

SELECT BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting of June 13, 2023. The meeting took place at the Meeting Trailer at 131 Pleasant Street. Members of the Board present were Dawn Holdgate, Thomas Dixon, Matt Fee, Dr. Malcolm MacNab and Brooke Mohr. Staff members present were Town Manager C. Elizabeth Gibson and Assistant Town Managers Gregg Tivnan and Rick Sears. Also present were facilitator Julia Novak of Raftelis and her colleagues Catherine Carter and Julie Gieseke.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Holdgate called the Select Board meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

II. ANNUAL SELECT BOARD GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP.

Ms. Novak led the meeting and the Raftelis report of the meeting is attached.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 AM.

Approved the 28th day of June 2023.

**SELECT BOARD
JUNE 13, 2023 – 9:00 AM
MEETING TRAILER AT 131 PLEASANT STREET
NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS**

List of documents used at the meeting:

- II. Raftelis Memo re: Governance Retreat; presentation

Town of Nantucket, MA

Strategic Plan Review

June 12, 2023

The Select Board of the Town of Nantucket, Massachusetts, held a Strategic Plan review session with members of other Town Boards and Commissions on June 12, 2023. The Select Board then reconvened on June 13th to debrief and talk about next steps for the Strategic Plan. The sessions were planned and facilitated by Raftelis.

Day 1

Policy Priorities of the Boards

Each of the Boards and Commissions described their current policy goals.

Finance Committee

- Our priorities and goals include continued collaboration and continued investment of time, particularly on warrant articles. There have been some things that happened last-minute between Town Administration and Planning, so we want to continue to work on timely communication, but, generally, things have moved in a positive direction.

Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission (NPEDC)

- The NPEDC is a rural transportation planning group that allows Nantucket to access certain resources. Priorities include research, planning, and management of Planning and Land Use Services (PLUS). This includes reviewing enabling legislation, mission, and bylaws, and the group is also looking to revisit the memorandum of understanding with the Town. We're interested in discussing how we fit into other planning efforts (where do we take the lead, and where are we better in support roles?), as long-range planning is a Town-wide responsibility.

Planning Board

- The major focus for this group is updating the Master Plan; the most recent iteration of the plan was completed in 2009. The plan has nine elements. Census data has delayed the process, but we're still basically on schedule. We're also entering into some new contracts, which will likely lead to a new article at a future Town Meeting.

Conservation Commission

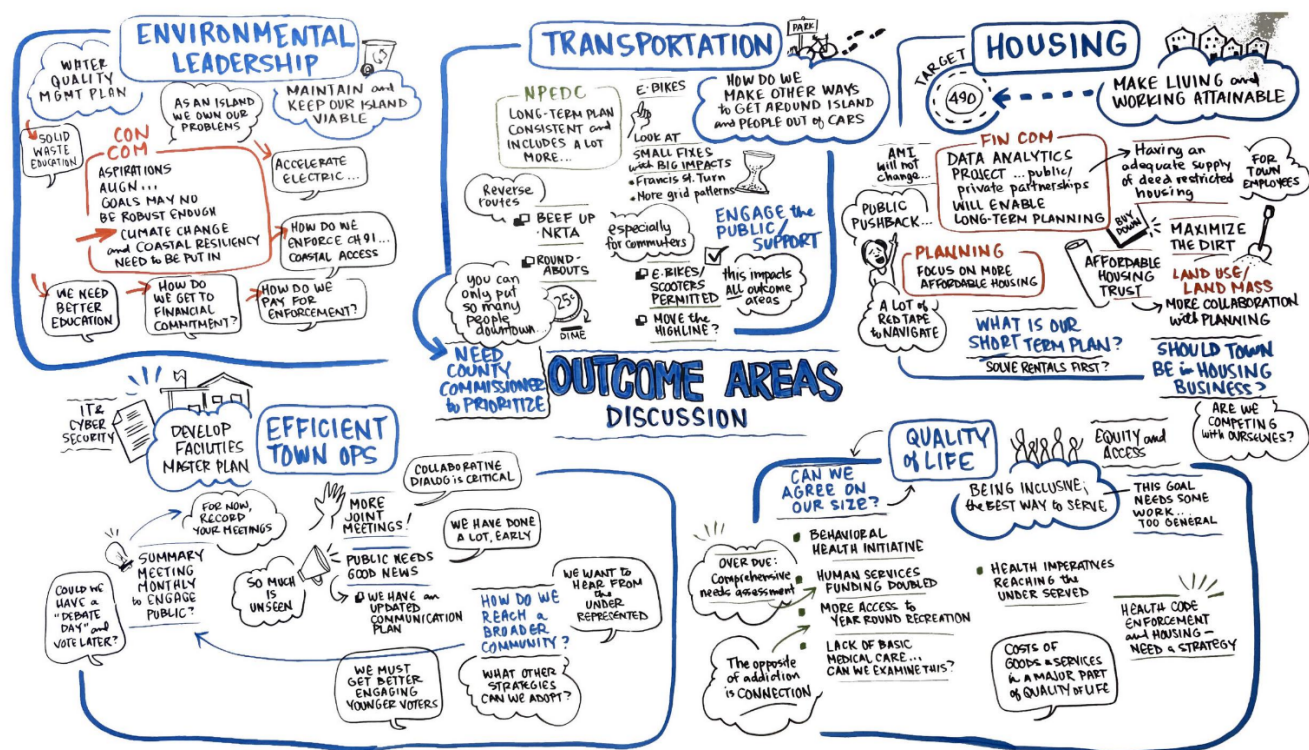
- The Conservation Commission is a regulatory body that protects natural resources on the island, with specific jurisdiction over coastal and inland wetland resources. The group works with applicants to review and permit projects and is currently working to update regulations that are close to adoption. The goal is to review policies and procedures to be more efficient. We see more applications than any other in the Commonwealth, and some applications need to go through multiple Boards. The focus of a future meeting could be to better streamline and share information between groups to increase the efficiency of the regulatory process.

