

Town of Farmington  
Planning Board Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, May 7, 2019

**Board Members Present:**

Charlie King, Chairman  
Rick Pelkey, Vice Chairman  
TJ Place, Selectmen's Rep.  
Bill Fisher, Secretary  
Bruce Bridges

**Board Members Absent:**

Stephen Henry, excused

**Others Present:**

Stuart Arnett, ADG Managing Partner  
Bill Parker, ADG Regulatory Review

**BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD:**

**Call to Order:**

Chairman King called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Review of Meeting Minutes:**

April 16, 2019 – No errors or omissions

**Motion:** (Fisher, second Place) to accept the minutes as written passed 5-0.

**Any Other Business before the Board:** None

**Review of Draft #4 of the Implementable Master Plan (IMP):**

Stuart Arnett reintroduced Bill Parker to the board and said he wanted to begin by reviewing how we got to this point because of the recent changes to the board, staff and procedures. He provided the board with copies of the original Request for Proposals (RFP) that was sent out over a year ago seeking proposals to update the 2005 Master Plan.

Mr. Arnett said the RFP starts with an outline of the community followed by the Scope of Work on the second page. This section contains the expected "deliverables" in 2 key categories. He said the first category contains requests for 7 different types of community outreach (engagement and promotion, assessment and issues identification, analysis, functions and systems, sectors, assets and vision) and the second category contains the guidelines for the implementation plan calling for a slimmer, simpler more actionable plan in more easily understood language than the traditional "3-ring binder" plan.

**Community Outreach Actions-** He said ADG responded with a proposal that said they would do the community outreach as outlined on page 2 of the e-mail (from Mr. Arnett to Land Use Assistant Sarah Morse, 5/1/19) and have committed to providing robust community engagement, interactive project website, project newsletter, 3 online surveys, mobile displays throughout the community, a PESTAL report (political, economic, social, technical, legal factors

impacting community development), host a series of workshops and meet with committees to solicit feedback and distribute the revised plan for review. He added that they have received additional topics and information from the Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) so there will be more items coming.

Mr. Arnett said that back in Sept. they discussed community outreach and how to handle receiving input from the community and the board and they agreed that the board would look at the total outline before they started sending out chapters to avoid some of the back and forth. He said now that the board has received the draft outline the next steps in the community outreach plan are to set up the project website and to develop a newsletter. He said he would be driving most of the community outreach and he planned to ask the Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee and the Economic Development Committee to assist him with that. He will be meeting with the Selectmen on June 3 to discuss what they would like to see happen. Mr. Parker will be driving the content of the plan and any comments or questions will be handled by him he said.

Chairman King asked how they plan to accomplish “robust community engagement plan-all residents” listed as the first bulleted action item on that page.

Mr. Arnett said they wanted to listen to the Planning Board first before moving to the next step in the community outreach plans. He said they have talked to the Steering Committee about acting as a liaison with the community they have already done outreach with to help with setting up some workshops and public meetings.

Chairman King asked if they have a set community outreach plan and if not if it would be formalized by the time he meets with the Board of Selectmen on June 3.

Mr. Arnett said the outreach plan would be formalized in time for his meeting with the Selectmen. He said he would review it with Selectmen as long as the Planning Board was okay with not having had an opportunity to approve it before he presents it to them.

Chairman King then listed Hay Day, attending local community groups’ and organizations’ meetings and places where people tend to congregate such as the library as opportunities for points of contact in the community.

Mr. Arnett said he liked the idea of taking information to groups on their own turf as they know each other and are more comfortable than they would be by having them to come to the Town Hall and stand in front of a microphone.

Chairman King said the interactive website is only going to get some people as there are some people who don’t own/use computers so they need to find a way to reach them. He suggested the Rec. Dept. as a potential avenue to reach out to the seniors in town and to distribute handouts or surveys to kids/adults participating in the dept.’s programs.

Mr. King said the town could come up with a mailing list to do a town wide mailing but he did not know if that approach has been successful in other communities. He said it is important to get feedback from the most diverse sections of town residents because if there is only input

from one targeted group you will only get the world according to that group.

Mr. Arnett said some surveys ask questions and others show graphs and ask for a response and asked which type of survey the board would like them to use.

