, approximately six weeks later a booklet is produced that covers the activities and outlines the recommendations of the Charrette Team. The result would be a document that takes into consideration the input of the stakeholders who participated that can be used as a road map of the County looks to move forward. The document outlines the recommendations of the Charrette team, and establishes short-term and long-term goals as well as establishing a budget, identifying funding sources and providing a document that will guide the County to the next step.

L. Kaiser noted that she would like to be certain that the County's needs are considered first. Comm. Holden noted that this is important and that the Board of Commissioners would look to provide input.

A timeline was discussed with possible dates for a Design Charrette being held on a Friday and Saturday, possibly August 15-16 or August 22-23. The Committee members agreed that it would be beneficial if the Charrette could be held before the upcoming State election gear up. Mr. Peterson expressed his concern regarding the expenses involved with detailed engineering. Mr. Castagna offered that at this stage, the engineering is schematic, pretty picture stuff, not detailed engineering, which would come down the line as a next step, should the County choose to proceed with a project. Comm. Holden noted that it is necessary to get information for the Executive Committee and the Delegation so they can make an informed decision. Comm. Holden mentioned the importance of a cost estimate

A discussion of the expenses associated with the Charrette process followed. The following expenses were discussed. It was noted that the retail value of the process would be approximately \$50,000,

- Friday: Lunch and dinner (staff),
- Saturday: Coffee and pastries(in a.m.) and lunch.
- Professionals – may be a stipend.
- Cost of the book that will be the final product-approximately, sixty hours, \$6,000.
- Printing cost of approximately \$1,500

- Materials cost of about \$2,000
- Mileage rate for the Delegation (both days)

P. Manney indicated that she would research the cost of the corridor study. Mr. Castagna explained that with the city of Manchester, he donated his time for the two days and they are paying him for the cost of the booklet. Each engineer participant was given a \$300 stipend for their time and participation, and there was a materials cost of approximately \$2,000. Their cost will be about \$10,000 for a \$50,000 value. He indicated that there is no reason this cannot be done the same way, noting that the engineers involved could be looking at future work from the project. He suggested that upwards of fifteen professionals might be involved.

L. Kaiser expressed her belief that the towns have engineers that could likely volunteer for the County. Comm. Holden noted that realistically the Committee should prepare a budget and be prepared to pay people. Mr. Castagna suggested recommending the full amount in the budget, and if there is a savings in the County's favor, it is a plus. L. Kaiser asked if Real Estate professionals would be involved, to which Mr. Castagna responded that one or two should be a part of the process. L. Kaiser expressed her belief that it should not be necessary to pay Real Estate professionals – they usually work on a commission basis. Mr. Peterson noted that if the Committee were to bring a request for \$10,000 or \$15,000 to the Delegation, it would be smart to have a realistic budget for this process so we can actually proceed. He expressed his belief that it might not be reasonable to “hold out the carrot” that some future commercial development or sale might be generated from this process; it needs to be open so we can inventory our assets and develop a plan that will pass muster with elected officials.

Comm. Holden suggested that it might be wise to budget for a boundary survey, and while the Committee may not need this in the initial phase, it might be necessary later, therefore should be included in the FY09 budget. Mr. Castagna suggested that it not necessary to do the survey now. The money does not need to be spent until there is a decision to develop or do something with a portion of the property-then it will be necessary. The development phase of any project will likely include those costs. Mr. Wenger noted that that phase of a project would be more likely to occur in FY10. Following a discussion, the Committed determined that it would not recommend the inclusion of the cost of a boundary survey in the FY09 budget.

Mr. Wenger asked for confirmation that part of this process will identify items where costs will be incurred as the County moves forward with the development process, either by the County or by the developer. Cost items could include surveying, road building and things of that nature. Mr. Peterson indicated that he sees costs of \$6,000, \$4,500, \$2,000 then the cost of meals, and asked where the \$50,000 figure comes from. Mr. Castagna informed the Committee that the \$50,000 would be the “full boat” cost if you hired professionals with no consideration for pro bono work. There was discussion about who would do the work and the consensus was that the RFP would determine that. M. Castagna offered that for budget purposes, he would recommended that the \$50,000 amount be recommended, and if the work can be obtained pro bono that would result in a savings but that at this point he did not believe that the Committee should rely on a partial pro bono Charrette.

