

**PLANNING BOARD MEETING
TOWN OF LITCHFIELD**

Held on June 5, 2012

Minutes Approved - 6/19/2012

The Litchfield Planning Board held a meeting in the Town Hall conference room 2 Liberty Way, Litchfield, NH 03052 on Tuesday, June 5, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Leon Barry (Chairman), Bob Curtis (Vice Chairman), Frank Byron (Board of Selectmen Representative), Russell Blanchette, Joel Kapelson, Thomas Young

MEMBERS ABSENT: Barry Bean, Michael Croteau

ALSO PRESENT: Joan McKibben (Admin. Assistant), Jen Czysz (NRPC Senior Planner),

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Barry called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. and joined the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Jen Czysz started out by explaining to the Board about the Historical Society putting an application in for the Heritage District, and pulled out the frequently asked questions: Question 1 was: can a community submit an application for the Heritage District plus the standard typical application which is what we are working on here. Jen stated that the answer is yes. All of the applications that come into the Heritage District process will be pulled aside and scored separately and only scored against others that are looking to implement a Heritage District of which they will select 2. All the other grant applications then go into their own pool to be scored separately, if the Heritage District is evaluated and is not selected as one of the 2 Heritage District set aside grants, it will then get put in the pool of all the other applications to be evaluated at which time the Town would have to choose which application would go forward and be evaluated. These are open to all Towns in the State of NH and there is \$1 million dollars that will be passed out to all the different applicants.

1. Work Session for NH Community Planning Grant Program

Jen explained that there have been a couple of things going on behind the scenes: Russ worked on a memo and sample letter of support that Joan has been distributing. Andy Prolman will be writing a letter of support and one was received by the Historical Society. Andy suggested that we should direct some of the large property owners, particularly some of the farms. We want to get as many letters of support as we can.

Selectman Byron asked who the requests go to:

- Board of Selectmen

- Conservation Commission
- Recreation Commission
- Historic Commission
- Steve Perry
- Andrew Prolman
- Jason Hoch

Selectman Byron suggested that one go out to Laura Gandia who is our State Rep. It was also suggested to send one to Linda Jacobson who has a CPA firm in town, Rick Charbonneau, Wilson Farm and any other local businesses.

Jen stated that we need to state project partners and it states that whoever is identified as a project partner in our scope of work, they also have to submit a letter of support saying yes they will be involved in the process

Project Goals

Jen handed out two attachments. One was a table identifying the many points within the Master Plan where we might draw upon while developing the application narrative. Thanks go to Tom (Young) for identifying these many plan sections.

While still working toward implementing the 2002 Master Plan, the recent opening of the Airport Access Road at the northern end of Town has created both the opportunity and an urgency to respond to potential new growth and development. While surrounded by more heavily developed communities, the Town of Litchfield has remained a quiet agricultural community, primarily due to the relative lack of access to the Town. With the new bridge in place and direct access to 3A into the town, there is an opportunity to both promote commercial growth and economic development, but a risk of losing some of the Town's agricultural heritage and identity. Any planning for commercial development must be done in concert with that of agricultural preservation to ensure a balanced plan for the future.

The proposed future land use visioning process and commercial and agricultural zoning districts will:

- Establish an updated community for future land use map
- Identify and implement a strategy that promotes economic opportunities
- Preserve agricultural resources and enhance economic opportunities through farming

Anticipated long term outcomes include:

- Increased commercial development in scale with the community
- Increased employment opportunities within the Town of Litchfield
- Reduction in vehicle miles traveled by residents
- Preservation of agricultural resources and historic farms

Metrics to measure annual progress over a five year period

- Number of commercial site plan applications submitted to the Planning Board
- Number of new businesses and jobs within the district
- Decrease in the annual number of agricultural acres converted to another land use (or increase in the total number of agricultural acres)
- Increase participation and decision making in developing and implementing a long range vision for the town by populations traditionally not engaged in the public planning process.

Scope of Work and Budget

Visioning:

Who would you see helping you out in the process to conduct a visioning?

Partners: Planning Board, BOS, Conservation Commission, other Town Boards and Organizations and Businesses in Town, Classroom projects

Task 1:

The Town of Litchfield will conduct a series of public engagement activities to gauge public opinion, needs and desires for how the community will grow over the next 10 to 20 years. The Town will employ a variety of processes such as:

- Community Survey(s)
- Community Visioning Meeting/Forum/Listening Session/Café Conversations
- Response/Listening/Comment Boxes
- Small study circle conversations
- Classroom project
- Web based public engagement tools (Facebook, bulletin board, etc.)
- Interactive community mapping activities

Task 2: Future Land Use Master Plan Chapter & Map

Mirrored same Partners from visioning (which is a continuation of task 1)

Building upon the visioning sessions, the future land use master plan chapter and map update will focus on the layout of the community so to facilitate implementation of the vision in a way that is simultaneously harmonious with the existing land use patterns in town. The future land use objectives will serve as the basis for revision of the zoning ordinance to identify the more finite and appropriate responses to recent changes in Litchfield (the bridge). While the impetus for this effort is to re-evaluate opportunities for the Route 3A corridor, the Town will take a comprehensive town-wide approach to ensure critical linkages are fully considered, such as proximity to housing, recreation sites and public services.

