

Montpelier Planning Commission
December 14, 2009
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Subject to Review and Approval

Present: Jesse Moorman, Chair; David Borgendale, Vice Chair; Missa Aloisi, John Bloch and Bethany Pombar. Anne Campbell resigned.
Staff: Gwen Hallsmith, Planning & Community Development Director.

Call to Order:

The December 14, 2009 meeting of the Montpelier Planning Commission was called to order at 7:04 P.M.

Review of Minutes:

Upon motion by Bethany Pombar and John Bloch the minutes of November 23, 2009 were approved on a vote of 5 to 0.

Planning Department's Budget:

Ms. Hallsmith presented members a copy of the packet she presented to City Council when she defended the Planning Department's budget. It is only once a year that they take a look at what we have accomplished over the year and look forward to the next year. The document gives you the organizational chart and names of people in the Planning Department. The second and third pages go over the kinds of things we have been working on this year so you can see the accomplishments under the enVision project, Montpelier Area Neighborhoods, Growth Center Designation, and working on major development projects such as the multi-modal transit center on the Carr Lot, the District Energy Project, Turntable Park. They have made significant progress in all of those areas over the last year. There have been new grants from the Clean Energy Development Fund. They reallocated a bond vote that occurred back in 2002 to complete the feasibility and permitting for the District Energy Plant. They have been working a lot on the Carr Lot and wishes there was better news to report there. For Turntable Park they secured an additional amount of money totaling \$124,000 to move forward with brownfield remediation in the spring and to build the park. The money was there before, but because the Pyralisk project wasn't part of it any more they had to pull that part out. They received a lot of what the Pyralisk project had for their brownfield remediation dedicated to the Turntable Park.

Community development programs – they have worked on housing preservation grants and business loans. They secured \$200,000 for the Home Share Program through the department. The other grant they received from the Onion River Exchange Reach Program is another community development program, but it grew out of the work with enVision Montpelier and the Onion River Exchange. They have completed the redesign of the web site. There are still some things they need to do, and that is included in the goals for next year. They do a lot of grant writing and management within the department. Some of our bread and butter are the permits in development review. That is one of our revenue streams and one of our main responsibilities. There were actually 20 more permits issued this year than last year. Last year it was 152; this year it is 176. You would think it would be the other way around given we are in an economic slow down. There weren't a lot of big projects, but there was a lot of activity and a significant increase over last year. They also offer GIS services in the department so Eric has been real busy this year between his web responsibilities and his GIS responsibilities. There were a lot of maps that needed to be prepared for the Growth Center application and there will be a lot of maps that will need to be prepared for the Master Plan. He also prepares flood plain and flood way maps, helps the Parks Department with their maps. He worked with the Assessor and updated parcel maps.

That is a quick summary of what they did in 2009 and she did a little cost benefit analysis at the bottom. The total Planning Department budget is \$371,000 but this year they brought in \$742,000 in revenues that wouldn't have occurred if they didn't exist. They are earning their keep.

Mr. Borgendale said he is curious about whether they compared the permits that needed to go to the DRB this year as compared to prior years.

Ms. Hallsmith replied it was more. It was roughly the same percentage as last year. She started the job after the zoning was revised in 2006. She understands that prior to that there was a whole lot more permits that needed to go

to the DRB and they were mostly variances for exceptions that needed to occur because our zoning at that time did not fit with the village district. There were a lot of setback variances, and happily those days are over. Between now and back then there are fewer permits moving forward, but a lot less aggravation and frustration and wasted time on the part of both city residents and city staff and the DRB. Of course, in the next zoning revision they will be working to make that process even less cumbersome.

enVision Plan Drafting – Master Plan: Governance Section:

The Steering Committee met last week on this and she has tried to incorporate their comments and changes. The highlighted percentages in this draft are the percentages that came in on the National Citizen Survey that the city recently completed. It is a statistically significant survey that was sent out to a sampling of Montpelier residents and they all answered very similar questions. The good thing about the Citizen Survey is it gives us a good idea of what our baseline is in a lot of these areas. One of the targets that had been set in one area under equity on page 17, you can see that 75 percent of residents report that opportunities to participate in community matters are excellent or good, and currently the number of residents reporting that are 79 percent so the target was below what the actual baseline was. In this case what the Steering Committee opted to do because not all of the cohorts in the survey of each income and cultural background had that same level of reporting. They changed the wording to say that at least 75 percent of residents of each cohort of incoming cultural backgrounds report that they have these good opportunities to participate in community matters to address that issue.

