

JUNE 6, 2005 SPECIAL MEETING

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on June 6, 2005 at 6:15 p.m. in the lower level conference room of the Stillman Building.

Present: Councilors Adil, Cascio, Forrest, Fortunato, Hemmann, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Karangekis and Chairperson Morin.

Absent: Councilor Czernicki.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk; and Strategic Plan Committee members Linda Avery, Peter Gardow, Leigh Standish, Bill Donahue, Claudio Capone, Jim Clynch, and Ralph Karanian.

Workshop - Strategic Plan Committee

Peter Gardow said that the Council was recently provided with a draft plan of the Strategic Plan including the introduction of the plan, the implementation process, and the use of the plan. He said that the intent of the Committee was to update the current Strategic Plan to develop numerous strategies for the Town for the next five years. Mr. Gardow said that Councilor Montinieri, Councilor Cascio, and Councilor Czernicki were at the public hearing in 2004 and Councilor Montinieri has attended other meetings on and off. He said that the Committee appreciates this participation. Mr. Gardow said that the process was to comprehend the 1995 Plan, parse the 1995 Plan into a usable database format, identify relative stake holders for the updated Plan, present the new data at a hearing to the stakeholders, public, and Council, use feedback from the hearing to update the 1995 Plan, and modify and update the Plan for use by the Town Council and Town Manager. Mr. Gardow said that the Committee found that the 1995 Plan was oversized and repetitive, and often contradicting. He said that it was very difficult to use as a plan and the Committee asked the Town Manager to get feedback on the Plan as to what was completed, what was ongoing, what needed to be revised, what was started, and what was no longer relevant. Mr. Gardow said that this information was presented at the October 13, 2004 public hearing. He said that one hundred stakeholders were identified as part of the prior plan and the Committee tried to reach out to these people. Mr. Gardow explained the SMART Process as standing for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time bound. He reviewed the Mission Statement and Organizational Chart of the updated Plan, as well as the goals and objectives. Mr. Gardow stated that the strategies and implementation include the following:

- Goals and objectives to be assigned to Boards & Commissions to form strategies
- Strategies might be a local Strategic Plan for Boards & Commissions
- Strategies shall be available to the Strategic Planning Committee six months after approval of the goals and objectives

Mr. Gardow stated that planning needs to be used to the Town's benefit for improvement.

Leigh Standish said that some of the reasons the Committee opted against the detail in the 1995 Plan is that there was a tightly compressed time frame, and they wanted to leave the various agencies, Departments, Boards, and Commissions responsible for implementing the strategies for objectives in Town.

Linda Avery said that she thinks it is very important to have a follow up of the Plan periodically.

Mr. Standish said that the Committee hopes that the Council will build into the Plan some accountability of those Boards and Commissions who report to the Council a justification of their positions and a reporting of their progress.

Chairperson Morin said that he appreciates the work done by the Committee so far and a lot of the ideas they've presented make a lot of sense to him. He said that, after tonight, Council questions can be submitted in writing to the

Town Manager who will forward them to the Committee for their response.

Jim Clynch commended Town Manager Bonnie Therrien for her work in getting together the Committee to review the Plan.

Councilor Hemmann thanked the Committee for their work and said that the process, when the Strategic Plan was first put together, was a very good process, but it was rudimentary and there was no expert in planning to provide guidance. She said that the proposed objectives stated are all phrased in a format that can be gauged and they are good to use as Department goals which can also be measured.

Councilor Fortunato asked if the Town is mandated to devise a Plan every five years and the Town Manager said that there is nothing mandated; therefore there is flexibility. Councilor Fortunato said that where she works, a three year review seems to work well. She asked if the work to date has been shared with the appropriate Boards and Commissions and was told that the Council is the first to see the work to date. Councilor Fortunato suggested that feedback be collected from these Boards and Commissions and also suggested that some of the language in the Plan be modified. She asked if it is the intent of the Committee to have the Boards and Commissions create the timeline to develop the strategies and was told that this would be the decision of Management. Councilor Fortunato stated that the Strategic Plan Committee's work is only partially done as the implementation of the Plan also has to be done and this will take a combination of the Town staff and volunteers.

Mr. Standish asked if the Strategic Plan Committee will be charged with this role as they are not necessarily in the position to do this and Councilor Fortunato said that the Committee needs to define what they mean in saying that the Plan will be sent to Boards and Commissions for strategies.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Committee is saying that they are not going to come up with a plan to fulfill specific goals, but rather the Boards and Commissions along with Town staff will do this.

Councilor Fortunato said that the process of the second piece of the Plan needs to be developed. She recommended that guidance be provided to the Boards and Commissions to help them through this process so that there is uniformity.

Councilor Cascio thanked the Strategic Plan Committee for the time they've dedicated to Wethersfield. He said that he finds the SMART process to be very specific and easy to follow. Councilor Cascio verified that the Board of Education has been approached through the Shared Services Committee and said that the Strategic Plan has to be a buy-in by everyone and not just specific sections of the Town. He said that the Strategic Plan is only as strong as those who lead by example want to take the Plan and work with it.

Councilor Cascio said that the Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools need to get this Plan out there for all Departments in Wethersfield.

Councilor Montinieri stated that she likes the way the Mission Statement and Vision Statement came out and the Goals & Objectives are very succinct. She said that she appreciates all the work put in by the members of the Committee.

Councilor Forrest asked for definitions of some of the words used in the document. He asked what "tax growth" referred to and was told that this referred to the mill rate. Councilor Forrest asked what is meant by a "desirable business mix" and was told that this refers to the plan of Conservation and Development as well as the new zoning regulations and that this objective would go to the EDIC to develop a plan for implementation.

Chairperson Morin said that there are a lot of people who need to review the Plan to compile a final draft. He said that this will take time as this is a very important document that needs to be utilized.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:00 p.m., Councilor Adil moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Hemmann. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk

Approved by vote of Council 6/20/05