Task 3: Coordinate with Workforce Housing Efforts

Partners: Planning Board, code enforcement, local resident/housing subcommittee

The commercial and agricultural preservation zoning efforts will be coordinated with the Town's ongoing work to revise its zoning for workforce and multifamily housing. Additionally, the results of the Future Land Use visioning efforts will be used to inform the resulting districts where residential zoning will be revised to allow for multifamily and/or workforce housing.

Task 4: Commercial Zoning Ordinance

Partners: Planning Board, BOS, Other Town Boards and Organizations, Local Business Leaders

The Town of Litchfield currently has three zones for various forms of commercial uses: commercial, commercial-industrial, and transitional. Following upon the community visioning sessions and revised future land use chapter and map, these zones will be first audited to determine their continued relevance and effectiveness and then either repealed or replaced

entirely or revised to make these zones more conducive to maximizing economic opportunities. This work will also look at linkages and opportunities created through changes to the Town's residential zoning slated for completion at the 2013 Town Meeting to include additional workforce and multifamily housing opportunities in proximity to the commercial areas. Specific tasks include audit existing ordinances: review and draft new Commercial Zoning District(s); revise and finalize the ordinance based on input and public hearing.

Task 5: Agricultural Preservation

Partners: Planning Board Conservation Commission, other Town Boards and Organizations, Local Farmers

The Town will review existing models and examples of ordinances aimed at preserving local agricultural operations such as the Agriculture Incentive Zone model in the Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques handbook and the Town of Allenstown's recently adopted Agricultural Preservation Ordinance. The Planning Board will actively seek the guidance of the local farming community to ascertain what form of ordinance would best aid in maintaining and potentially enhancing the existing agricultural operations. Specific tasks include audit existing ordinances; review and draft new Agricultural Preservation/Incentive Ordinance; revise and finalize the Agricultural Ordinance based on input and public hearing.

Task 6: Develop New Zoning Map

Partners: Planning Board, ZBA

The Town's zoning map will be updated to reflect the new boundaries created for the commercial zoning ordinance(s), agricultural preservation zone, workforce housing, and any other boundary changes.

Task 7: Community Outreach and Engagement

Partners: Planning Board, BOS, ZBA Conservation Commission, other Town Boards and Organizations

See the description of Outreach proposed under Task 1 above. Those methods used during the visioning process that proved most successful will be continued throughout the program process to ensure an iterative process of outreach and input. Additionally, for Task 4 and 5 above, outreach will include:

- Public listening sessions at the beginning of the project
- Neighborhood sessions for the population within the proposed district
- Public input opportunities at existing community wide events
- Develop print and web based education and outreach materials
- Public hearing prior to adoption

5% of the budget will be dedicated to outreach and engagement of marginalized and underrepresented populations within the municipality. This includes identifying and contacting populations that typically do not participate in the local planning process such as commuters, agricultural community, and young professionals. This may include one-on-one conversations and/or other means of engagement best determined to meet the target population's needs.

Mr. Barry mentioned the churches, and mention to one of the churches that we would like to hold a jam session at your church, and send these letters out to see the support of the churches. Mr. Bob Curtis mentioned reaching out to the senior communities

Mr. Frank Byron suggested that we should also consider reaching out to the Hudson Chamber of Commerce; the President of the Hudson Chamber of Commerce is a Litchfield resident.

Town Meeting and Adoption

Partners: Planning Board, Code Enforcement

This task entails prepare the final draft ordinances; conduct a minimum of one public hearing for each ordinance; and prepare the ordinances for the Town warrant article.

Joan asked if this is something the Board does all the work or are we going to send out an RFP?

Jen answered by saying the Grant money is for the Board to hire somebody to do the work. It comes in as dollars for you to hire someone; a planning consultant or planning professional to do the work. The default in the program is the Regional Planning Commission, if you do not go with the Regional Planning Commission then you can do an RFP but it has to go through the NH Housing Bid website.

