

RYE TOWN CENTER COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARRETTE
Plan NH Presentation of Recommendations

Minutes

Saturday, June 1, 2019
Rye Jr. High School

In Attendance:

Representing Plan NH - *Robin LeBlanc, Plan NH Executive Director; North Sturtevant, JSA Architects; Peter Michaud, Historic Preservation; Jay Longtin, JSA Architects, Jamie Simchik, Simchik Planning & Development; Katiemae White, Ecological Design & Marketing; Douglas Dowell, AARP Executive Council; Charlotte Bouvier, Thornton Tomasetti/Becker Structural Engineers; and Bob White, Landscape Architect.*

Selectmen Present – *Phil Winslow, Keriann Roman and Bill Epperson*

Selectman Phil Winslow opened the presentation at 3:00 p.m. and introduced **North Sturtevant, representing Plan NH**, to lead the presentation.

Plan NH is an organization made up of architects, engineers, contractors, planners and others who brainstorm recommendations to address challenges a community may face. The charrette for Rye was sponsored by a group of citizens who fundraised for the event, which was held over a period of two days. The purpose of Rye's charrette was to focus on the center of town and look at ways to make it the "heart" of the town with a goal of contributing to the health and vibrancy of the community.

The Plan NH Charrette Team conducted a site walk of the Rye Town Center (*area between the Rye Town Hall and the split near the junior high on Washington Road*) on the morning of May 31st. The tour included the following buildings; Public Safety Building, Library, Town Hall, Old Trolley Barn, Parsonage, Parson's Field, TD Bank building and the recreation area. A stakeholders meeting was held in the afternoon of the 31st, which was an opportunity for Plan NH to speak to the community leaders in regards to their ideas involving the town center and how it operates. Additionally, two public listening sessions were held in order for Rye's citizens to express their ideas and visions for the community.

The Plan NH Team worked together in a group session on the morning of June 1st to come up with their recommendations for the town based on the citizens' vision for Rye.

The residents' vision over the next ten (10) years included:

- Preserving the quintessential town center;
- Increasing pedestrian and bicycle safety;
- Strong interest in multi-generational activities with places to gather; and
- Obtaining a clear plan for the town hall and other historic buildings within the town center.

Concerns of the residents included:

- The past stalling of projects.
- Taxpayer and financial issues of projects proposed.
- Ideas should be realistic to achieve.
- Opportunities for shared resources amongst the town's departments and buildings is important.
- Traffic and speeding through the town center.

Recommendations from Plan NH:

- Raised crosswalks to help slow traffic through the center of town.
- Sidewalks to connect the junior high to the rest of the "downtown" area and the library.
- "T" up the intersections off Washington Road to help slow down traffic.
- Village café where people can gather.
- Incorporate the Parsonage into the library "campus" to use for middle school aged children programming.
- An expansion of the library towards Washington Road with an entrance facing the road (expansion could be glass to give it transparency).
- Restore the second floor of the town hall and open up the space to be used for meetings, theater productions and other social events.
- Addition to the town hall of a one-story structure for administrative office space.
- Create a pocket neighborhood on the TD Bank property for new housing with an objective of creating Workforce Housing.
- Include benches and shade trees in the town center.
- More signage in the town forest to mark the trail that connects Parsons Field and the rec area.
- Kiosk at Parsons to post trail maps and upcoming events.
- Prepare a visual guideline for the Historic District addressing the zoning ordinances of the district.
- Sell the trolley barn property to use the funds towards other town center projects.

The Plan NH Team shared ways in which the town could get some of the projects done.

A question and answer period was held with the public.

The recommendations and presentation by Plan NH may be viewed on the Rye Civic League website. The presentation was also livestreamed at the Rye Junior High with a link from the town's website. The Selectmen will be holding a work session to discuss the recommendations of Plan NH.

Selectman Phil Winslow closed the presentation at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger