

*Pownal Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting*

September 8, 2020

6:30pm @ Mallett Hall

Present: Kathy Hogue, Marcia Bowen, Coren Wheeler, Heidi Curry (Zoom), Christine Watson (Zoom), Russ Schmidt, Susan Peters (Zoom) Joan Mueller (Zoom), Jon Morris, Adam Haynes (Zoom)

The meeting was called to order at 6:45.

1. The minutes of March 3, 2020 were unanimously approved.
2. Finances: Susan had nothing new to report as there have been no new expenditures.
3. Marcia had suggestions on format. She agreed with Will Johnston's recommendations to put important things first (goals, objectives, etc.). Also, she felt that the biggest issues were land use/rural character and secondarily public safety/fire building. In the Land Use section, Russ did not include some of the big issues having to do with land use and designated growth areas. Without a designated growth area, the State will not issue us a 'finding of consistency'. The advantage of this finding is that it can provide legal support for our ordinances should we be sued. It's also essential for obtaining grants. The State grants exemptions from designating a growth area in cases where there is no village or densely populated area, which is the case in Pownal. We could invent a hypothetical growth area just to get State approval. Joan asked if we would need to change the zoning districts in order to do this- but we would not do this. She thought the purpose of having a village district was to have potential for village-type development. Jon said that the Town has areas where mobile homes are allowed. The state is asking us to envision a spot where potential growth might occur. Where in our best guess would growth occur? Jon said we could designate a growth area (hypothetically) that then helps prevent development everywhere and helps focus development areas, with landowner approval. Alternatively, we could decide not to designate a growth area, get an exemption, and then the entire Town would be open for development, depending on landowner wishes. Durham decided against a designated growth area and was granted an exemption, for same reasons that could apply to Pownal. Coren thought we already have a village district that would be optimal for encouraging future growth, especially since there is water and gas already there. North Yarmouth is another example of what a built-out village center would look like. Susan asked whether our goal is to guide future planning and not to solve problems. Coren said that our survey only captured around 20 percent of the population, most 50 plus, so it should not exclusively dictate our plan. We should expect younger innovative folks to move to Town in the future. Christine said that there are large landowners in Town that would be most likely to sell to developers. Jon said that we in the Plan could develop options to proactively help to preserve this land. Marcia will send out sections of Will's planning document about strategies to manage growth in rural areas. Jon said his kid came up with a strategy like Boston's, designating lands that connect Town and State-owned lands so that in the future they could be continuously accessed. Heidi said that in terms of designated growth areas, she is not comfortable with

‘making things up’. Heidi also felt that if we designate (randomly or otherwise) a growth area, it will cause future issues as well as current issues for current landowners. She would prefer to go for the exemption.

4. Some on Zoom said that they could not hear speakers and wondered if we could improve it. We originally planned to have everyone use phones including those at Town Hall but feedback from phones forced those at Town Hall to turn off phones, so that audio was strictly from one microphone with those in person more than six feet away. Heidi said that we should either all be on Zoom or all in Town Hall. The Select Board Zoom meetings have worked well. It was decided that the next meeting will occur with everyone using Zoom from home.
5. The committee decided to meet twice monthly, with the next meeting on September 22. Kathy will include the Zoom contact information. Marcia will try to gather information on historical permits, etc. She also will send Coren demographic information she found. Russ indicated that the State Planning office had information for Pownal; Joan also indicated that GPCOG has information.
6. Joan said we haven’t really nailed down format or perhaps what is better called ‘style’. Kathy brought up whether we should have responsible parties listed with goals and strategies- is that our job? She also likes having narrative first before goals and strategies. Russ suggested that we get the material together and then begin edits section by section. Kathy thought all the sections were more or less done. Marcia mentioned the Economy is one that was not assigned, mostly derived from census data.
7. The meeting was adjourned at 8:01.

Respectively submitted,

*Marcia Bowen*

*Committee Members:*

*Marcia Bowen, Heidi Curry (Select Board), Adam Haynes, Kathy Hogue (Chair), Jon Morris (Select Board), Joan Mueller, Susan Peters, Russ Schmidt, Christine Watson, Coren Wheeler*