The National Citizens Survey is right on the home page of the city's web site. There are a number of different documents you can read, the aggregate results, the comparison to cities of similar size and demographics, the comparison to all cities that have done the survey, the essay questions they asked people to write. One of the good points from the point of view of the Growth Center work they did was that a very high majority of citizens supported their growth goals. It was over 70 percent who supported a very specific goal of increasing the number of housing units in the city by over 500 units in the next several years. That was an affirming statement given the difficulty they had moving forward with that particular project.

Ms. Pombar said she noticed on page 4 under number 3 that it doesn't have the explanation code like the others do. She didn't know on chart 5 if they had age break outs that could be embedded in here or demographic break outs along the lines for the voting. A lot of the information as presented in this first section is indicators that will be drawn on other parts. It talks about voting but it doesn't have any demographic break out of who is voting and who is not.

Ms. Hallsmith said that is a great suggestion. They can incorporate that in there if it exists.

Mr. Moorman said given the highlighted percentages should the Planning Commission be filling in the x's now. We have the data. One of the changes the Steering Committee made with Target 1 is in line with what Gwen was talking about on page 17, whereas it used to say x percent of residents rate opportunities to be involved in the community the change reflects taking into account all cohorts of income and cultural backgrounds instead of all residents.

Ms. Pombar said she has a comment on the goal language itself. Self-determination – she wonders if they are thinking about access and different educational levels that it might help to be really being poignant about what self determination means in this sense.

Ms. Hallsmith self determination in this plan means the degree to which people have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

Mr. Moorman said he is fine with that. In terms of the x percent of residents under Target 1 under Goal A even though it says currently 79 percent that doesn't take into account all cohorts of cultural and incomes.

Ms. Hallsmith replied that is correct. That was a general percentage. There are a lot of numbers in the plan because they do break it down.

Mr. Moorman said in effect they could say they are already meeting this goal if we put down 75 percent. We don't really know about all cohorts and what percentage we are meeting.

Mr. Bloch asked if it was possible to break out the cohorts. If we are going to write a plan it seems we need to see where we need to do work and not do work, and then design efforts to target those areas that need work.

Ms. Hallsmith said the survey breaks it out by income levels. She doesn't know how much ethnic analysis was done.

Ms. Feierabend said it was done by race but not culture.

Ms. Hallsmith said there is a geographic distribution by neighborhood.

Mr. Bloch asked if it was broken down by educational cohorts.

Ms. Feierabend said she didn't remember.

Ms. Hallsmith said this is a subjective indicator.

Mr. Bloch said he believes the numbers in the targets direct the actions. Somewhere they need to tie reality and the theory together.

Ms. Hallsmith said they could say that by looking at the socioeconomic data that residents with incomes below x, who are living next to the poverty level, only rated this as 50 percent, and people with high incomes rated it at 79 percent or higher. Low income people might get up to 60 percent while high income people went higher.

Mr. Bloch said he would if it was determining factor on participation.

Ms. Hallsmith said she would think inequity built right into the target would be a problem.

Mr. Moorman said he has only ever seen it as a standard percentage they want every cohort to meet.

Ms. Hallsmith said rather than saying low income it is okay if they are only rating this 50 percent rather than a higher percent.

Mr. Bloch said he isn't saying it is okay. The percentages serve as markers for where you ought to be expending energies.

Mr. Moorman said they don't know those break outs.