Mr. Bridges said he would like to see a survey with some of both of those things which would give residents an opportunity to say what they think.

Mr. King suggested using simple questions such as what they would see as improvements needed in town or give a short list of areas of concern and ask the respondent which is the most important item on the list. He said sometimes questions lead people to an answer with the way they are structured which would not provide a true picture of what the residents think.

Mr. Arnett said there is also the risk of outspoken people stealing the agenda and have their comments included several times in the results while a quieter person might not participate.

Mr. Pelkey said the Steering Committee did an extensive survey with a lot of feedback from the community and the information they gathered would feed into this. They also co-hosted a forum at the Public Safety Building with the UNH Cooperative Extension he said.

Mr. Arnett said some of the committee's findings are included in the draft outline.

Mr. King said he would like to see a more generic approach to information gathering that is not specific to the verbiage in the Master Plan chapters. He said that way they might find areas of concern that lean differently than what the priorities were 5-10 years ago. He then asked about how the survey responses would be collected and how to avoid multiple responses from the same person or group.

Mr. Arnett said there are ways to address multiple responses online from the same e-mail address and they could ask the respondents to provide their home address if replying by mail.

Mr. King asked how they plan to get the word out about the existence of the website and the online surveys. He suggested the Town's website e-mail notification system that people can subscribe to and the Town Face book page run by Town Administrator Arthur Capello as 2 ways to get information out to residents.

Mr. Pelkey said that as soon as the information is posted it will probably be picked up by other groups and re-posted on their Face book pages.

Mr. Arnett said some Planning Boards like to complete all of the work before sending it out but it sounds like this board wants to send out information while it is still being worked on.

Mr. King said that is correct because the board does not want to formulate where the town should go and then they get back information that doesn't agree with that and the plan is already written.

Mr. Arnett said their outreach will consist of him and possibly one other person getting face time with people on turf that they are comfortable with hopefully between now and the end of June because July and August is vacation time. That will give them some more information and they will come back and do some more crafting with the board and then be ready to provide updates in the fall.

Mr. King said if they have survey handouts ready and available some organizations will try to keep them available and hand them out for about a month or so.

Mr. Bridges said the town wide mailing mentioned earlier would reach everybody in town.

Mr. King said he was not opposed to a mailing but the funding for the mailing cost is probably not included in their (ADG) plans and the Town would have to kick in the money for postage.

Mr. Bridges said he meant the mailing would be for informational purposes such as where to find the website, contact information to schedule face-to-face meetings, etc. not to gather answers to a survey.

Mr. King suggested they hold the mailing in reserve in case they don't receive a significant amount of feedback when it may become more of a necessity than a desire. He said it may be interesting to look at the statistics from the survey for the last Master Plan update and what kind of response was received.

Mr. Parker asked if they recalled how the surveys were distributed for that Master Plan project.

Mr. King said Selectmen Chairman Paula Proulx was on that committee and more involved in the community outreach portion of the project and may have more information about the results of the community outreach efforts then. There was a subcommittee who reviewed the wording on each question for that project and in this case we are not doing that but are relying on an advisor to formulate the questions appropriately to get the true answer he said.

Mr. Parker asked if there are service clubs in town such as the Lions' Club or the Rotary Club.

Mr. King said there is no Rotary or Lions' Club but there are several churches, a Woman's Club, a senior group and the Friends of Farmington.

Mr. Place said there is an American Legion Post in town.

Mr. Bridges said the Puddledock Press would help get the word out to the town.

Mr. Arnett suggested contacting rail associations, bike clubs, trails groups, hunting and fishing groups.

Mr. King said he would compile a list of suggested clubs, groups and organizations for Mr. Arnett and there is also a list of groups on the Town website.

Mr. Fisher offered to be the contact person for the library as he is a Library Trustee and noted that he is also a member of the Steering Committee. He said the Selectmen may be interested in holding another forum at the Public Safety Building and suggested the discussion be expanded from the focus on the development of the old fire house lot to include the Master Plan update.

Mr. Pelkey said it would be interesting to hear the Selectmen's input about what they want to see for community outreach when Mr. Arnett meets with them.

