

Approved Meeting Minutes

Chilmark Planning Board Subcommittee Meeting

January 12, 2024, 10:00AM

Chilmark Town Hall, 401 Middle Road, Chilmark

Present: Ann Wallace, Catherine Thompson, Peter Cook, Janet Weidner

Staff: Jennifer Christy, Admin. Asst.

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10AM.

Minutes:

- The minutes from the December 15, 2023 Planning Board Subcommittee meeting were reviewed and approved as written.

Master Plan:

- General discussion occurred about town planning and how the Planning Board and the Planning Board subcommittee is utilized by the Select Board to contribute to the planning in town to address Menemsha and farms. Peter Cook noted that there may be a benefit to reviewing how the fishermen and the town approached commercial enterprise and how that may inform the farms.
- Cathy Thompson noted the differences in the various town farms and wondered whether farms with leases have anything in their leases that address commercial activity.
- Ann Wallace noted that there are various legal guardrails in place for some farms in town due to agreements with the town and/or the Land Bank.
- Peter Cook is interested to see what each of the different farms want that is specific to their farm. Janet Weidner noted that Native Earth Teaching Farm is smaller and may want to conduct different activities than other larger farms.
- Ann Wallace noted that some farms are organized as non-profits which may further affect the activities that are permitted or pursued.
- Discussion occurred about pursuing the Boards and Committees and Depts. that have not yet responded. Jennifer Christy will work on this to try and collect more responses.
- Discussion occurred about pursuing the task of engaging a forum facilitator and using the money that has been designated for Master Plan work in the warrant article. Ann Wallace thought that a facilitator would be helpful in obtaining feedback from the external, public townspeople.
- Peter Cook suggested that each Subcommittee member closely review the responses and ask “so what?” and “what’s the significance?” Catherine Thompson explained that the Subcommittee members can make a qualitative assessment, but it will be very difficult to make a quantitative assessment. Janet Weidner noted that the chart that has shown the initial main points of the surveys is a beginning, but that there is a need for more assessment.
- Janet Weidner thought that what will happen, she imagines, is that the review of the first assessment of the main points of the responses will be reviewed to come up with 5 or 6 topics that are the most important. Catherine Thompson thought that this process would be more valid and it would be important to not use a simple quantitative assessment of the first chart to determine the 5 or 6 top topics.
- Peter Cook thought that there are key important topics that are arising such as Housing and Staffing. Janet Weidner thought that the Governance topic is related to hiring and how to attract a workforce. She noted that some of the topics “roll up” into something bigger. Peter Cook

noted that the Governance topic will touch on, for example, the volunteer basis of the Town's Boards and Committees and this will be an important aspect of the underlying theme of governance. He noted that the need for "follow-through" on projects is not likely to diminish in the future and this is important in considering the governance topic.

- Peter Cook stated that land use and conservation are other topics that will arise in relation to housing and staffing of town work.
- Peter Cook reiterated the benefit of taking time to look at the 1st draft of the chart showing the topic instances from the received surveys to try to assess 5 or 6 main topics. Janet Weidner agreed that this process would be beneficial. Catherine Thompson identified some groupings of the survey response chart:
 - Overarching Governance: Interdepartmental collaboration, staffing, housing (workforce & affordable), governance, town infrastructure, space needs, island collaboration
 - Town Character: Historical preservation, digitization, Preservation, town infrastructure
 - Community Outreach: efficiency of online forms and procedures, island collaboration
 - Climate & Energy: climate change, energy, sustainability
 - Housing & Rentals
- Further discussion occurred about the response chart that may show that a certain entity does not indicate a key concern, but that it is in fact a key concern based on the Subcommittee's observations. Janet Weidner agreed that there is a need for the members to go back on their own and perform a close review of the responses and the chart.
- Discussion occurred about where town center would be in the four groupings above. Ann Wallace noted that the responses received are from those who work in town government and that the responses may be different when the survey goes out to the broader community.
- Janet Weidner directed the members to review the chart and the responses and asked Jennifer Christy to send out the draft top four groupings to the Subcommittee members.
- Peter Cook asked when a consultant may be engaged to work to plan forums. Janet Weidner thought that a consultant could be used to develop the broader community survey and then after that the series of forums. Peter Cook suggested each member write a paragraph of the overall perception that will then be sent to Jennifer Christy or bring it to the next meeting. Ann Wallace expressed concern about interpreting what more internal people respond to the questions. Catherine Thompson agreed. Peter Cook noted that the important thing to him is to try to read between the lines. Catherine Thompson suggested maybe responding to one paragraph. It was decided to put this idea off for now.
- Janet Weidner asked Jennifer Christy to send one last email to those who have not responded to the survey and have not been contacted. Ann Wallace asked if Jennifer Christy would make the offer again for any SubCommittee members will come to assist if needed.

Next Meeting(s):

- Monday, Jan. 22, 2023, 3:00PM, Chilmark Town Hall

Documents:

Master Plan survey results chart

Meeting adjourned at 10:55AM. Minutes respectfully submitted by Jennifer L. Christy