When we get down to the budget part of what you have to do is provide match and talking with Jason and the people at NH Housing, there is a portion of the match that has to be a cash match and the people at NH Housing said it is okay to take the Circuit Rider time that is involved being at meetings for this process can be used as the cash match portion. In terms in the rest of the match is required Jen went through and said how many meetings will be involved she calculated an on average 5 members, there is a standard volunteer rate that she used and said x number of meetings times 2 hours per meeting times 5 people and came up with part of the In Kind match and then Joan's time that she is sitting here also counts as In Kind match as well so Jen took Joan's time factored that in as well and said that there will be a little time before and after the meeting that Joan will be prepping minutes or agendas associated with it, etc., would also count as part of the In Kind match. In the end the number of meetings Jen estimated was 1 meeting a month for the term of the grant to get to it. Jen stated that your time sitting here is counted as a match. There is a value in the hours you put in. Jen stated she left the Lead to be determined. When you get funded then we will cross the bridge of who does the work afterwards. The Board decided they wanted to choose now.

MOTION: by Mr. Curtis

Nominate Jen Cyysz (NRPC) Planner to be the lead for our NH Community Planning Grant Program Application.

SECOND: by Mr. Young

VOTE: 6-0-0

Master Plan Consistency

The Town's Master Plan anticipated the potential for the new Airport Access Road (AAR) to expand commercial development demand. Now is the time to make those modifications to the zoning ordinances, now that the AAR is complete and the northern extent of Albuquerque Ave constructed and linked to Route 3A. Additionally the land to the North and South of Litchfield's

town boundaries are zoned non-residential, which in conjunction and increased access, will further increase the potential for non-residential, which in conjunction with increased access, will further increase the potential for non-residential “spill-over”. The master plan called for the creation of an economic plan to guide and manage this increased development potential in a manner that maintains the communities’ agricultural character. Nearly half of the active agricultural land was identified in the Master Plan as being zoned commercial/industrial, risking the conversion of prized agricultural land to non-residential uses.

...While the residential Town character is desirable to many people, population growth, fiscal instability, increased travel time to employment and commercial centers, and a lack of local employment opportunities are factors that point to a need for nonresidential development...

This proposal will address and implement the following existing and related Master Plan Goals:

- Strive to balance environment protection and economic development in local planning.
- Continue to seek innovative land uses to minimize impact on the natural environment while providing adequate housing for a diverse population and preserving greenways and open space for wildlife, agricultural, recreation and conservation.
- Promote the use of innovative technologies in future economic development activities.
- Provide ample job opportunities
- Properly plan for the Airport Access Road construction anticipated to the north and the circumferential Highway that will eventually be built to the south.
- Maintain, enhance and encourage traditional Town Center development.
- Provide adequate and diverse housing to meet the needs of residents, while maintaining the character of the Town.

...Preserving agriculture in the community is a primary goal of this master plan. There is an eminent threat to the loss of agricultural land to new development, especially as other readily developable land in the region becomes scarce...Starting with the early agrarian history, the main commercial activities in Litchfield were predominately farming and a few small disperse water powered mills...²

This proposal will address and implement the following existing and related Master Plan goals:

- Balance community development of residential, agricultural and commercial land including protection of structures and lands of historic importance.
- Identify, protect and enhance the principal natural and man-made features of the Town which collectively define Litchfield’s physical character and cultural heritage, and which constitute the basis for future planning actions.
- Preserve agricultural lands and promote the maintenance of agricultural resources.
- Conserve the Town’s rural-agricultural community character.
- Provide a coordinated approach to community development that benefits all residents.

Consistency with the NH Livability Principles

Jen gave a little background on what these Livability Principals are: The original federal grant dollars that came down, New Hampshire Housing was awarded to create this program. HUD is part of what is called the Federal partnership which is HUD, EPA and DOT, and they got together and said if the three of them are going to work together in a collaborative process; what are some basic principles that we would like to promote in our various programs. They came up with their set of Livability Principles. In the State of NH there was a group called the Transportation Land Use Roundtable that was convened by the charitable foundation to talk about the Climate Action Plan and implementing the Transportation Land Use pieces of that plan. These are a New Hampshire specific version of the Livability Principles.

Promotion of Traditional Settlement Patterns & Development Design: The Town will simultaneously be working on revising its existing residential zones while undergoing the commercial zoning and agricultural preservation tasks described above. The revised commercial district will consider opportunities to allow for mixed use development – linking new commercial growth with multi-family residential options. Consistent with the Master Plan’s goal to encourage traditional town center development, the project will look at opportunities to create nodes of commercial development consistent with the scale of the traditional New Hampshire village and appropriate to being surrounded by existing farmland. The Town of Litchfield, amidst a sea of developed and more suburban communities, has retained a significant agricultural community character. New development risks conversion of this traditional working landscape. The objective is to consider commercial and economic opportunities in balance with agricultural preservation and conservation of the Town’s working landscape. The proposal will support the preservation of Litchfield’s unique community character – a small agricultural town that balances commercial development needs and pressures.

