

MINUTES

LAKES TO LAND REGIONAL INITIATIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM MONTHLY MEETING

OCTOBER 10, 2012 AT 1 P.M.

PLEASANT VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER
3586 GLOVERS LAKE ROAD

Call to Order

Present: Brad Hopwood, Susan Barnard, Jeanette May, Deanna Pattison, Jackie Johnson, Bob Peterson, Ted Wood, Betsy Evans, Melanie Ware, Bob Delanoy, Dennis Holcombe, John Iacoangeli and Tamara Buswinka, Monica Shultz, Sandy Skees-Giaier, Bruce Wildie, Kurt Schindler

Old Business: Planning Commission Status Report Round Robin

Arcadia Township reported that they have completed their current Land Use Maps, priorities, and strategies. They are meeting twice a month. There are less people attending than desirable, but they don't allow public input when they go into work sessions. Gilmore and Blaine are approximately at the same point. Other townships are just getting started. The summer was devoted to the Vision Sessions held at different times, so communities are at different points. Tamara was really impressed with the work done to complete the Existing Land Use Surveys—not an easy task. She is seeing some great ideas coming out in development of the goals and strategies. There is a visible link in the goals to the vision session results and also to other communities in the region—collaboration opportunities are already starting to show themselves. Some feel like they should be further ahead. Some have been competing with issues like the Medical Marijuana ordinance. (There was a brief side discussion around that and a recent court ruling about the issue of coops. A lot of communities are extending their moratoriums until more information gets fleshed out.)

Monica requested tips for completing the Land Use Maps. Dennis Holcombe recommended a 9-1-1 street map from the County Equalization Department as it shows the location of homes in relationship to the lots. Others used Google maps plus driving around. Dennis thought the 9-1-1 maps are more specific to the location of houses. A question was raised about Planning Commissions meeting once vs. twice a month. Tamara responded that it's not a contest - work at your own pace. John added that it doesn't matter if you meet once or twice a month but that there is a regular schedule that can be posted so people know about the meeting ahead of time.

Kurt Schindler thought that Manistee County had the ability to make custom maps and that Benzie could put digital photographs of the entire county on a CD (for a charge). There is no fee for the hard copy of the 9-1-1 maps for government agencies.

New Business: Planning Commissioner Training Schedule

What would be an ideal time for training township boards and Planning Commissions? The Citizen Planner Course is typically 3 hours, one night a week for 7 weeks, but it can be done on Saturdays or by other arrangement. It covers all of the basics on Planning and Zoning; administration; how to run meetings and public hearings; legal foundations; the planning and zoning processes; traditional and cutting edge techniques; and public participation. The goal is to train members of Planning Commissions to be proficient. Monica recommended that citizens also attend to better communicate with Planning Commissions. A 3-month lead-time is needed to schedule the trainings. Although not all the townships were represented at today's meeting, there was a general consensus around doing it after the first of the year and after the Master Plans are done. The training would be held locally to get as many people involved as possible, including interested citizens or townships officials. There is also a Master Citizen Planner certification for those who wish to continue their education. It requires 6 hours of training per year to maintain the status. A link will be put on the website for Citizen Planner and M.A.P. education. While there are online versions, Brad Hopwood found the interactions at the table to be more valuable. A few locations were suggested. Kurt Schindler appreciated the feedback and suggested a committee be formed to help put it together. Monica will put out a survey so more solid numbers can be gathered for the next meeting.

Action Item: Link on website for Citizen Planner and M.A.P. education (Beckett & Raeder). Citizen Planner Course Survey (Monica).

Other Business

Monica recently sent out an interview and article that was posted on the website. She asked if there were any ideas of stories in our individual communities that could be the subject of future articles.

Dennis Holcombe relayed that he was skeptical at first that Blaine and Gilmore townships could work as well together as they are. "We are learning a lot about each other's townships. There is corporate knowledge that we are all benefiting from."

Tamara was complimented as being "superb at chairing and eliciting comments. When she walked in with all these maps, it was like National Geographic."

Sandy asked, "Could we have an article that is more in depth about what the Master Plan process is or an example of something that was accomplished because of a Master Plan?"

Brad Hopwood suggested that Onekama Township and Arcadia to a lesser degree could talk about things that resulted from past visioning and plans, such as the beach, the Marsh, the park projects in Onekama, the DDA. "All of these things came from those plans and the community support that brought them forward".

Sandy wondered if it was too early to talk about cooperation. Tamara responded that it should be put on the list for a later article.

John Iacoangeli explained that if you were to interview a planner in the 1970s, he would have said that the purpose of the Master Plan was to scope out areas for future growth and then use that as a basis to create the zoning ordinance. "Today, if you ask a Planning Commissioner in Onekama [they would say that] their Master Plan is a portal to explore opportunities... to leverage community assets. There has

been a shift in how Master Plans are being utilized. It's just not complying with state statutes. It is learning and discovering about similarities and differences ... opening eyes to assets".

Brad responded that if people understand going into the planning process up front, that is less likely for problems, like Sandy indicated, to occur.

Dennis Holcombe relayed a concern that their current zoning ordinance is very aligned with their current master plan and they don't want to have to change the Master Plan and make the ordinances they like obsolete.

Brad Hopwood replied, "That is what an ordinance audit—post-plan—is... to identify areas where the ordinance does not support the plan. But the ordinance is still a political function; it may never fully support the plan because political will may not be there."

Tamara added "That is why you guys spent the time to review the Benzie County Master Plan to really understand it to know how it fit in with the goals you developed."

Dennis thought that both were really well balanced right now and doesn't want to unbalance it.

Brad replied, "Those observations tell me that you are doing a fantastic job. Understanding that ahead of time is very important. It doesn't happen a lot."

Susan Barnard felt that Onekama was experiencing some of those hurdles.

Brad felt that some of those stories could be valuable, too. "The political will is not always there. Not everyone who is elected or appointed [is] always there to meet the overall community vision."

John added that the consulting team added an additional tab called Community Engagement. He indicated that the team thought it was important to explain in detail the community engagement process and vision session results in one comprehensive section. Priorities will be highlighted so that the user of the document will get a better context of what's going on in the region. Beckett & Raeder will have Tab 1-3 ready before the holidays. Tab 4 will be the Master Plans and then final one; the convention will be coming the spring. You will see some draft documents soon. John indicated that he will be giving each one of the Leadership Team a Christmas present when they meet in December.

Brad indicated that Arcadia had just gotten done paving the end of Lake Street with striping if anyone wanted to see a fresh example of implementation of past plans.

The next Meeting will be November 14, 2012 at 1p.m. at the PVCC.