Ms. Hallsmith said the break outs are in the report.

Mr. Bloch said when he looked at the report and when he watched Bill Fraser's presentation it does have these data points embedded in it, but in an effort to educate the community as to what we have done now that we have done the survey then we ought to say this is what dictates our actions. Those percentages drive efforts.

Ms. Pombar said if they now have a survey that can give them some data it would be good to review it and find out where applicable. That information is going to drive what the strategy actions will be. It would be good to include as much of that data as possible into the targets.

Ms. Hallsmith said they can absolutely include more of the information in the plan. She just had a question about having inequitable expectations around the targets. They should be trying to get everybody to the same level.

Mr. Bloch said that is another issue. The first issue is that this document can become very rich if we mine the data sets that came out of the survey and put them here. He doesn't assume that the lower income cohorts would have a lesser participatory activity. In fact, he thinks a strong message can be sent that at the extreme high ends they are

totally disconnected. He can't say any of that if he doesn't know what these cohorts did in the survey. This document can become an enormously rich as an educative tool if we tease out those pieces.

Mr. Moorman said given the percentages we have here, how they should approach in a uniform fashion how they feel on the x's knowing we don't know the percentages.

Mr. Bloch said this is the way the school system juggles attainment levels.

Mr. Moorman said he doesn't think all would be above 79 percent. Certain groups would probably be far lower than that.

Mr. Borgendale said he worries about getting this too complicated. One of the ways we could address this is to set the goal to be very challenging. Gwen suggested 80 percent and he was thinking 90 or 95 percent. If you set the goal to be very challenging the only way you can achieve the goal is to increase the level in the cohorts that are much lower. If you have a cohort that is at 98 percent it is going to be pretty hard to improve the overall percentage by focusing on that. One solution to this would be to set more challenging goal percentages compared to where we are at and that would force focusing on the kinds of things we are talking about here and would avoid having to get into trying to deal and define in the document what the specific cohorts are at this point. Set the goals to be very challenging.

Ms. Pombar said she likes the idea of setting challenging goals, although she would want to make sure they are attainable. There is not a time frame in Target 1.

Ms. Hallsmith said maybe they need that. They could say by 2015.

Ms. Pombar said the other solution she was thinking about with the challenge of working with the currently available data was to say that when we include the current data maybe also in the target that when we measure it again we want to make sure we are measuring equitably all cohorts.

Ms. Hallsmith said some of the questions in this particular part of the survey might be skewed because the people who are already more involved in city government and local community affairs would be more likely to submit the survey than those who aren't. She had suspicions about the numbers from that point of view. Apparently, the surveyors do mathematically factor that in so it is statistically significant even across the incomes and across the cultural backgrounds. They balance it out when they are doing the work. It would be good to get an equal number of people from all of the different income levels and all of the cultural backgrounds to respond to the survey, but in the absence of that they do factor in that as a margin of error when they are doing the calculations. This is a standardized survey and you can compare yourself to other cities.

Ms. Pombar said definitions are important to her. In community matters she didn't know if the survey team had used a definition for "community matters" that could be expounded upon.

Mr. Moorman asked if they knew when the next survey will happen. Do we know if it is by 2015?

Ms. Hallsmith said the targets aren't necessarily run by the survey. They are more moved by the fact that we are moving in 5-year increments for the plan, so by 2015 hopefully the plan will drive the survey more than the survey driving the plan. There will be another master plan being drafted by then as well. The Master Plan is supposed to be done by July or we are out of compliance.

Mr. Borgendale said he participated in the Governance Committee early on and one of the things discussed that never made into the final set of goals is that one of the best ways to both have participation and have city government become somewhat more responsive to the citizens is to have more contested elections in a city. That is something we could measure. He would like to see something like that in here because the reason he thinks contested elections are good because when two or more people are running for the same office they are going to take positions on city issues

and that is what people will vote on. In an uncontested election you have no idea. He would love to see something like that included in here, that we want more participation on boards and commissions. If you have more people running for City Council or Mayor, whether it is elected or appointed, that is something to measure participation by. One of the difficulties is that all of these jobs, whether they are elected or appointed, are pretty demanding in terms of time and the pay isn't great.