Capital Program Committee

- The group is review- and advisory-based, regarding material received from the departments, as well as Town Administration. We review capital projects and long-term projects for better planning and pricing.

Focus Area Discussions

Participants then had conversations related to each of the five focus areas in the strategic plan. Discussion points are captured in the graphic map and bullets below.



Housing

- Activity Update
 - \$1M was intended to assist the most rental-challenged Town employees and we did a lot of research on how we could best use it. Haven't yet gone to the Finance Committee with the Town's conclusions, but we're hoping to reallocate the funds for another Housing project.
 - We've also worked to incorporate grievance language into union contracts, which has been beneficial.
- Questions/Discussion
 - Is it possible to forecast needs for the next 10-15 years? Or are we just focused on meeting the annual goals?
 - 490 affordable units is a fraction of what we need as a community, but we don't have the validated data to support the need. Ultimately, we're aiming for public

- private partnerships based on the data analytics project. Need to start thinking about what's next, after we meet the requirements of the Safe Harbor.
- It's important to spend money as quickly as possible, but also correctly to maximize impact.
 - Now that there's money available, now how do we prioritize and make sure that we get where we need to go?
- We will never be able to pay people to live in market-rate housing on Nantucket. We need deed-restricted properties. Aiming for the project to be completed by year-end. Different entities will hold different deed restrictions, including the land trust. Looking at what money can be used where, so execution starts in January.
 - 30% turnover, 11% vacancy rate – crisis in the short-term.
 - Long-term, should the Town be responsible for owning and managing housing? Causes challenges between employees and employers.
 - The Town is so desperate to fill high-level positions that we're trying to rent anything that's even somewhat reasonable.
 - Deed protected housing stock creates almost an island within an island – do we know the targets, metrics, and costs?
 - Not yet – that's part of the goal of the data analytics project.
 - What Brooke talked about in the update is 40 years of fixing in 10 minutes – it's taken us a long time to get there. It will be very difficult to convince the public of some of this.
 - Love the buy-down idea, but the concern is that there's no dirt yet. Seasonal residents pay 90%, and we're about to ask them for more.
 - Build-out analysis is coming, open space plan is coming, more sewers are coming – there's a lot of infrastructure that needs to be developed. Property values have increased 1500%, and we're trying to fix something that no one saw coming.
 - We need to maximize the dirt – taking under-developed properties and filling them in.
 - It will be very hard to talk about this publicly.
 - We need more work with planning and the land trust to tweak zoning to get the job done for affordable housing (ADUs, etc.). We need as many units as possible to be set aside for year-round residents as possible.
 - Planning Board has put forward a number of articles at Town Meeting to support attainable and affordable housing, and is looking at additional options to support.
 - Affordable Housing Trust – present Board has made great strides. Obtaining land is frustrating and we can't keep up – there's a lot of red tape, and there are developers who are bidding above ask.
 - Years ago, we had a moratorium on building permits, and it had the opposite effect. People heard about the moratorium and threw in their permit, just in case, and then they ended up building. Should be some kind of requirement that if you're going to build a certain number of houses, we should require a percentage to be affordable.
 - Throw a dart on the wall and we need all of it when it comes to housing. Supply is the biggest problem; we have two houses on the market for less than \$2 million. 240% of median household income can support up to a \$7k/month, but we need parallel paths.