Mr. King advised that they be prepared for the meeting with the Selectmen as they will be expecting answers to this is where we are going and this is what we are doing.

**Review of Draft #4 Outline** – Mr. Arnett said the draft #4 has an outline for all 8 chapters in the Master Plan. He said Mr. Capello asked where the content for the chapters came from and he

explained it came from the existing Master Plan, the downtown revitalization process, livable communities initiative through AARP and new state laws. It's a little bit soft with some generic statements because it's meant as a starting point he said.

He then asked how Chairman King wished to handle the questions/responses going back and forth between the board members and ADG.

Mr. Parker said the communications will also include statements made by him and Mr. Arnett for the board to react to.

Chairman King said he assumed they would review the outline at this meeting.

Mr. Arnett said the potential for revisions stays open until the end of process.

Discussion, comments and requested changes for each page of the draft outline are as follows:

**Page 1, Objectives & Goals, Item #3** – a “cool” community;

Mr. Arnett said one of the objectives is to have Farmington seen as the next ring of attractive communities that attracts millennials and down-sizing baby boomers. Those two markets are looking for an amenity package- diversity of housing, restaurants, services, etc. The “cool” statement is something where people know what it is to them and is meant to open a conversation about what that means. It may or may not stay there he said.

**Page 2, Actions, How Policies will be Implemented, Item #3** – “The (blank) will establish a Leadership Group to oversee the public comment and outreach of the implementable Master Plan under the counsel and guidance of the (blank)”.

Mr. Arnett said the 2 blanks were filled with “Planning Board” and “Board of Selectmen” but did not say which board went in which blank space. He said they proposed that the group consist of one Selectman, one Planning Board member and one downtown person to oversee the implementation of the plan.

Mr. King asked if this committee would exist during the writing and adoption of the plan or after it is adopted.

Mr. Arnett said he would like to see it assembled during the writing and adoption of the plan.

Mr. Parker said he saw it as being assembled after the plan is adopted to keep an eye on how it is being implemented.

Mr. King said it is an interesting possibility about how it could be accomplished and asked what the metrics would be regarding how often the committee would meet and how often the Planning Board would review the actions that have been taken.

Mr. Arnett said Mr. King's question is included in item #2 which states “The Planning Board will (blank)-annually measure actions against the plan and adapt any changes as needed”.

Mr. Pelkey said he thought that it depends on the complexity of goal being accomplished and that they may not be able to do a full evaluation of something in a year's time and may have to do it one section at a time. He said that items #2, #3 and #4 taken together is the road map and the timeline for the review and need to be considered together.

Mr. King said there could be a presentation at Town Meeting with a report on any changes in

the areas covered by the plan.

Mr. Pelkey said that Town Meeting would be a good time to solicit feedback from residents and begin the review of the plan accomplishments for the next cycle.

Mr. King said this group would report their findings and if the community says the results are not acceptable then they would be spurred into action and that goal becomes a priority.

Mr. Arnett suggested the group could come before the Planning Board in February every year and present the report they intend to release to the board.

Mr. Pelkey said at a minimum they could take the action items and report on what's been done for each chapter.

He said item #5 calls for web links in the Master Plan that take the reader to a current website for relevant data and asked who will maintain the website.

Mr. Arnett said they discussed posting the Master Plan somewhere such as on the project website created for planning process and the links will take the user to a live website for current data.

Mr. Pelkey said the website will need to be maintained and asked who will maintain it or pay to maintain it.

Mr. Arnett said he did not have an answer to the question.

Mr. Pelkey said this is going to cost money and the Selectmen will need to figure out who is going to pay to maintain the website.

**Page 3, Land Use, item #2** – Mr. King suggested adding the word “land” to “owners” at the end of the sentence.

Mr. Pelkey noted that the subtitle states “Objectives- Goals are aimed at or sought: Farmington (supports/encourages/allows?): and suggested that they use the word “encourages” there.

He said item #2 also questions whether to use “allows” or “encourages” in regards to cluster residential and mixed use developments and recommended that the word “encourages” be used here as well.

**Page #4, Actions, How IMP Policies will be Implemented, item #3-** “Advocate for the needed staff and expert capacity to implement the IMP Objectives and land use regulations updates and to lessen the Town’s exposure to legal action”. Mr. King requested that “IMP” be spelled out and asked why the phrase “lessen the Town’s exposure to legal action” was included in this action.

Mr. Arnett said this is under land use and basically it says if they are going to regulate land use that they do it well enough so as to not expose themselves to legal situations.

Mr. King said that is a requirement of everything they do but it is not a primary goal.

Consensus of the board was to delete “and to lessen the Town’s exposure to legal action”.

**Page 5, Natural Resources Conservation and Utilization, Policies- Ideas and Plans to Achieve Objectives and Support Actions, item #3-** “Incorporate performance-based building codes and regulations to achieve natural resources protection and conservation goals that are integral and



consistent with applicable Implementable Master Plan goals”.

Mr. Pelkey said he did not know what “performance-based building codes” are.

Mr. Arnett said for example it means less specification of wire size and more of you can show us how you’re going to do it but it must have 2 hours of burn time (performance). He said a lot of communities have older buildings and the newer building codes make rehabilitation prohibitively expensive and suggested it could be replaced with “modern” codes.

Mr. King said building codes and regulations are out of the purview of the Planning Board and the Master Plan.

Mr. Arnett this is a plan for the community and asked if they have to adopt building codes individually.

Mr. King said it is not done by the Planning Board and that typically the Town adopts the state building code as it has been amended.

Mr. Parker said that sometimes the adoption of building codes is part of the zoning ordinances.

Mr. Arnett said they would check on this issue.

**Objectives- Goals that are Sought, Item #4-**“Allows reasonable owner use and access of privately owned natural resources for uses including recreation, while maintaining effective measures for town wide resource protection”.

Mr. Arnett said this means the owner can use his land but his septic field can’t be polluting the water for the neighbors downstream.

Mr. Fisher said there are already statutes prohibiting putting in a septic system too close to a wetland or water supply.

Mr. King said this item talks about the owner’s use of the property and others using it for private and public recreation that they want to encourage but he would take this whole item and throw over his shoulder and start over again. He said it reads like it will allow the landowner some use of his property while giving access to everybody. The intent is to conserve while maintaining landowner rights and encouraging recreation on publically and privately owned lands where permitted he said.

Mr. Arnett said this chapter was previously titled “Natural Resources Conservation” and they added “and Utilization” to cover both sides of the issue. He said even though they are encouraging natural resource conservation they aren’t saying you can’t use your land legally.

**Page 6-** There were no questions, changes or comments from the board.

**Page 7, Cultural and Historic Resources, Objectives, Item #2-** “That the community’s cultural and historic sites, including those that are economically distressed or neglected, are redeveloped with appropriate and desired uses that enhance that heritage”.

Mr. Pelkey said he liked the idea behind this item but that he did not like the way it is worded.

Mr. Fisher suggested the word “are” be replaced with “when” to read “when redeveloped...” because he did not want to tell an owner he has to redevelop his property because it is distressed.

Mr. Arnett said the goal is that the property be redeveloped.

Mr. King said that should be on a case-by-case basis by choice of the landowner.

Mr. Arnett said he was trying to say that we have enough museums and old houses and this was a statement to encourage the next use of a historic property versus moth balling things.

Mr. King suggested that the word “that” before “heritage” be struck and replaced with “Farmington’s” to read “...that enhance Farmington’s heritage”.

**Page 8, Actions - How Policies Will Be Implemented, item #1** – “Determine on existence of any existing local historic group, their work, and invite any that share the IMP’s goals to participate in implementation”

Mr. Fisher said this sounds like they are saying if you don’t share out goals we don’t want to hear from you. He said he would strike “any that share the IMP’s goals” and amend it to read “and invite them to participate in the implementation”.

Mr. Arnett said he was thinking of groups that are formed for law suits to support “Save the (fill in something that needs saving)” and they may not want to invite in a group that is trying to sue the Zoning Board.

Mr. Bridges said they still should have a chance to speak.

Mr. Fisher said if they try to exclude someone he will raise Hell and blow it out of proportion so they want to hear from everybody whether they agree or disagree with them.