Ms. Hallsmith said even though she agrees that having contested elections could be measured, sometimes it is more of an indicator of dissatisfaction with the city than it is an indicator of public participation. By 2015 the contested elected and appointed positions reflect general interest in participation rather than dissatisfaction with city government. That would measure both the quality of participation and the quantity of it. That is true in every city she has ever known, that non-contested elections generally don't mean people aren't participating. It generally means that people are pretty happy with what is going on in the city.

Ms. Pombar said she has an issue with representation across cohorts on elected and appointed positions. It would be great to see not only an increase in participation but that it is equitable across the demographics. Representations align with age groups, gender and other orientations. Boards and commissions should also reflect a diversity of representation and that is aligned with the demographic background of Montpelier.

Ms. Hallsmith said she would suggest they have scratched out that whole goal because there is no way of measuring it as an indicator. Perhaps she is suggesting another indicator which is that the participation rates in formal and informal government of these following examples reflect the cultural and demographic diversity of the city. That could be added and add the one about contested elections.

Mr. Borgendale said he doesn't understand the self reporting. He is talking about participation rates in civic groups increases. The first one says that residents self report volunteering time to some group or activity in Montpelier three times or more over the past year, and that is at 40 percent. Then, the next bullet says self report for participating in a club or civic group three or more times throughout the past year. If you are volunteering time to some group or activity you are participating in it.

Ms. Pombar said she believes a club or a civic group is particular thing whereas someone could be volunteering for Meals on Wheels. She wouldn't consider that a club or a civic group. She thinks of a civic group as something like Girl Scouts or the Rotary.

Mr. Moorman said perhaps they could just combine them.

Ms. Hallsmith said if the survey was done again and they had that information in the survey the data would be exactly what this says. Currently, 40 percent of residents self report volunteering time to some group or activity. The problem with making it an indicator is how we are trying to increase it when we aren't really sure it is good data. She is happy to continue to report it in the plan as it is, but to say by x date we are going to get better is a challenge.

Mr. Moorman said Strategy 1.B. was a real popular one. It received some of the highest marks. They should provide child care at public events to build a sense of community. You are trying to encourage participation and to build a sense of community. The x date should be 2015.

Mr. Borgendale said one of the things that bothers him particularly about the first one is he doesn't know if having a low percentage of people coming to city type meetings like the Planning Commission three or times a year is a measure of a lack of participation or lack of self determination of participation because it seems to him people come out when there is an issue they are concerned about and don't otherwise.

Ms. Pombar said she wondered if public meetings should include CAN meetings that are happening. That would speak to participation in local community.

Mr. Moorman said do we necessarily need or want to increase participation. We certainly want to know how many people are doing these things. Increasing attendance at meetings such as this doesn't mean good or bad. That alone doesn't seem to answer the question.

Ms. Hallsmith said there isn't a nice neat correlation between the survey and our goals. Where there was a correlation they tried to throw in the data, but she doesn't think they need to have all of these indicators for Strategy 1.C. The data can be put into the data report.

District Energy:

Planning Director Hallsmith sent members the preliminary overview of feasibility that VIOLIA conducted. This was the first phase of their study where they were looking for deal killers. They have determined in the scoping report that there aren't any, that the project is feasible and worth moving into the next phase of studying and permitting. There are still some questions about the degree to which it can include electric generation and also the expansion rate throughout the city partially because of the numerous diverse potential clients and customers that would be served. They do have a critical mass of core customers between the city and the state so they are optimistic about moving forward.