- Affordable Housing Trust Guidelines didn't have a definition; we've been using affordable (up to 80% of Area Median Income), while Attainable is up to 240%. We need all of it.
- All about land use, land mass, and what's available for us to build on. There's tension between conservation use and building use, so we're competing against ourselves. Zoning helps, transfer fee advocacy (economic tools to make things happen; Town's first right of refusal; increase telecommuting for off-island workers). Where do we have the appetite for making changes?

Transportation

- A long-range transportation plan is required to receive federal funding, and that plan is very consistent with what the Select Board is looking for in this area.
- Progress has been building on the island – over the near/recent past to now, a lot has changed.
 - BPAC group was one of the smartest things we've ever done – the eBike thing that just popped up; if this group hadn't been looking at it, it would have been a big issue for the Town to deal with.
 - There are some easy fixes that make a big difference – might take three generations, but at least it's fixed. We need simple solutions on Nantucket – we're better served by small, noticeable improvements that don't change the character.
 - eBikes are going to be the big game changer, because we're not going to ban things that are electric.
- We need the public transportation options to be easier than getting into cars (especially for commuters).
- A lot has been discussed at the NPDEC, including evolution of bike paths, Steamship shuttle to parking areas, rotaries/roundabouts, etc. We've also done things that haven't needed to be voted on at Town Meeting, and NRTA has helped to facilitate a lot of things.
- Scooters/eBikes/micro-mobility options are a huge win for the Town, but currently none of them are permitted by code and we need to (very quickly) update the bylaws to permit. They reduce traffic, decrease carbon emissions, they're generally fun to ride, and they require less space for parking.
 - We need to regulate and enforce as well.
- Where we're having back-ups now is where they were predicted to be 20 years ago. If we continue on this path, we'll end up in a less great place. We need neighborhoods to consider letting roads be connected.
 - We need to do the work to build consensus face-to-face.
- Drivers are looking for workarounds, and behaving less safely as they work through the non-standard areas. Need to re-look at garage system, metered parking, where the Hy-Line docks, etc. Fast ferries are incredibly efficient at moving the majority of people around.
 - Need to look at using reverse routes.
- County commissioners are the key to making transportation/interconnected roads happen. The more public roads, the more maintenance required. Bit of an internal conflict that needs to get worked out.
- We never thought about on-street parking in the 80s. The airport is where people should be parking.

Environmental Leadership

- The aspirational statement reads really well, and the goals are good. They're more focused on Town staff than the regulatory piece.
 - I do see the goals as not being robust enough (resiliency – coastal/climate). We need critical infrastructure to be protected, and if we don't factor in climate change and coastal resiliency, it will be a miss.
- This area needs a lot more specifics – the Retailers Association just had a presentation by National Grid related to being carbon neutral by 2050. We need to be talking about accelerating a lot of activities.
- In doing the Harbor Plan and Madaket update, we had 130 people at the first public meeting to review the plan.
 - It ties in with other environmental issues and is a two-year process to update. Includes sea level rise, harbor access, Chapter 91, permit adherence, and enforcement. There's a lot of cross-over between this and some of the other plans in place.
- Many of the citizen warrant articles relate to environmental initiatives, but the Town needs some direction.
 - Are these aspirational goals or things that we need enforcement for (e.g., plastics ban, nip ban, lighting, fertilizer). We support making steps in the right direction, but how do we pay for enforcement?
- Haven't figured out a map to get to implementation of the coastal resiliency plan (likely \$350M), but we desperately need a grant writer.
- For Environmental Leadership, it can be beneficial that we're an island – we have a limited geographic range, so we're basically a closed loop.
- We're missing adequate community education – some lawns are really too green.
- We need to do more to not harm in the first place.
 - Some things have unintended consequences – composting led to PFAS in the waste stream.

