

Winthrop Comprehensive Planning Process
Monday, January 11, 2010 7:00 p.m.

Board Attendance:

Patrice Putman

Andy Wess

Sarah Fuller

John Callinah

Harold Burnett

Kristen Bartlett

Jack Kaiser

John Carpenter

Town Support:

Chris Huck, KVCOG
Cornell Knight, Town Manager

Community Members:

Russ Hazzard
Maxine Pray
Don Beatte
Jared Alessandroni
Roger Lajunesse
Others, whose names I unfortunately missed.

Agenda: Economic Development outside of the Downtown

- Supporting local business – as local businesses support us
- How to bring in the businesses we want
- Recreational economy
- Transportation

Many thanks to Kristin for her willingness to take minutes for these meetings..

Sara spoke on WKEDA. Market Winthrop and surrounding towns. Looking at who to market to and what type of businesses we want to attract. A survey is going out to local businesses to get their input on what is needed. They are still in the beginning stages of developing things. Jack noted the difficulty in coming up with a marketing plan and not knowing what your product is.

Patrice asked the group to articulate the common business-related themes.

Education. Several citizens mentioned how some towns are able to draw in students (whether H.S or higher education) and use it for financial benefit. It would also help fill the school system, which is suffering from low enrollment. Educating people and building skills would economically help the community.

Jack--Retail business tend to cycle money within the local region, but to get the biggest bang out of your money you must provide goods and services that are sold throughout the state, nation and world. Such a business may also need a large workforce which will also help the community. In cases like Winthrop's Alternative Manufacturing, the company is even employee-owned which provides even more financial benefit.

Quality of Life

Cautions against going too big, but Sara pointed out that there are other restrictions on Winthrop that would prevent that from happening.

Harold suggested a model of a wide-based pyramid with different sizes of businesses, so that they are not dependant on larger businesses which can bring big advantages, but also big emptiness if they leave.

Patrice—what type of businesses might we want to pursue to help develop the lakes, recreation, etc (places other than downtown).

Possible Attractions:

Half pipe for boarding in winter

Improve horse trails, so they could be further developed

Children's water area...further develop the beach area as more of an attraction.

Ken suggested that an attractive environment would invite new businesses. New programs at the high school might help draw people, but how do people get to know about it?

Need to know what buildings are available. One company had to move to Greene because there was no space in Winthrop that was large enough (Royal Street building had structural issues). There is a need to do some work making spaces available. A spec building would need a public/private partnership and investment is hard to come by. In general companies are looking for places that are already built, not some place that would take a year and a half of planning and building in order to be able to start business (6 months top). Public/private partnership...if there were to be a community effort would need approx 500K to 1M. Could get via TIFF, state funds, federal funds, etc.

**possible recommendation. Move forward with Public/Private option to be available to aid potential development when the need arises.

Would a LEED certified building be a greater draw? The answer is unknown...if is not cost-prohibitive than it could work. Workplace in Pine Tree Zone has no incentive to be energy-efficient because the state helps pay (?). Greenhouses in Madison because they have cheap electricity. Does Winthrop have any utility-based incentives that could be put into place (using the dam, etc.)

What buildings are currently available that could be utilized with a little help? Old Mill on Main street, Mill on 202, Royal street building (needs attention),

Andy...Small businesses can also provide large benefits to the community. Andy noted that his business spends $\frac{3}{4}$ million (maybe heard wrong... $\frac{1}{4}$ million?)and that zoning will need to change to attract businesses (move to performance-based) and town would need to embrace business more fully. New businesses to town could get an advocate or expediter to help through the zoning process, etc.

Mill...Call Center, Administrative building next to mill has had interest as cooperative arts center etc. Things falling through in one case due to customer deciding on Lewiston because more businesses, parking, etc. Not critical mass in Winthrop. Businesses are afraid that there will not be enough people, etc. Also funding has become an issue in the current economic environment.

Jared...Call Centers valuable. Schools to attract out of state, foreign children. Assisted living brings in people as well as employees (highly financed by HUD). We need to get the Mill fully occupied. There is great opportunity there.

Chris—Transportation must be part of the discussion. He suggested a Feasibility matrix.

Once decide what type of businesses, the important thing is to have the infrastructure to support them. Conversation on how to improve the transportation infrastructure.

It comes down to traditional Maine development (village and farm) or development of the past 20 years (more spread out and strip development).

We have to set our community priorities for the kind of community we want to be and make transportation decisions that support those priorities.

Traffic safety issues on 202. Traffic lights are one solution. Limiting access points may also help.

Limit access on 202

Slowing high density areas (both 202 & Main street)

Bike path

Commuter bus service

(tried during Mr.Market shutdown and no one used. Commuter vans a possible alternative to bus (need to get 12 people together, etc. GoMaine provides this)

Increase local road maintenance (50 miles or road...100K budgeted this year...less for next?)

Chris will solicit list via e-mail?

Next: January 25th—Significant fun community events (carousels, and merry-go-rounds!)