ORE-REACH Program:

They have hired staff and had a major retreat last week for two days with all of their partners, and that is moving along quite well. There are some great staff. Graham DUYEA has been hired as the Coordinator. Chloe Budnick is the Case Manager. She has five years of case management experience and is on loan to us from the Council on Aging. They are still looking for a Development and Membership Coordinator, and it is likely they will be advertising for a Program Assistant. That is the federal grant the city received for implementing a new elder care system through the Onion River Exchange.

TIF RIP:

They issued an RFP for a consultant to prepare a Tax Increment Financing District for the city and have received one proposal from that RFP which she will be discussing with City Council on Wednesday. Because they only received one proposal she doesn't know if they will try to open it up again for more applicants. She didn't spend any time this round looking out of state, although that was her initial inclination because there aren't a lot of tax increment financing districts in the state so therefore there aren't a lot of consultants that have a lot of experience with this type of activity. They did come up with a list of about six people that would have the qualifications in state so she specifically targeted them for RFPs and then posted and advertised it like they usually do. It is a good proposal and right on target of what she thought it would cost. If the Council is comfortable with receiving only one proposal, that would be fine.

Carr Lot/Transit Center:

The new FEMA map that has just been issued for downtown Montpelier shows the dark pink as the floodway and the light pink is the 100-year floodplain. When they did the original environmental assessment required by federal law, because there are federal funds going to the Carr Lot, this map wasn't made yet. The only map we had showed that the Carr Lot was in the floodplain but not in the floodway. There are different regulations for those areas and it is much more difficult, as it should be, to build in the floodway. You can see the Carr Lot completely covered by the dark pink unfortunately and that was the straw that made FTA tell us we needed to go back and revisit the finding of no significant impact, which is one of the benchmarks you get when you move forward with a federal project giving you the go-ahead to move forward with things like property acquisition. We have the FONZI for the transit portion of the project, not yet for the federal highway portion of the project because right now the bike path comes along the river, has a grade crossing of the train track that is about to be upgraded, and then has a bridge to nowhere across the second branch. It lands bicycles and pedestrians in a place where there is no place to put safely bicycles and pedestrians. Until they resolve where they are going to land the bike path and pedestrian path on the other side of the North Branch they weren't going to give us the FONZI for the federal highway portion of the money, which is a problem. One of the alternatives they had come up with was to keep the bike path on the Memorial Drive side of the river down to Main Street and cross there in traffic. That would be more acceptable than sticking them in a place where there isn't any place to put them. Because essentially we have the same status with both federal highway and federal transit authority it's not exactly back to the drawing board but we have a number of relatively difficult and some expensive work to do before we are going to be ready to move forward with acquisition.

Mr. Borgendale said he doesn't understand how that is in the floodway, and if it is it has been encroached upon already. From what he understands about floodways they should just be left open with nothing.

Ms. Hallsmith said parking lots and parks are okay in floodways, but not four-story buildings paid for with federal dollars. The modeling that was done to determine this is considered to be better than the modeling than they used in 1981, but it is far from perfect. It is USGS data based on statewide approximations, differential equations. It does not look specifically at the river basins and the flood control and the specific rainfall that falls in those areas.

However, Barre, apparently when these maps were first issued a couple of years ago, had some really funny configurations of the floodway. It came right up Main Street and was problematic. On top of that, right after the map was issued they had the flood and the flood didn't behave the same way the maps predicted. Barre essentially contested their maps and went back to the drawing board and used the real data, flood control measures and came out with more area in the floodway and not less, which is what they were shooting for. It did sort out some of the bizarre elements of it, but it did not reduce the area of floodway. She has talked to the State Floodplain Manager about this and his take on it is that the Taylor Street Bridge and Street serves like a dam because it is elevated and blocks the river. You have the North Branch and the Winooski Rivers coming down to this obstacle and what you are seeing with all of the pink is the modeling that shows that the water will come to back up behind the dam that is Taylor Street and the Taylor Street Bridge. They are not optimistic at all that if we challenge the methodology or if we try to engineer out of this problem that it would succeed because of the hydraulic role that the Taylor Street and Taylor Street Bridge plays. That remains to be seen.

