

Notes: Winthrop Comprehensive Planning Committee
Feb. 26, 2009 6:00 – 8:15

The committee met for the first time to get to know one another and discuss the overall process. All members introduced themselves and talked for a few minutes about how long they have lived in Winthrop, their work here, and their primary areas of interest. Margy Burns Knight talked with the group about opportunities to communicate through the town website. She took a picture of the group and will post it on the town website.

A few decisions were made.

The town website will post my patriceputman@gmail.com e-mail address. Questions and concerns will be directed to me and I will distribute them to the Committee. A decision was made to try using the Reply All response so everyone on the Committee can follow a conversation. We will evaluate if that is working well for everyone ongoing. E-mail will be the primary means of communication between Committee members.

All Committee meetings are open to the public and will be listed on the Town website. When subcommittees or taskforces are formed, we will need to make sure their meetings are also put on the website. This may be a challenge but we need to make it an expectation of all the groups.

Chris Huck went over how the Town Planning process usually unfolds. Generally, he pulls together as much information and data as possible and that information and data becomes the basis for the public discussion. He said that Towns can approve the Plan, and the State can approve the Plan, or either can approve the Plan. Having a state approved plan does provide additional points for many grants. The state lists the minimum number of subjects that need to be addressed, not the maximum. The State Planning Office now looks primarily at the Land Use Plan for growth areas and rural areas. It looks more at the check lists for other subject areas. This is a change from the previous process.

How decisions will be made: The Committee discussed various ways to make decisions: consensus, voting, super-majority voting, rank-order voting, and quorum-based decision making. The general consensus was that there was a strong preference for consensus-based decisions. If a consensus can not be reached and the subject has been talked out, the Committee felt a vote could be called for but decisions should be made only if there is a strong preference for a particular position. If it looks like a 49:51 decision, the community will probably not be in agreement either and more work would need to be done on the issue. Discussions do need to be somewhat time limited so that we can get all of the work necessary done in the agreed upon 18 month timeline.

Upcoming Schedule: We will be meeting every second and fourth Monday from 7:00 to 9:00 at the Town Hall unless otherwise decided. I do hope to take July off.

March 9: Review of 1996 Plan

March 23: Downtown Economy

April 13: Transportation

April 27: Natural Resources

May 11: Recreation

Notes by Patrice 3/1/09