Efficient Town Operations

- In the last few years, particularly since digging up Prospect Street, we've fixed a lot of things. Communication has been really good, and we have a much better understanding of what's under the streets – we're fixing a bunch of things at once, and there's been really good coordination.
- There are several areas where the Town is leading the way, e.g., we have the most access for affordable housing creation, we've split sewer/sanitary, we have an enviable coastal resiliency plan.
 - Speaking with other MA elected officials, we're way ahead of dealing with some of these issues.
 - PFAS – we had a departmental summit and the cross-departmental/cross-Board dialogue has been great.
- People talk about how they don't know what's going on, and civic engagement is low, while transparency is higher than it's ever been. Collaborative decision-making and proactive discussions help a lot.
- What is the Town's communication strategy?
 - Communications strategic plan, reviewed by the Board in December.

- Now have two staff members to support communications, as well as professional services contracts.
 - Towns across the state are struggling to get the word out and get the public's attention.
- We do well at executing the communication strategy – it isn't enough, but it isn't deficient. We need to look at results, not just effort, and we need to keep trying different things.
 - In working to update long-range plan, the responses are heavily skewed to wealthy, older, white, homeowners. We know we need to be more dynamic, but it's hard to get a representative sample.
 - Multi-lingual access – every survey goes out in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. We have a really high level of engagement with YouTube videos and online engagement. More data will help us to better target our efforts.
 - There is support for increases in the communications area. Consider a survey consultant, incentives, etc. Need a focus on social media for timely responses.
- Everyone in this room is involved in a lot of individual meetings – public can't attend everything. Libby does a good job with the summary meetings.
 - Could do a monthly summary meeting with representatives coming to share the work of the Boards on a regular basis.
 - Is it possible to have a debate day prior to Town Meeting? Give people the opportunity to explore issues before the meetings.
- Some people are also disillusioned with government (especially the in-their-30s crowd) – need to do more engagement for younger folks.

Quality of Life

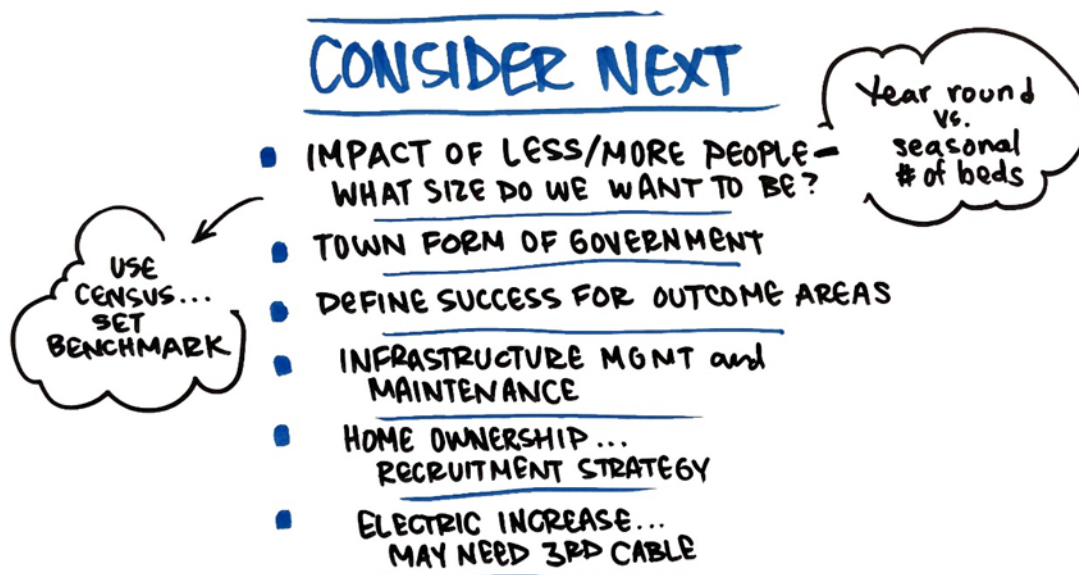
- As a representative of the Board of Health – what are we doing with the second goal in this area?
 - Recreation positions, ball parks, bike paths.
 - Provide funding for Human Services (doubled funding).
 - Starting to focus on year-round, healthy recreation options – need to have more initiatives at the schools.
 - Contract Review Committee – had \$875k to give away, high competition for the funds. We're working to collaborate with other agencies and have required recreational programming and also behavioral health components. Health Imperatives has done a great job of reaching underserved communities to help people who haven't traditionally had access.
- Lack of accessibility for basic medical/dental care – everything is at least three months out – what can we do to get more primary care providers to the island?
- Compliments to public, private, and non-profits for the work that has happened so far.
- In terms of Human Services, a comprehensive needs assessment is overdue, and will be integral moving forward.
- Critical imperative to have good enforcement of our occupancy code and we need to fix substandard housing. The Board of Health and the Health and Human Services Department could take this on.
- The opposite of addiction isn't sobriety – it's connection. Need an indoor community center – brings people together; every committee would have a role to play.
- The goal needs some work in terms of how it's written – specifically, the reference to rural identity/middle-income jobs, etc. It's too general.

- Costs of goods and services – priced at summer population levels is hard for those here year-round.
- What community are we trying to plan for? Are we a 25k people year-round community? 50k?
 - How do we keep us from growing past the level that we decide?
- This area should really be our number one priority.
- There needs to be a recognition that we're not going to be able to address every social ill – there are some things that are beyond our reach. The Town has done a lot and there's a lot in the works.

What's Next?

Participants had subsequent discussion related to updating the strategic plan, and what needs to be included. Potential priorities include:

- Start thinking one step beyond - what happens once we've achieved our goals? Are there new problems that are created? All of the problems that we've talked about are less severe when there are fewer people here.
- Form of Government
- Taking a longer view than 10 years out, and being more proactive
- Further defining success for the Focus Areas
- Housing inventory – how many year-round bedrooms do we want?
- Infrastructure management and investment
- Strategic plan was created to evolve, revisit, and reprioritize
- Home ownership is a critical part of attracting Town employees
- We don't always know where the issues are
- Third cable as we expand electric use on the Island



Parting Word

Participants closed the session by sharing a word that describes how they felt after the discussion.

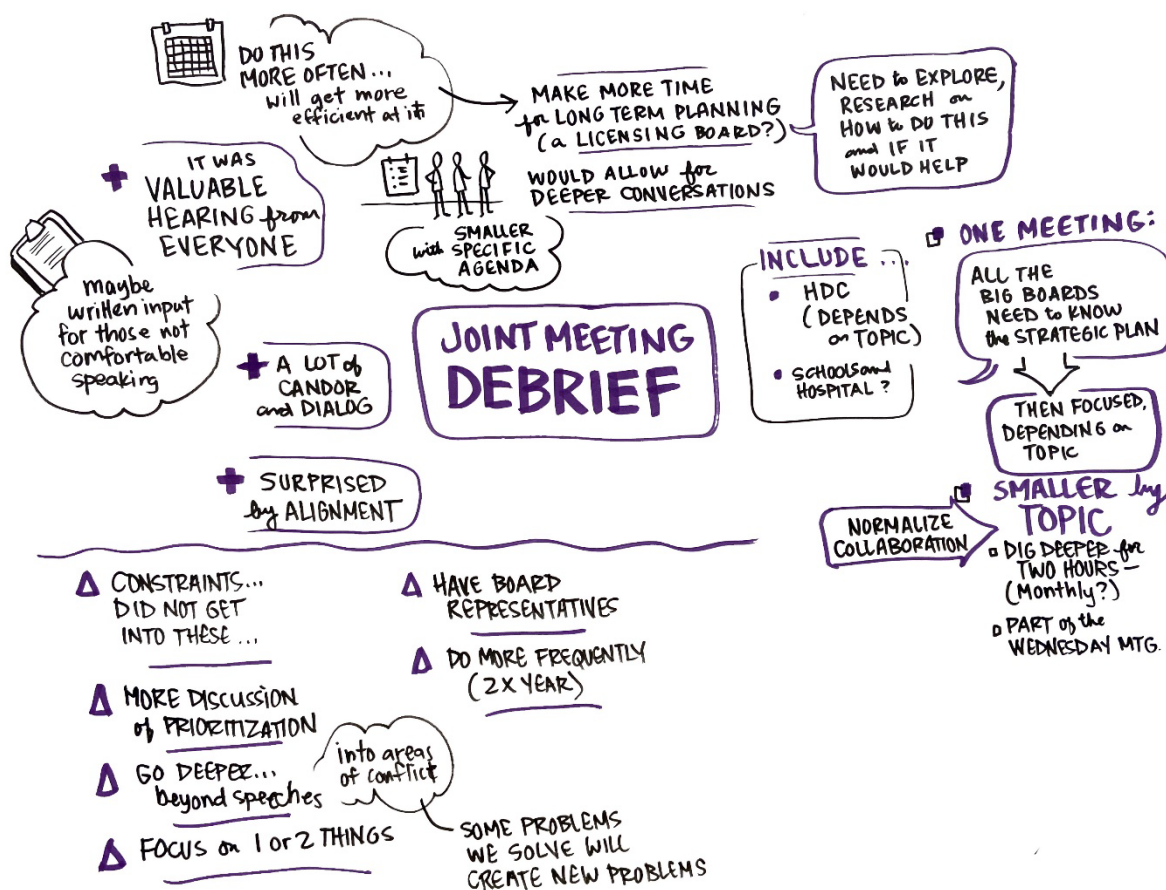
- Collaborative
- Process Management
- Productive
- Hopeful
- Community
- Encouraging and Positive
- Positive
- Educational
- Patience
- Optimistic
- Encouraging
- Adaptable
- Long-range Planning
- Forecasting
- Collaboration
- Energizing
- More issues
- Overdue
- Helpful
- Helpful
- Visionary
- Stay focused
- Stewardship
- Complex
- Helpful
- Inclusive