What they are doing right now is meeting with the consultants who did the modeling and prepared the maps just to get an early take from them on what their conclusions are. That is the next step at this point. On the floodway issue there are other issues they need to revisit with the environmental assessment. One is the retaining wall along the river. That was not addressed in the initial environmental impact assessment and it has been identified as an issue on which federal funds will need to be spent to bring the property up to standards. Another big change from the initial environmental assessment is now the level of contamination and the degree to which that needs to be mitigated. Basically, all of those issues call for a revisitation of that finding of no significant impact. They haven't constrained our expenditure on project management which might be a logical outcome of that because we don't get to do project management until we are past that mark. But because of the unusual circumstance they have basically given us the go ahead to have our project manager, who is currently Dubois & King, help us with the revisitation of the Fonzi.

We're looking at another \$50,000 to \$75,000 in analysis before they get to that point. They need to figure out where that money is coming from and look at alternatives. Given the new information they have about the environmental constraints we should revisit the mandated look at alternatives that are a part of every environmental impact assessment.

Mr. Borgendale said his question on that is what is the prognosis for there being even any way that any of these impediments can be engineered around or overcome?

Ms. Hallsmith said there are a couple of ways of determining that. One is to contest the designation. In that case you need to bring in your own engineers and modelers showing the alternative flow regimes and modeling that could apply. The other is to try to engineer the building into the site by demonstrating that there is no net increase with the placement of the building in the flood level if the building was on the site and there were flood conditions. Again, because of the damming effect of the Taylor Street structure the State Floodway Manager wasn't optimistic that the engineering would work because basically you are trying to prove that if you put a bunch of structures in an area that would normally be filled with water that it doesn't raise the water level anywhere in the floodway.

Mr. Borgendale said one way to mitigate it would be to fix the problem with the Taylor Street Bridge.

Ms. Hallsmith said they could take out the Taylor Street Bridge.

Missa Aloisi said one of the goals of the Natural Environment is to have a 50-foot riparian zone.

Mr. Borgendale said he is aware of how important that is. Unfortunately, you would be doing in a good chunk of downtown.

Ms. Hallsmith said the other interesting thing about this which is even beyond the possibility of consideration is that this represents fluvial flooding coming from upstream during a storm event. It does not represent the type of

flooding that is most likely in Montpelier, which is ice jam flooding that tends to come back upstream from the areas that are shallow just below the downtown. For example, most of the people who were here in 1992 noticed that the Carr Lot was high ground during that flood because the water came up State Street. It didn't come down the river. When it is coming up State Street you don't have that same damming effect like you do like if it was coming

downstream. Therefore, because it has had fill over the years it was high ground. It is higher than the adjacent properties off of State Street. The flood maps do not consider ice jam flooding. They are looking at fluvial flooding. There is a bit of a mismatch between the maps and what is likely here. They don't map ice jams because ice could jam about anywhere and that would have a completely different hydrological form depending on where the ice jam happened.

There are a bunch of difficult issues. None of which work in the city's favor unfortunately.

Mr. Borgendale asked if the obstacles are so great that it isn't worth spending any more money on the project.

Ms. Hallsmith said in order to figure out whether the obstacles are so great you need to spend the money to figure it out, and that is what the City Council is going to need to decide. Is it worth going the extra yard to invest in some of these possible engineering exercises knowing that the outcome at the end of \$15,000 worth of work is still an open question? It is one thing to engineer something you know is going to be something you can use, but it is another thing to engineer an open question where the answer might be no. For example, you could put money into engineering the building into the site and trying to figure out what it would take to achieve that rise in flood level with a building on that site. The street and the bridge would have to be lowered because they are higher. The bridge is scheduled to be reconstructed next year.

This is a setback but not one within the city's control. One of her first concerns when she first saw this map was the value of the property. In a floodway it is not going to have the same value as it does not in a floodway. Part of the project logic really was that the value of the property was going to carry the mitigation costs.

