

Comprehensive Plan Committee  
November 16, 2006

The Comprehensive Planning Steering Committee met on Thursday, November 16, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room, 28 Main Street. Committee members in attendance included: Richard Miller, Barry Warren, Karen Sullivan, Michelle Eastman, Maureen Hennessy, Bob Lawson, Rob Robinson, Bill Youngs and Gary Herzig. Others in attendance included Jim Koury, Kevin Kelley (CPA), Mayor John Nader, Jeff House, David Hutchison, Grace Smith, Pau Patterson, Lizabeth Shanon, Julie Carney, and Phillip Hill.

Co-Chair Miller stated that while Mr. Kelley was setting up the power point presentation, he would go ahead and do some administrative tasks. He asked if there were any changes to the September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting minutes. Hearing none, he stated that they would be duly approved and accepted. He continued by stating that CPA would summarize the October public forum; that a draft plan would be distributed sometime in December and he addressed the issue of non-steering committee members attending and participating at committee meetings. He stated that the meetings were open to the public and the public could certainly participate in the discussions. However, if there were to be any formal votes, the public would not be eligible to do so.

Mr. Miller turned the meeting over to Mr. Kelley. Mr. Kelley thanked Mr. Miller and apologized for the malfunctioning of the power point presentation. He stated that it was not a major focus of the day's presentation however. Mr. Kelley distributed a handout which summarized the public forum responses. Mr. Kelley stated he wanted to begin by asking the committee members what their thoughts/impressions were of the October Public Forum. Mayor Nader stated that he had heard from numerous attendees that the process and the meeting were very good and he received many compliments on the overall format, presentation and scope of the forum.

Ms. Smith stated that she and a few others attended the forum but did not realize it was to be focused primarily on land use issues. She stated that she liked the process but some of the issues that she and some others had come to discuss were not addressed. She said some of these issues were addressed in a letter sent to CPA after the forum. Mr. Kelley and Mr. Miller both stated that she could certainly express those thoughts at the meeting. She continued by stating that she and others felt that the historic residential district within the context of the plan should have some special designation. Mr. Kelley stated that the input received at the forum was very good on the historic district and he also said that Mr. Koury had sent him information on the downtown district and that information would be included in the plan also, along with the Walnut Street District.

Mr. Hill stated that he was pleased with the outcome of the meeting. The forum had generated ideas that he had not heard before. All in all he said it was a very good event.

Ms. Eastman stated that she believed that Mr. Koury had sent out Ms. Smith's letter to the committee. Ms. Smith stated that the one she sent was not in e-mail format and that she could certainly get it to Mr. Koury for him to distribute. Mr. Miller stated that the committee should move on and that he would like Ms. Smith to expand upon the issues that she wanted to present.

Ms. Smith stated that in the draft plan that was on the city's website she did not see any vision for the city. She wanted to know what the vision for the city was. Mr. Kelley stated that ultimately there would be a very broad vision included in the draft plan but did not develop one yet. Mr.

Kelley continued by stating that ideally what will happen is that there will be a broad vision statement which will then filter down to policy statements and then to the goals and objectives.

Mr. Warren stated that it could also work in the reverse where the vision statement would be contingent upon the development of the goals and objectives and the policy statements.

Mr. Kelley said that he and Mr. Raus could certainly develop a broad vision statement based upon and consistent with the 5 policy areas that will be part of the final plan. Mr. Miller stated at this point CPA should just put the vision statement into the draft plan and it can be reviewed at that time rather than doing it before the draft is completed.

Mr. Kelley continued discussing some of the bolded items on the handout that he had distributed which summarized the comments from the public forum. Some topics discussed in more depth included:

Rental vs. Owner Occupied Units: How many does the city actually want? It was also expressed that more affordable rental units are needed.

Downtown Housing: the entryway doors to the upstairs apartments could be more aesthetically pleasing. Some could better fit the exterior of the buildings.

NYS DOT involvement with plan: it was felt that the NYSDOT should be intimately involved in the development of the plan since they were a major force in the development of the greenway, beautification efforts and entryway improvements.

Greenway: New Island tying in with the greenway better. The issue was access and how the current access was not condoned and very informal off of the interstate.

Visual parameters: It was felt that some codification of visual standards needed to happen in order to provide the Planning Commission with better tools to do its job and implement the comprehensive plan.

Interaction of Students with Residents: It was felt that more should be done in terms of promoting better interaction with the student population and the permanent residents. Places like Northampton and Amherst, MA were brought up as examples of communities that had been very successful in making their student populations feel they were truly a part of the social fabric of these respective places.

Optimism: Mr. Kelley stated that in most of the communities that he has worked in that were successful in promoting their communities were very optimistic about their future and what could be done to improve their conditions.

Mr. Kelley stated he wanted to briefly touch upon the land use map. He inquired if there were other issues that were not touched upon that should be. He stated if some felt there was too much focus on land use, he would like to encourage more input on other areas.

Mayor Nader stated that one area that he really would like to see focused on more was Administration and Government. He expressed concern over loose Charter statements that did not identify a clear line of authority to the Mayor and other issues that would create better, more unified and clearly identifiable line of authority throughout city government. He also stated that the Town/City Study done a number of years ago had some very good suggestions and that this

document should be reviewed and some of the recommendations should be carried forward into the new comprehensive plan.

Mr. Miller stated that the committee and others should e-mail their thoughts on the town/city study and other related issues to CPA. Mr. Kelley agreed that the Administration and Government Category was rather slim as compared to the other topical areas to be included in the plan.

Mr. Miller asked if there were any other issues committee members wanted to discuss. Hearing none, he stated that it was agreed with Mr. Raus that there would be a ten (10) day period from the date of the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting before a draft plan is finalized. This would allow for more input into the draft plan. He stated that the intent was to have a draft plan submitted around December 6<sup>th</sup>, which would allow committee members time to look it over before the next meeting.

Hearing no other comments or concerns, Mr. Miller adjourned the meeting until the next meeting of the Steering Committee to be held on Thursday, December 14, 2006 at 4:00 PM at City Hall.

Respectfully Submitted,  
James R. Koury, City Clerk