

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

**Tuesday, October 19, 2021
1:00 p.m. – Rye Town Hall**

***Members Present: Steve Carter, Katy Sherman, Kathryn Garcia and Rob Wright
Ad-Hoc Members: Patricia Losik (serving as alternate)***

Others Present: Planning Administrator Kim Reed and Julie LaBranche

I. Call to Order

Chair Carter called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Visioning Session on November 10th

It was reported that 25 people have already signed up for the visioning session, which is being held on November 10th. Two people have confirmed that they will act as a facilitator. The sign-in table will have a list of people who have already signed up, plus an additional sign-in sheet for people signing in the day of the event. The volunteers at the table will check off the names, write the name on a name tag and give the person work session handouts. This will prevent multiple people from using markers and will cut back on person-to-person contact. Masks will be required entering the junior high building and will be required to remain on during the entire visioning session.

Planning Administrator Reed has reached out to the school to see how to handle people who want to participate but will not wear a mask. The Long Range Planning Committee has to abide by the rules of the junior high, as they are using their facility. The schools do not allow people into the buildings without masks.

Ms. LaBranche noted that she is thinking of creating a worksheet based on the three themes. Those could be emailed to people to fill out or picked up at the session.

The Committee agreed this would be a good option for people who cannot attend, but want to participate. The worksheets can be dropped off at the Town Hall to the Planning Administrator's office. The Committee also agreed to strictly enforce the school's policy in regards to masks in the building.

Discussion:

Member Wright stated that Dominique Winebaum made a salient point about having four quadrants in the SWOT analysis with only an hour. By the time the first person gets done speaking, they will be out of time.

Chair Carter suggested shortening the first topic to “Our Community”, as this involves the citizens and municipal services. People can talk about the community’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. He commented that if they had an hour for each topic, it would still be tricky to get through the SWOT. It’s up to the facilitator to move things along.

Ms. LaBranche noted that they don’t have to do all four on the analysis. They could just focus on strengths and opportunities to give it a positive spin. She pointed out that the Planning Board knows what the weaknesses and threats are. If there are two analyses, the groups would have ten minutes of discussion for each analysis, under each topic.

Member Wright commented that in saying “Our Community”, it’s broad enough that when viewed in the context of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, things will surface pretty naturally and quickly. The facilitators could ask the group to give one word about the strengths of living in Rye. They could see what organically comes from that.

Ms. LaBranche explained that the instructions given to the facilitators will instruct them to tell the people at their tables that this isn’t a conversation. The facilitators will be looking for rapid feedback.

Chair Carter pointed out that it might be helpful to have a timekeeper at each table in addition to the facilitator. Referring to the SWOT analysis, he suggested strengths, opportunities and threats. He thinks it might be good for people to think about the threats and give their comments.

Member Wright stated that he would encourage the Committee to keep all four notions intact. Taking away weaknesses takes away the opportunity for people to say; “I think this is a huge gap in the provisioning of town services and land use policy.”

Ms. LaBranche suggested keeping all four, but not doing each one separately.

Chair Carter clarified that each person will give a bullet point and the facilitator will have four categories and write it under the specific category. His only worry about this is that it will become a free for all.

Ms. LaBranche pointed out the facilitator will go around the table and ask for people to speak one at a time.

There was some discussion about how to handle the group discussions.

Ms. LaBranche noted that at the sign-in desk one of the questions should be whether they have taken the community survey. At the end of the night, if people really delved in deep and given some really good feedback, they could ask how many people would take the survey if it was opened back up again.

Referring to the group discussions, Member Wright stated that the ideas should be ranked to give an idea of the consensus of the group sitting at the table.

It was clarified that everyone will give one word or phrase. It can then be briefly discussed with a ranking given at the end.

Ms. LaBranche pointed out that ranking will eat up a lot of time because there will be discussion back and forth. She is not sure they can get through it.

Member Wright commented that this information is valuable, as it takes the temperature about how passionate someone is about something. If there is a lot of support behind a particular item, that gives a good factor as to what's important in town.

Member Garcia suggested that the facilitator ask what rises to the top.

The Committee discussed possible ways of ranking that would make it a quick and easy process.

Member Sherman asked why there is a need to rank. If it's brought up, it's important for somebody. There will be a feel from the people at the table if it's important to someone else.

Ms. LaBranche stated that the facilitator could be told to tell their group if they agree with something that has already been put up there, just repeat it and a check mark can be put next to it. There may be three people who agree with one specific point.

Chair Carter pointed out that there will be certain topics that will be more common amongst the six to eight tables.

Ms. LaBranche noted that a lot of this content was covered in the community survey in quite a bit of detail. The survey also had ranking as to its importance. The visioning work session is not supposed to take the place of the community survey. It's another way to bring people together, raise the awareness of the visioning chapter process and get people participating. She continued there is probably going to be a commonality between the tables under the SWOT categories. Once the event is done, all the information will be collated and what came out of it can be seen. She thinks there's a way to prioritize without taking the time during the event to do it, just by compiling and collating the data.