Mr. Arnett said he would amend the item as proposed by Mr. Fisher.

**Page 9 and 10** – No questions, comments or changes by the board

**Page 11, Housing Development, Redevelopment and Upkeep, Objectives, item #1** –

“Encourages development of diversified residential development that creates housing options for all generations, income levels and household types, including workforce housing to support existing and future local employment opportunities and age friendly options to support aging in place; generations do not to leave to be able to stay in Farmington ”

Mr. Fisher said he didn’t like the phrase “workforce housing” and asked that “workforce” be stricken from the item.

Mr. King said that is latest phrase used to replace “low income” housing because we didn’t like the results of that. The state has subsidized it with tax payers’ money to developers and we’re not in that business he said.

Mr. Arnett said he would remove the word from the line.

The board also requested that he rewrite the last phrase “generations do not to leave to be able to stay in Farmington” in item #1.

Mr. Arnett suggested amending it to state “generations do not have to leave and are able to stay in Farmington”.

Mr. Pelkey suggested that “development of” be stricken from “Encourages development of diversified residential development” in item #1 as it is redundant.

Mr. Arnett noted that they added “Redevelopment and Upkeep” to the title of this chapter



because they heard the message loud and clear from the town that over time people want to make sure the existing homes are kept up and it gives some backing for enforcing the building and zoning codes and encourages people to come in and fix up existing houses.

He said that the statements that say the zoning ordinance should reflect the town's housing objectives does not mean that it doesn't but that it should be checked to see that it does.

**Page 12, Actions- How Policies Will Be Implemented- item #1** – “Conduct a review and analysis of the Town's zoning and regulations to determine if they support the objectives” Mr. Arnett said this is related to the discussion of the previous page and suggested if they have not done so the board should review the zoning and regulations.

Mr. King said that in item #3 “Southern” Regional Planning Commission should be changed to “Strafford” Regional Planning Commission and asked why it was included.

Mr. Arnett said that by including enlisting the assistance of some of the private developers and groups such as the Community Development Finance Authority and the SRPC in the Master Plan it tells them that we see them as part of the solution.

**Page 13, Recreation**- Mr. Pelkey said he would like to see a making a connection to regional recreational groups and activities such Moose Mountain, state wide trail groups, etc. included somewhere in this chapter. He said if the town was part of a regional recreational group it could bring people into the town in support of town businesses.

**Item #1-** “Provides safe and sought recreation facilities...” Mr. King questioned the use of “sought” and said that it was an uncommon use of the word.

Mr. Arnett suggested replacing it with “desired”.

**Page 14, Recreation, Actions** - Mr. Arnett said item # 5 contains two blank spaces that relate back to the earlier discussion about who would oversee implementation of the plan (regarding recreational facilities and services).

**Page 15-** No questions, comments or changes.

**Page 16, Economic Development, Objectives, item #2-** “Encourages appropriate business location...” Mr. Fisher suggested the word “appropriate” be removed. He asked who is to say what an appropriate location is and noted that this board would have a different definition of appropriate than another Planning Board 10 years down the road. This requirement is already in the zoning ordinances he said.

**Page 17, Actions- How Policies Will Be Implemented, items #4 and #5-** Mr. Arnett noted there are 2 blanks regarding who will be assigned to maintain the website and oversee a business retention- visitation program that will need to be filled in.

Mr. Pelkey asked if there will be another draft update.

Mr. Arnett said they intend to be back before the board on a regular basis.

He asked how the board wished to handle comments from ADG and that the current set up is to funnel them through Mr. Capello.

Chairman King said he didn't think there would be a different plan.

Mr. Pelkey said it would be nice for the members to get any communications from them at the same time the Town gets them.

Chairman King said if it readily available sending it by e-mail would allow the members more time to review it and they would still receive the copies in their meeting packets.

He reiterated the importance of having significant public participation or the nay-sayers will say the survey was biased.

Mr. Arnett requested permission to communicate directly to the board.

Mr. King requested that they send communications to him and to cc Mr. Capello and the Land Use Assistant.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (Place, second Bridges) to adjourn the meeting passed 5-0 at 7:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

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Charlie King, Chairman