

Town Board Minutes
Comprehensive Plan Workshop
October 23, 2008

The Town Board of the Town of Cambridge held a Special Comprehensive Plan Workshop on October 23, 2008, 6:30 PM, at the highway garage.

Members present: Supervisor JoAnn Trinkle, Councilwoman Carol Imhof, Councilman Joel Nichols
Councilman Frank Ziehm, Councilman Ted Berndt

Others present: Town Clerk Sally Eddy, County Planner Chris DeBolt and approximately 80 people from the public.

Supervisor Trinkle called the meeting to order and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. She then gave brief history behind the Comprehensive Plan stating the town was taking a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach to development. The Comprehensive Plan was to serve as a tool for guidance in decision making in regard to development. Four years ago the town asked for volunteers to serve on a committee to draft a comprehensive plan and 17 people came forward. There was a lot of enthusiasm at first but, as time went on the committee dwindled and 10 people remained active to the end. There is some good information in the Plan but there are parts that the Town cannot accept. There has been some misunderstanding as what a Comprehensive Plan is and its purpose. She introduced County Planner Chris DeBolt to explain the goals and purpose of a Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. DeBolt stated he was present to only give technical advice. Usually, a plan contains three basic components. 1) a census or snapshot of the town by providing a historical account right up to the present; 2) what are the town's goals and objectives regarding development? What's the vision for the community? This is usually discovered by surveying the citizens of the town; 3) Recommendations as to how to implement the goals and objectives. A Comprehensive Plan is not law but a guiding and planning document setting forth community goals. It protects a town from unfavorable business or industry. A Comprehensive Plan works to put a town's goals on paper and shows forth a community consensus. A plan can help a town get funding to help achieve its goals particularly if these things have been identified and incorporated into the plan.

Mr. DeBolt said the town's land use regulations, (i.e. subdivision rules & regulations) can be challenged if they are not in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Comments

Stana Iseman, a member of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, refuted the accusations made against the committee in several published articles and stood in support of the Plan. The Plan set out to protect farmland and keep it available for agriculture. If you don't have land you can't farm. Every year a field gets converted to build upon. She said she tried to persuade the Committee to put something in the plan that would advocate developing parcels that were not favorable to farming. She was not successful. She remarked that one-third of the plan is devoted to research and collecting data. She urged the Town Board not to throw it out because it's good solid material to work off of. She thanked the Town Board for not rejecting it but working on it.

Cynthia Blakemore, also a Comprehensive Plan Committee member, stated because she did not want to see Cambridge turned into subdivisions she joined the Committee. She attended meeting after meeting for four years and, now, she feels totally betrayed by the people. The town has nothing in place to protect it from developers and you need a plan to keep the town the way it is. You have to plan in advance.

Supervisor Trinkle asked the crowd what would be a realistic time table to prepare a new plan and change the wording to make it more understandable?

Several members of the public loudly voiced that the townspeople do not want the plan. The 520 signatures on the petition to throw the plan out should be a wake up call to the Town Board.

Cassie Fedler stated it's a fight of the residents of the Town of Cambridge, not just the farmers. Small property owners don't want it either. How can you pick a reliable time frame when you can't use the survey? It's a poor representation, people are mad about the survey. This plan has to go. You have a lot of work to do before you get another one. People need time to calm down. They feel like they are not being listened to. If we do get a plan, it need to be simple and less cumbersome.

Supervisor Trinkle assured Ms. Fedler that the Town Board is listening.

Councilman Joel Nichols stated he felt the survey was unintentionally biased. At the Sept. 10, 2008 public meeting sixty oral comments were received. If we delete the subdivision section of the Plan and not list any limitation on subdividing, can we use the oral comments to correct the Plan or do we need a new survey? The public rejected the idea of correcting the present Plan.

Tim Johncox said that it appears that the Board is hanging onto the idea of a Plan. He related that to correct a human resource problem at his wife's work it took more than one communication through a survey. Several surveys had to be sent in order to make the situation right. You may have to do the same.

Michael Halsey, Harriet Peabody, William Buchanan, Sally Whitney, William Watkins, Alex Bass, George Beagle, Art Myers, Dan Thomas, Ben Yurschak all offered comments that spoke against the Plan and wanted it thrown out.

Leonard Wachel commented he was comfortable with the plans and procedures the town already has in place. However, if the town decides to proceed with an amended Plan, he urged the Board to put it up for a town wide vote.

Kim Davidson asked where are the people that are saying yes to the Plan?

After hearing all comments, Supervisor Trinkle remarked that the Town Board is going to make a judgment tonight.

Resolution by Councilwoman Imhof
Seconded by Councilman Ted Berndt

RESOLVED, that the Cambridge Town Board reject the Comprehensive Plan and, at a later date, a new committee be formed to look at the feasibility of preparing a new Comprehensive Plan using the rejected plan as a reference. The committee will adhere to the open meetings law and any other applicable law.

Supervisor Trinkle motioned to amend the resolution to omit the following: *and, at a later date, a new committee be formed to look at the feasibility of preparing a new Comprehensive Plan using the rejected plan as a reference. The committee will adhere to the open meetings law and any other applicable law.*

Seconded by Councilman Joel Nichols.

Vote: Supervisor Trinkle – Aye	Councilman Berndt – Aye
Councilwoman Imhof – Aye	Councilman Ziehm – Aye
Councilman Nichols – Aye	

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The amended resolution shall be as follows:

Resolution by Councilwoman Imhof
Seconded by Councilman Ted Berndt

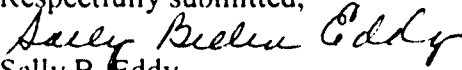
RESOLVED, THAT THE CAMBRIDGE TOWN BOARD REJECT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

Vote:	Supervisor Trinkle – Aye	Councilman Berndt – Aye
	Councilwoman Imhof – Aye	Councilman Ziehm – Aye
	Councilman Nichols - Aye	

The audience applauded and thanked the Town Board.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was moved and carried to adjournment at 7:45 PM..

Respectfully submitted,


Sally B. Eddy