Day 2

The Select Board met on June 13th to debrief the previous day's discussion and consider what needs to happen prior to the strategic plan refresh in October.

Debrief

Key takeaways are captured in the graphic and bullets below.



Overall

- Valuable to hear from everyone; just having one spokesperson wouldn't bring you the different voices.
- Might be good to allow for written input.
- We need better communication on specific issues throughout the year. Some things don't rise to the top for whatever reason, and they just keep getting put on the back burner. Prioritization conversations need to be more discussed.

- Mention of constraints, but we didn't dig into fiscal or labor complaints. We have competing interests and we don't have enough time to deal with any of it, and we didn't get into picking and choosing.
- We do need to get the information on what's going on to other Boards. Anything that gets us on the same page is a good thing.
- Pleasantly surprised at the degree of alignment. Not sure if that's because folks are disinclined to talk about areas without alignment.

Topic-Specific Discussion

- I thought there was good candor from a lot of the Board members. Maybe people didn't say exactly what they thought, but the quality of life conversation was good, and I liked that so many people had questions about Housing.
- Interesting that they caught that Coastal resiliency wasn't considered as part of the discussion.
- I'd like to dig more into areas of conflict – even within areas in our strategic plan (e.g., coastal resiliency and securing housing stock). With transportation, people get concerned with concentrations of housing in particular areas, but high concentrations are necessary to get people out of single person vehicles.

Future Meetings

- Timing was rough; evening would be better and have broader participation. Would need a bigger room.
- I think that we should do it again. I don't think that we got that deep; and would have liked to have gone deeper. I'd like to get to the nitty gritty, and focus in more on one or two things. It was a start, but we can do better.
- Just because we have a representative present, doesn't mean that we're able to learn everything.
- We could get to a more productive point if we did this more frequently. Could be quarterly or twice a year, with maybe fewer representatives. Once we fix problems, we may be inviting more people and exacerbating the problems. We need to better realize where we have conflicts.
- Off and on, the Board has tried monthly workshops on particular topics. We've also tried scheduling standing topics on particular weeks of the month (e.g., first Wednesday is Town Business, second is...).
- Who should participate?
 - HDC
 - HTC might be another good group to bring in, because their design standards are sometimes in conflict.
 - Depends on the topic (strategic plan was too broad). Maybe do one meeting per Focus Area.
 - All the big Boards need to know what the Select Board's strategic plan is. Throughout the year, maybe we have scheduled times for the joint Board meetings – what would it take to achieve some of the goals in the plan?
 - ConCom is looking at more stringent regulations, but what are the impacts of those regulations? (staffing, funding, enforcement, outreach, etc.) Trying to get the Boards to get deeper into the recommendations that they're making.