Natural Resource Functions & Quality: Route 3A is located along the Merrimack River. Zoning language developed for both the commercial district and the agricultural preservation piece will need to also consider potential impacts to the river and water quality. Additionally, virtually all of the land in Litchfield is located within the town’s existing aquifer protection district. As stated above under Promotion of Traditional Settlement Patterns, one of the key aspects of this proposal is to establish viable mechanisms to maintain the working landscape. Agricultural resources: Key to this effort is the balance between commercial opportunity and preservation of agricultural resources.

Community and Economic Vitality: Current zoning allows limited opportunity for economic development and enhanced employment opportunities in proximity to existing residential areas. Additionally, as currently configured the transitional and commercial zones are often cited as “unworkable” or “difficult.” The revised zoning proposal will look to increase and enhance opportunities within the community. Additionally, agriculture is essential to preservation of Litchfield’s cultural heritage and social activity. Any future revisions of the zoning ordinance to increase economic opportunity will have to be carefully considered to ensure this heritage is not lost and formulated in a way that identifies the most appropriate locations for commercial growth, while retaining cherished agricultural resources.

Housing Choices: While not directly a part of this scope of work, the Town is simultaneously working to revise zoning to increase housing choices, particularly multi-family and workforce opportunities. Task 3 within the scope of work, reserves time to coordinate commercial and agricultural zoning with the workforce housing efforts to ensure affordable housing options are integrated throughout the community, there are mixed-use opportunities, and planning for neighborhoods in proximity to employment centers.

Transportation Choices: While not directly a component, there is the potential to increase workability and transportation options such as biking if the town is able to co-locate housing and commercial uses.

Climate Change and Energy Efficiency: Building in the Transportation Choices related benefits of this proposal, with increased biking and walkability comes increased energy conservation and reduced vehicle miles traveled. Additionally, through the commercial development ordinance work, the board would have an opportunity to discuss and promote low impact development techniques and green building standards.

Regional Approaches: NRPC will be including the Airport Access Road within its forthcoming Metropolitan Transportation Plan and including it within regional traffic modeling to measure before and after traffic counts and the real impacts to the Town due to enhanced access. Additionally, Litchfield will work to integrate the results and findings of a Granite State Future, the current regional planning effort, into its deliberations when formulating a new Town Vision, Future Land Use Map, and Commercial and Agricultural Zoning Districts.

Readiness to Proceed: Please see the attached letters of support the Town’s 2002 Master Plan Executive Summary and Introduction, Goals and Objectives.

Outreach Plan: Refer to Tasks 1 and 7 above under Scope of Work.

Ms. Czysz went over the **Project Budget** and explained what each column meant and how she came up the totals

Task Name	CPG Funds	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Task Total
Task 1: Visioning	\$8,000	\$350	\$ 925	\$ 9,275
Task 2: Future Land Use	\$8,000	\$350	\$ 925	\$ 9,275
Task 3: Workforce Housing	\$2,000	\$150	\$ 775	\$ 2,925
Task 4: Commercial Zoning	\$10,000	\$575	\$1,600	\$12,175
Task 5: Agric. Zoning	\$7,500	\$560	\$1,600	\$ 9,660
Task 6: Update Zoning Map	\$1,000	\$140	\$ 500	\$ 1,640
Task 7: Outreach*	\$8,000	\$420	\$1,250	\$ 9,170
Task 8: Town Meeting/ Adoption	\$2,000	\$280	\$ 850	\$ 2,130

Totals	\$46,500	\$2,825	\$8,425	\$56,250
*total expenditures on Outreach to marginalized or disadvantaged pops.	\$ 2,250			

Max CPG is \$50,000 (2 years)

After discussion and concerns from the Members of the Board it was agreed to change the Town Meeting/Adoption from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and Outreach from \$7,500 to \$9,000

Jen stated that the commitment of match needs to come from the Planning Board. Chair will sign the documents.

This document needs to be presented to the Board of Selectmen on their Meeting on Monday Night 6/11/2012.

2. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes of 5/15/12

MOTION: by Mr. Frank Byron

Move that the Board accepts the minutes of 5/15/12 as amended

SECOND: by Mr. Joel Kapelson

VOTE: 6-0-0

1. Status of Impact Fees – waiting for bids
2. Discussion on e-mails for Planning Board – set Joan up for Google Docs. Have Joan set up a site and Planning Board can go on and look at site.
3. Tanger Way on May 21st had final coat of pavement, will go on 2 year maintenance bond, then there will be a final inspection.

MOTION: by Mr. Bob Curtis

Move to adjourn

SECOND: by Mr. Thomas Young

VOTE: 6-0-0

The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Leon Barry, Chairman

Litchfield Planning Board

June 5, 2012
Bob Curtis, Vice Chairman

Frank Byron, Selectman

Barry Bean

Michael Croteau

Thomas R. Young

Russell Blanchette

Minutes taken by: *Donna Baril*