

**NORTH EAST PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING MEETING
July 25, 2024 / 4:00 PM
North East Town Hall Meeting Room
106 South Main Street
North East, Maryland 21901**

-CALL TO ORDER-

Mrs. Vennell opened the workshop at 4:03pm.

Present for the meeting included Chairman Mark Dobbins, Members Judy Duffy, Neil DeMatt, and Commissioner Hilary Crothers-Moore, Stacey Dahlstrom, Consultant, Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Zoning Administrator, Grant Handley, Assistant Town Administrator, Amy Yackenack, Grant-writer, Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning, and Lisa Rhoades, Planning and Zoning Assistant. Calvin Wilson was absent from the meeting.

-INTRODUCTIONS-

Introductions were made of the Planning Commission members and the members of the Steering Committee. Mrs. Vennell introduced Ms. Stacey Dahlstrom, EPRPC, the Planning Consultant hired to update/refine the North East Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Dahlstrom shared her background with this type of project. Ms. Dahlstrom stated she currently works for Centerville, Maryland and has worked for Maryland Department of Transportation, the New Castle County Planning Office and several places in the state of Florida. Ms. Dahlstrom reported that she had assisted New Castle County with their 2040 Comprehensive Plan update.

Mrs. Vennell reported that the Comprehensive Plan is not a complete re-write as there are sections that will not need to be updated. Since the last Comprehensive Plan update there are new State regulations and requirements which will need to be addressed. The Goals and Objectives in each section will need to be updated. Mrs. Yackenack will be utilizing the updated goals and objectives in her grant requests. Mrs. Vennell reported that the Water Resource Element and the Municipal Growth Element have been 90% completed by the Town's water engineering firm. The Planning Commission reviewed the Transportation element and updated approximately 75% of this chapter in 2022, which Ms. Dahlstrom will finalize.

-OVERVIEW-

Public Involvement Plan

Ms. Dahlstrom reported that she has been working with the Town to set up the Public Involvement Plan and the strategy of how to implement and update the plan over the course of the project.

APPROVED

August 22, 2024

Ms. Dahlstrom reported she will update and finalize the Municipal Growth Element, the Water Resource Element and the Transportation Element as they gather input from the public and the workshops.

Survey

Ms. Dahlstrom reported that the first public involvement initiative will be a survey which has already been drafted. The Planning Commission/Steering Committee members were given a copy of the drafted survey and any updates, revisions, recommendations concerning the survey should be emailed to Betsy Vennell by August 5th so the survey can be finalized. Mrs. Vennell reported that the final survey will be posted to the Town's website and the Town will also send out a postcard mailing with a QR code for those who want to utilize their cellphone to take the survey. Copies of the survey will be placed in the front lobby of the Town Hall, as well.

Municipal Growth Element and Water Resource Element

Mr. Handley inquired if there will be a section specifically designated to MS-4. Mrs. Vennell said the information will need to be inserted into the Municipal Growth or Water Resource Elements. Mr. Handley reported that he will prepare language to be utilized within these elements which talk about the MS-4 program the town is involved with.

Maps

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that Eastern Shore Region Counsel Conservancy has offered to provide maps for the Town's Comprehensive Plan at no cost. Ms. Dahlstrom stated that Mary Buffington from the Eastern Shore GIS Cooperative will forward the GIS zoning map for North East.

Mrs. Vennell commented that WILMAPCO has offered to provide updated transportation maps to be included in the Comprehensive Plan.

Future Workshops

The group discussed future meetings agreed to meet one to two times each month on a Thursday evening from 4pm to 6pm. The next meeting is planned for August 22, 2024. Ms. Dahlstrom stated that she may need to Zoom for the next meeting, however, could be in person or Zoom for future meetings.

Ms. Dahlstrom inquired if the group would be opposed to reorganizing the Comprehensive Plan as that may help with repetitiveness and the flow when reading through the Plan. The Steering Committee agreed that would be fine.

Timeline

Ms. Dahlstrom reported:

1. Their firm will take each element and put them on a schedule for review. The Housing Element will be the most labor intensive, therefore this one will be done by itself but the some of the other smaller elements could be grouped together. The elements (chapters) will be drafted and sent out to the Steering Committee prior to the meeting.
2. Survey: receive comments regarding the survey, from this group, by August 5, 2024.
3. Place the survey on the website by August 19th. 2024. We are unsure of the date a postcard can be mailed to residents, as this is dependent on the Town's vendor.
4. Deadline for receiving the surveys back from the public is tentatively set for September 30, 2024.
5. A summary of the public survey results will be posted on the Story Map.
6. The first open house is proposed to be conducted in December. The open house is to present the draft elements to the public. There will be several informational stations setup for residents.
7. Final draft will be prepared after receipt of public comments.
8. The final draft will need to be sent to the State Agencies
9. Planning Commission Public Hearing is tentatively planned for March 2025.
10. The Mayor and Commissioners Public Hearing is tentatively planned somewhere between May and July 2025.

Mr. Handley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:31pm. Mr. DeMatt seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

Respectfully Submitted:

Lisa Rhoades
Planning and Zoning Assistant

Attest:

Mark Dobbins
Chairman