

Windham Economic Development Committee
Strategic Planning Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes - **Approved**
05/29/14

Attendance: Regular members – Ed Gallagher (Chair), Charles Roberts, Michelle Farrell
Guests – Ralph Valentine and Al Letizio

Meeting Called to order at 8:36

Ed Gallagher opened the meeting and welcomed Ralph Valentine and Al Letizio. Mr. Valentine and Mr. Letizio were asked to share information about the large parcels of land that are available for commercial development. Mr. Letizio is the chair of the Land Use Committee in Windham. Mr. Valentine pointed out the differences between Land Use and Strategic Planning. The Strategic Planning committee is responsible to review the strategic plan, to give input in regards to the goals of that plan, and to look at the big picture of strategic planning.

Mr. Valentine presented the large commercial parcels of land that are available in Windham:

1. Intersection of Rt 128/Rt 102 approximately 5.6 acres
2. Village District Area approximately 60 acres
3. Clark Farm North approximately 25 acres
4. London Bridge road to Lowell road, Rt 111 frontage approximately 35-40 acres
5. Land behind the post office approximately 25 acres
6. Across from the post office approximately 10-12 acres
7. Wall Street area – Lynch property
8. Near the Rt 93 on and off ramps – Walters property – approximately 30 acres
9. Driving Range approximately 30 acres
10. Searle's Property, possibly available in the future, approximately 163 acres
11. Rt 28/Rt 111, a couple of parcels, approximately 8 acres

Mr. Letizio reiterated the importance of looking at the current strategic plan and measuring how we are doing in regards to the goals. Mr. Letizio further explained the charge of his Land Use Committee. Their members are looking at what are the obstacles to developing these large parcels of land. A formal report will be given to EDC, however some of the preliminary findings are:

1. There are small parcels of land that are not as valuable as a stand alone, however if they are combined with other parcels, they could be valuable. For example, the land from Lowell Road to London Bridge Road is primarily owned by the town and school district, it would be more valuable to combine the small parcels into a big parcel.

3. Cobbett's Pond Ordinance places parking restrictions on commercial development.

4. Water Protection Ordinance in general has many restrictions.

Mr. Letizio stressed the importance of zoning ordinances that promote what we want our Town to look like.

Mr. Gallagher thanked Mr. Valentine and Mr. Letizio for the information and stated the usefulness of this knowledge for our committee. It is evident that there is a lot of land to work with for economic growth. Planned economic growth is important with the widening for Rt 93, the school needs, and the revision of the Town Master Plan. From an economic strategic plan, the committee needs to look at tax benefits, quality of life and the betterment of schools. After this committee finalizes their findings and suggestions, Mr. Gallagher would like to present them for input in the Town Master Plan development. He states the purpose of this committee as he sees it, is to define a vision and then the steps of how to make it a reality. He gives the example of Andover, Ma that is a place with a downtown, but it also has businesses such as Raytheon. There needs to be a balance.

Mr. Letizio spoke of the importance of communication. There needs to be constant communication instead of only when a warrant is on the ballot. Communication needs to be energized.

Mr. Gallagher presented the idea of slow commercial growth. Mr. Letizio thinks it needs to move faster in order to feel the benefits of tax relief.

Mr. Gallagher talked of the needing to develop a compelling vision. He used the example of Market Place in Lynnfield, Ma and Cornerstone in Westford, MA. We need to adjust how people look at commercial growth.

Mr. Gallagher spoke of defining areas in Windham as High Tech bedroom community and perhaps we could do better outreach to high tech businesses that would reward NH based employees with a satellite office in Windham. The new Boston Express transportation to Boston is an asset we could highlight.

Mr. Valentine stated that Office Buildings generate the most tax revenue. Big Box real estate does not generate the same amount of taxes as office buildings.

Mr. Gallagher reiterated the focus of this committee is to set a vision, influence the Town master plan, and communication in concert with the mission of the WEDC to support both existing and new businesses.

Mr. Valentine and Mr. Letizio were thanked for their willingness to come to the meeting and to share their knowledge.

The 4.18.14 meeting minutes were amended and approved 3-0.

Action Items:

1. Members will edit the existing Strategic Plan and bring their edits for discussion at the next meeting.
2. Members will bring ideas for their vision of economic growth in Windham.
3. Members will give ideas for businesses they see appropriate for Windham.
4. Mr. Gallagher will poll the Town Master Plan for Language.
5. Mr. Gallagher will talk to all members regarding time of meeting; room availability and will then confirm meeting time with all.

Next Meeting: June 6th, time TBD.

Michelle made the motion to adjourn. Charles seconded the motion. 3-0 Meeting adjourned.