Since a parking lot would still be allowable in a floodway, and you can do an income based valuation on the parking lot, the parking lot alone might maintain a significant enough amount of the value so that it would serve our purposes for mitigation, but it certainly does compromise what the owner thought it was worth. Highest and best use now might be a parking lot.

Mr. Bloch said it doesn't solve the problem of getting the buses out of the middle of town. It doesn't tell us where we are going to put the transit center.

EECBG Grant Application:

Finally there is a new director and an RFP came out for the non-formula communities Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program managed by the Public Service Board. The legislation at the federal level was part of the stimulus package and at the federal level they allocated a certain amount of money to the 10 largest communities in each state and to the state, but we're not actually one of the 10 largest communities in Vermont so we didn't get money under that aspect of it and needed to wait for the RFP to come out. Now we have made two applications to that program, one to help with the renovations at the Senior Center that are needed to make it more energy efficient and one to start a program where we would provide matching funds to existing organizations, buildings, businesses that were doing some energy retrofittings of a match of 5 to 1. We were limited to \$100,000 total we could apply for. They put in \$50,000 for the Senior Center and \$50,000 for the new loan/grant program proposed. They prioritized the Senior Center just because the city is bleeding money there ourselves right now.

Senior Center:

They have been working on what is needed to bring the building into code and make it more energy efficient. Hopefully, now that a lot of the other issues are starting to get resolved we'll be able to move forward with that.

Other Updates:

Planning Director Gwen Hallsmith said she will be on medical leave starting next week and won't be able to walk for about eight weeks.

enVision Plan Drafting – Master Plan:

Target 3 – Ms. Pombar said there are indicators for some things and not for others, and it seems that in a lot of their conversation the indicators should be moved to the data section.

Ms. Hallsmith said the consistent way the indicators are supposed to work is they are supposed to flow from the targets because the targets are the measurable objectives. Young adult participation in Montpelier civic activities is significant. Young voters turn out at the poles ahead of national averages and the rate of young adult voting has grown. What they are measuring there and what the indicators would flow from that is what the number of the turnout at the polls is compared to the national average. The only thing they did with the National Survey was where they had interesting data we just included it in here as other possible indicators. The indicators themselves are really supposed to flow straight from the targets.

Ms. Pombar asked why there weren't indicators on many of them under the targets.

Ms. Hallsmith said the targets are the indicators and the strategies are how you achieve those objectives. In this case the voter turnout is measured typically with each election. It is available. She thinks they have confused things a bit by throwing in all of the data from the National Citizens Survey. They put it in where it matched things for interest and to give people a sense of what we had, but it isn't necessarily consistent with the planning methodology. It will be in the beginning of the governance section, a lot of the data that supports the targets and strategies.

Mr. Moorman said Strategy 3.A. was a top vote getter.

Ms. Hallsmith said they will be presenting with the Plan a public participation report when they present it to the City Council, and that will include all of the voting that has occurred up until that point so the City Council can really get a sense of what peoples' priorities have been over time. The voting that occurred at the meeting they held and the online voting has been fairly consistent. Access addresses some interesting things around geographic access and the role that CAN plays in all of that. There could be more in here about accessibility for people of different mobility conditions, accessibility for people who speak different languages, vision and hearing. That could be another target which would speak to that, that city processes and documents are available and accessible to members of the community with limited mobility, different languages, limited vision and hearing.

Mr. Borgendale said it seems to him that both Target 1 and Target 3 really address self determination issues much more than they do access issues. Target 3 has to do with redistricting so you have equal voters in equal districts.

Ms. Hallsmith said it is speaking to a geographical access. She likes the fact they are addressing the neighborhood's access and the district's access here.

Ms. Pombar said she would propose that Target 3 move to equity.

Ms. Hallsmith said a new Target 3 would be that by 2020 people with limited mobility, different languages, limited hearing and eyesight report that city documents, meetings and processes are available and accessible to them.