Mr. Reidy summarized that a Design Charrette could cost as much as \$50,000, but we do have the expectation that we will be able to complete it for substantially less. Mr. Peterson noted that he sees \$15,000 for hard costs and a possible \$35,000 for the person running the Charrette at full price. There was further discussion about potential costs. Mr. Castagna noted that each person in the Charrette team would devote a fair amount of hours up front, and many hours after the Charrette is, over-it's not just the two days.

Mr. Reidy asked about other costs. Mr. Castagna indicated that mailing costs are not included in that figure. The Committee suggested the following mailings:

- Save the date postcard to stakeholders

- Formal letter to stakeholders (need to have at least two mailings)
- Reminder postcard to stakeholders
- Email reminders

It was suggested that the Committee recommend a budget of \$5,000 for mailings.

L. Kaiser noted that she thought the purpose of the Charrette is to ascertain the needs of the County and asked if engineering work would be done while these people are here. Mr. Castagna noted that the people would be doing design work, concept design, not engineering. Ms. Kaiser asked about how specific this process would be, and an example was given that there may be a decision to set aside land near the Nursing Home for future use versus going into the detail of determining how many more beds the Nursing Home might need. Commissioner Holden noted that the County may not need to be in the Nursing Home business, but it is. She gave an example that it is possible we could do away with the Nursing Home and make it into an assisted living facility, and potentially down the road, build another Nursing Home. You might see that as a future need of the County. Mr. Reidy noted that the process must consider what the County's needs are, in general, for the next 20 years or 50 years, or whatever the Committee decides. Mr. Peterson noted that wetland must be identified. Mr. Castagna indicated that the process might determine the biggest footprint you could put on usable land, based on wetlands and soils. Comm. Holden noted that the County does have a very rough plan of where roads could be placed.

L. Kaiser stressed her concern that the Committee should know how much each person is making for each day and how many hours each person is going to work. She believes that this information should be required to develop the budget and as a part of the RFP. A discussion of approaches that are available under the County's bidding stature followed. Mr. Wenger suggested that the Board of Commissioners would determine how the process would proceed through the bidding process. Mr. Peterson noted that in the meantime we would need to have the Delegation approve the budget. Comm. Holden noted that last year the Board of Commissioners requested funds in the budget for the Master Plan, but they were taken out of the budget. Mr. Peterson noted that he is hearing a cost of \$55,000.

Mr. Reidy asked the Committee to consider what happens after the Charrette...if there are other issues it needs to be considering, that might be identified, or that require further steps. Mr. Wenger offered that based on the discussion this evening, the Committee is looking at a timeline through the next year that includes:

- The Charrette taking place in August,
- 6-8 weeks later, a report is received,
- September to October, this Committee meets again to review and analyze the report,
- December the report is presented to the Board of Commissioners for consideration,
- January the Board of Commissioners forwards the report to the Executive Committee for consideration,
- Discussion over the next year.

He suggested that with this timeframe Committee would probably not get to a next step until the FY10 budget. A discussion of a recommendation for the FY09 budget followed. P. Manney noted that if the Delegation has the information, there is more of a likelihood of the Delegation accepting the recommendation. Mr. Peterson summarized by saying we need to put it together and run it through the Executive Committee. Mr. Renzullo suggested that you present what you need but have a fallback position. Ms. Manney suggested that the cost might be split between the budget years. She noted her appreciation of the meeting time being changed so that Delegation members could attend.

R. Sawyer suggested that the group look at the samples reports from Design Charrettes that Mr. Castagna agreed to bring to the next meeting before making a financial decision. The Committee agreed to wait until the next meeting to establish costs.

Comm. Holden raised the issue of mileage for the Delegation members. The group seems to favor paying mileage and believes that there might be a better response if mileage re-imbusement is given.

Minutes

Motion: To accept the minutes of May 11, 2007. By M. Castagna, second by A. Renzullo.

Motion: To accept the minutes of Dec. 14, 2007. By M. Castagna, second by A. Renzullo.

Adjourn

There being no other business before the Committee, the motion was made to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.



L. Stonner, Secretary



Date

The next meeting will be Thursday, February 11 at 4:00 p.m.