- Maybe one meeting each year with the “Big Boards” (including health) with the purpose of informing. Then a calendar for joint, topic-specific meetings? Maybe two hours per topic, and a smaller number of Boards/representatives.
- Have a bifurcated government; how do we bring various parts of the government together. How do we bridge that? We need to normalize collaboration and make it more of an annual thing. Should be part of regular Wednesday meeting activities, rather than as a separate workshop that no one watches.
- We can work on a calendar of agendas in August and create a management schedule.

Other Topics

- We should seriously consider a licensing board, to free up Select Board for long-term planning. I know that there are positives and negatives to offloading that responsibility, but we need to be able to focus on the bigger, non-routine issues, including joint meetings with appropriate representatives.
- The Town can investigate a licensing board, but something would need to drop off to make space to create the board and determine its charter/authority. Could have an advisory group to make recommendations in the meantime, but we’d still need to have the public hearings in front of the Select Board, unless or until we have a board with full authority.
- The problem isn’t that we spend time on licensing, it’s that we’re not spending our time on the bigger issues. We need to get around to those things now; it’s not someone else’s job. We have a comprehensive plan and we have master plans, but it’s a matter of execution.
- We don’t do a great job of creating the “why” of Board agreements, and we need to stick to decisions and saying that over and over again when people try to move us out of our policies.
- Without the licensing requirements, it would free up almost a meeting per month.

Refreshing the Strategic Plan

The Select Board talked about the progress that has been made related to the strategic plan, and what they hope to see during the refresh process in October. Highlights from the discussion are captured in the graphic maps and bullets below.



Strategic Plan Implementation

- People have gone back to their corners; activities have owners but aren't necessarily talking across as much.
- A lot has gotten done and operationalized.
- FTEs have been added to build organizational capacity, but it's still not enough to do everything.
- We have an opportunity in October to write a new strategic plan. Existing plan will likely still be relevant. From a content/process perspective – what do we want to do differently?
- First one had three focus areas; done at retreat settings; two focus areas and the sustainability statement were added.
- Provide an update on the successes to the community (already in progress).
- Once things are done, they're in the rear-view mirror. It's a combination of what we've done, but also what's next? Generally, there's not a good understanding of the complexities. We struggle to communicate complex issues, and people come with great concepts, and there's a lot of "but"
- How do we synthesize and prioritize all of this? – we also need to build in some slack and some extra resources to address big issues/pursue grants.

Data Needs

- Data analytics on housing; cost per rider data for NRTA
- Cost data to fund things outside of what we can fund on-island
- Where do grants make sense?
 - Grants are complicated; require different scopes/specializations, as well as project management and administration.
 - Resources need to be there to actually comply with the requirements, and grants generally fund new things, rather than existing operations.
 - Staff just don't have the capacity as it stands.
 - There are firms that can do it, but you might apply and not get the grant, so there's a sunk cost.

- This group can be helpful in running interference when we have community members with interests.
- A community group is going to bring a proposal for incentives to convert short-term to long-term rentals. We've said yes to these things, and we're going to keep focusing on these things; if there are other things, the community can research. Need to be more definitive when we say no.
- Need the ability to promote public private partnerships; don't see a path forward otherwise – need to do it collaboratively, rather than imposing it.

Focus for October

- Don't know that we want to add anything, as we've had a hard time just getting through what we have.
- Disagreement on what quality of life means – needs better definition (could be an overarching area) – created space to talk about recreation, improving facilities.
- Would be helpful to see more specifically about the tradeoffs.
- Figuring out roles/responsibilities.
- Environmental Leadership is very staff-focused; could be reshaped to better address sustainability, to address new issues, etc.
- Needs to be an understanding of what's enough, and what are we asking people to sacrifice? Mostly financial incentives and convenience – what do we leave if the development train is slowed/stopped? People are frustrated and trying to chip away at the edges of development, in absence of a defined long-term plan.
- With other Boards and stakeholders, we need to get on the same page with data and whether we all agree on it – what are the facts?
- Schools/hospitals – are they engaged? Do they need to be, at some level. Housing is an issue there, plus the cost of the delay on projects.