Mr. Moorman asked if they were barriers to access.

Mr. Moorman said Strategy 1.B. got no votes whatsoever. We could take it right out of the draft.

Ms. Pombar said it could be broadened to say that the Governance Committee further explores other forms of participatory government. It doesn't have to single out one particular model.

Mr. Borgendale said early on in the Governance Committee there was some discussion about exploring representative town meetings. You have a pretty traditional Vermont town meeting style except basically neighborhoods elect who is going to attend the town meetings. It's like a miniature House of Representatives that meets once a year.

Mr. Bloch said they could say the city is responsible for insuring there are no barriers to participation. Physical accessibility needs to be present all of the time.

Ms. Pombar said under Target 2, Strategy 2.A, the city provides needed resources to CAN groups and continually recruits effective leadership. She would like to add recruits and supports effective leadership. On Strategy 2.C, a statement should be added that says neighborhoods are considered when capital planning funding is renewed.

Ms. Hallsmith said capital planning describes when particular streets and infrastructure are going to be upgraded, and there is actually a list by location of what the projects in the next year are going to be. Mr. Borgendale asked if the capital planning funding process suspended at this point. He doesn't understand the renewed part of the statement.

Mr. Bloch said he could give a specific example of why the neighborhood should be involved. At a great expense they put in a new section of sidewalk along Elm Street and built it just like the old one so they still have the duck pond. Had they talked to the residents they would have told them it is lethal in the winter because it collects water and freezes. If they had received neighborhood input they would have known about the problem and paid attention to it.

Mr. Moorman said neighborhoods should be consulted.

Ms. Hallsmith said she has "Insure some decision making is decentralized to the neighborhood level. Neighborhoods are consulted when capital planning funding is drafted to provide input into needed infrastructure improvements."

Mr. Moorman said they are moving Target 3 to equity. He said this is a good place to stop. The next Planning Commission meeting will be December 28th.

Ms. Hallsmith said she will not be attending the January meeting. The topic for January is infrastructure and the built environment. This is longer than the other sections they have been working on and has a lot more material in it. This part of the plan is that it is the closest part to the traditional master planning topics and it also needs to consider the policy framework for zoning changes, which is something they have not been focused on the enVision process. Ideally, enVision will be done and then they would take up the Master Plan, but since enVision took a little longer than they thought and the Master Plan is due in July right now they are doing both simultaneously. That means there are parts of the Master Plan that haven't been considered very carefully by any of the committees. She is sending members a memo on this. She had a meeting today with Clancy and Alan Goldman who has been co-chair of the Infrastructure Committee to talk about some of the policy questions that will need to be considered which currently are not in the draft. Some of these things are questions like: How do we resolve issues or address the conflicts we have between energy efficiency and historic preservation? We have a new Growth Center designation in the community and have been directed by the state as we obtained that designation to look a lot harder at what we allow within the growth center and what we don't allow outside the growth center. The state wants us to implement constraints on our water and sewer hookups outside of the growth center. They would like to see higher densities within the growth center. Those kinds of questions around what the growth center means for zoning should ideally be addressed in this next section. Further, the type of zoning they want to look at should be addressed. In the floodplain area and in storm water management we want to look at low impact development guidelines. Clancy will be coming to the meeting with some of those recommendations. These would be strategy elements that would be incorporated into the existing document because they are a higher level of detail than what they have been doing so far. Because they are related to the zoning they do need to address those.

Mr. Moorman said he is looking at Goal C – Equity. There is opportunity to be involved and an opportunity to participate. What is the difference between participation and involvement?

Ms. Hallsmith said they are the same. The strategies are different. When you are trying to achieve equity it is different. One is comparison among people and one is what they own themselves. Since they reviewed the draft they won't need to meet on December 28th. The next scheduled meeting would be the second Monday on January 11th.

Upon motion by Ms. Pombar and Ms. Aloisi, the Planning Commission adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Gwen Hallsmith
Director of Planning & Community Development