Member Wright suggested opening up the thoughts collected to the room and giving people a chance to walk around to see what was brought up and then marking what they thought were top

two priorities. This will give enough data points to be able to have a statistical sense of what was important to the people in that room that night.

Chair Carter commented that his concern is Covid related. If someone is at table 1, they have to go over to see what tables 2, 3, and 4 have put up to decide where to put dots on the eighteen sheets.

Member Wright stated that his understanding is that they were following the Covid guidelines of the school. As long as they are doing what has been asked and are doing what the students do during school, he doesn't have a concern.

Ms. LaBranche noted that it is not so much a Covid concern, but how fast people can actually do that task.

Member Sherman pointed out that this is going to elongate the meeting. People will sit there and start discussing different points.

Chair Carter stated that he thinks this will get too complicated.

Ms. LaBranche stated that the surveys and the visioning session are part of the very preliminary phase one for the Vision Chapter. She suggested compiling all the information and indicating how many times a topic came up in different groups. In phase two, the information can be brought forward or there can be another survey. The public doesn't necessarily do it. The Committee and the Planning Board does the prioritizing, as they are the experts. She commented that it can be indicated if something comes up several times.

Planning Administrator Reed explained that the goal of phase one is to come up with the framework to write a visioning chapter. Once the data is collated, how the visioning chapter is going to be written will come out of the information from the two surveys and the visioning session, which will be phase two.

The Committee discussed the process for signing people into the event to them choosing a table. It was agreed to have a dream board, as suggested by Member Garcia at the last meeting. It was also agreed that people would be assigned to tables. The Committee discussed the need to have timekeepers at each table. It was agreed the timekeepers could be the committee members, so they will also be available to answer any questions that may come up at a table.

Working agenda for visioning workshop:

- Introduction – approximately 10 minutes
 - Purpose of the visioning workshop and how the information will be used in drafting the Visioning Chapter – Pat and Steve
 - Overview of the master planning process, the purpose and how it is used – Julie and Kim
- Facilitated group discussions

- 5 to 10 minutes for introductions at individual tables
- Facilitator to introduce the format and review the instructions
- 20 minutes for discussion on each topic:
 - Our community
 - Our land development and growth
 - Our environment and resilience
- Topics to be analyzed in SWOT format
- Facilitator to go around the table to all participants and go around the table once more in time
- If someone agrees with something already on the board, they should let the facilitator know and a check mark will be added

There was some discussion in regards to people who may be able to be a facilitator. Ms. LaBranche will send reminders to the people who have not responded. Possible suggestions; Scott Marion, Stacey Smith, Jaci Grote and Carole Menard.

Ms. LaBranche will develop instructions for the tables, which will also be used as a guide for the facilitators. She will also set up a Zoom meeting with the facilitators to be held the week before the visioning workshop.

Duties during visioning work session:

- Kim – Greeting people at the door and directing them to the sign-in table
- Katy & Rob – At the sign-in table
- Julie – Helping at front of room
- Pat & Dominique – Floating and helping people
- Kathryn & Steve – Near the dream board off to the side
- Committee members will each be at a table (6 tables)

Ad Hoc Member Losik stated that she heard today that all the information, the two surveys and the visioning session, is going to be compiled. If the committee members get the question at the table, there should be an answer. She asked if the answer is that all the information will be compiled and discussed toward the end of phase one. She commented there should be clear direction. They should have a clear response for that night.

The Committee agreed.

Chair Carter stated that at some point the Committee will have to think about how they will put this data out so people can see it.

Ms. LaBranche pointed out that it's October. The visioning session is in November and there are still two or three months the Committee can continue working. Maybe one of the next phases is for this group to give a presentation to the Planning Board of the survey results. This could be done in December at the Planning Board meeting, which is livestreamed so people can watch.

This will be a way to present the information to the public and to give an update to the Planning Board. She continued that the Committee will take the information compiled from the surveys and visioning session and discuss it over December and January to develop the framework for a Vision Chapter. She noted there will be a summary report of the results. The Committee will then have working sessions to go through the data to determine what the Visioning Chapter should look like and to build that framework. The final product that will be delivered to the Committee and the Town is the draft vision framework and the three reports; visioning workshop report and two surveys.

III. Approval of Minutes – September 13th

The following correction was noted:

- Page 2, 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence should read: **Ad Hoc Member Winebaum stated that the Rye Civic League is going to do another send out.**

**Motion by Rob Wright to approve the minutes of September 13, 2021 as amended.
Seconded by Katy Sherman. All in favor.**

- Next LRP Committee Meeting to be held on Tuesday, November 2nd, 1:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion by Katy Sherman to adjourn at 2:35 p.m. Seconded by Rob Wright. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger

