

Comprehensive Plan Committee
Minutes from Meetings of April 28, 2021 and May 3, 2021

Present were: Jonathan Hall, Co-chair; John Gray, Co-Chair; Bud Fisher; Sarah Cox; Nancy Sanford; Allen Kratz; John Kimball; and Jackie Pike.

Friends of the CPC: Sallie Satterthwaite, Bill Satterthwaite, and Phyllis Cox
Jarod Farn-Guillette, Planner with the Hancock County Planning Commission
Abbie McMillen, Brooksville Broadband Committee
Debbie Grimmig, Secretary

Jonathan Hall convened the meeting via Zoom. He previously distributed by e-mail the agenda, minutes of the 4/14/2021 meeting, information from Doug Cowan for the Broadband section and draft of the Agriculture & Forestry section. The agenda was posted on the website and the public was invited to attend.

1. Discuss status of following plan sections in progress:
 - Natural Resources – This section is posted on the Town website and includes John Kimball’s write-up on night skies.
 - Water Resources – No new information provided. This section is posted on the Town website.
 - Housing –This section is posted on the Town website with the version of Jackie Pike’s description of affordable housing problems. Allen Kratz and Jonathan Hall are researching possible solutions to housing problems. Allen Kratz has contacted representatives from the Town of Stonington for information on solutions to affordable housing employed in that community.
 - Public Facilities & Capital Investment – This section is posted with no revisions. Jarod Farn-Guillette is working with the Select Board on the capital investment information. This will finalize this section.
 - Marine Resources – Sarah Cox is writing a description of the future of lobstering. The Clifford family dock will to be added to the list of shore access points. She is also working on Goals #1 and #2. She requested that the draft not be posted until these elements are completed and believes it will be ready before the next meeting.
 - Current & Future Land Use – This section is waiting for land use maps from Jarod Farn-Guillette. He also needs to supply maps for other sections.

2. Discuss how to handle Internet Section – Jarod Farn-Guillette’s initial impression is that the internet section should be included in the appendix as opposed to a separate stand-alone section because it is a commercial venture. However, he will proceed according to the will of the Committee. Jonathan polled the members of the Committee for their views on a separate internet section. There was consensus to create a separate broadband internet section for the following reasons. Broadband is a critical issue for the community. The new section can be formatted the same as the other sections. The 2018 Community Survey included questions on internet, so community information is available. Internet was included in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan. On the National level broadband is considered to be an essential part of the infrastructure. The Committee would not be doing a complete plan without an internet section. Jonathan Hall will re-visit the issue should the State reject the internet stand-alone section in its review of the plan.

Jonathan Hall distributed the information provided by Doug Cowan. Jonathan Hall will take the lead in coordinating with Abbie McMillen and Doug Cowan on this section. He will provide them with the template and will ask them to provide information in this format.

Abbie McMillen from the Broadband Committee attended the meeting on 5/3/21. She has drafted the section on Broadband which Jonathan Hall will distribute to the Comp Plan Committee. She asked the Committee to review for any areas that are unclear or need additional information. Comments should be submitted to Jonathan Hall.

3. Discuss and edit draft of Agriculture & Forestry section – The Committee reviewed this section. Nancy Sanford noted that there needs to be consistency in the date for the Comprehensive Plan. The process has spanned a couple of years and the draft sections may have different dates. The term “extraction” sounds like a mining operation instead of lumbering. The term was changed to “utilization”. There was confusion about term “ecosystem services”. It may be boilerplate language from the State. An explanation was added. Food sovereignty refers to a local ordinance that permits local people to market food products without complying with burdensome state regulations and inspections. This ordinance was initiated by Debra Evans of Bagaduce Farms. Jarod Farn-Guillette is researching the official number of farms in Brooksville. Some farms may have been taken out of production after the farmer passed away. Jackie Pike will make some contacts to verify if this is a valid assumption on the reduction of farms.

The language regarding climate change was strengthened. Climate change has more than a minimal effect on agriculture. There are threats from rising temperature, droughts, flooding, disease vectors, which require on-going monitoring and mitigation. Development pressures, plant, animal and insect invasive species potentially affect forestry. Forest Tent Caterpillars target hardwood and infestation had damaged trees around Walker Pond.

The Four Season Farm was specifically noted in this section because this farm is nationally recognized for its growing techniques, maximizing use of soil for cultivation, and food production throughout the year. The Brooksville Elementary School year-round Agricultural Arts Program and Garden Camp, which is an extension of this program, will be noted in this section. This program is integrated as part of the regular curriculum, teaches children how to grow vegetables and also addresses food insecurity issues.

Jarod Farn-Guillette will verify the 2015 Farmland Number of Parcels and Acres (Table 11-2) with the State, since this information seems to be an error. Also, in 2017 the number of parcels remained the same as the previous year, but acreage dropped by 50%. He will verify if this data is correct. Jarod Farn-Guillette is also waiting for timber harvesting data from the State. The Town does not collect this data.

Allen Kratz suggested a new policy and strategy relative to optimizing the use of farmland by identifying ways to put fallow farmland back into production to address food insecurity as well reduce pressure from development. There was agreement to add this as another strategy. Policy #5 was changed to include promotion of the Farmers Market and to include the farmers as another Responsible Party.

There was agreement that the Agriculture & Forestry section is ready to post to the Town website with the understanding that additional information will be added.

4. Public Comment – No members of the public were in attendance.
5. Schedule Next Meeting – Wednesday May 12, 2021 at 6:30 pm. Agenda items for this meeting will include review of the Broadband section and review of Land Use maps.