NP&EDC

NANTUCKET PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Nantucket Planning & Economic Development Commission DRAFT Minutes
Hybrid – PLUS Conference Room, 2 Fairgrounds Road and
Remote Participation via Zoom Webinar
August 21, 2024 @ 11:00AM

Commissioners: Chair Barry Rector, Vice-Chair Nat Lowell, John Kitchener, Abby De Molina, Michael Misurelli, Kristina Jelleme, Brook Mohr, Joseph Topham, Bert Johnson, and Dave Iverson

Staff: Leslie Snell, Director of Planning, Megan Trudel, Senior Planner, and Catherine Ancero, Administrative Specialist

NP & EDC DRAFT MINTUES 08-21-2024
Enabling Legislation Workgroup

I. **Call to Order:**
Chair Rector called the meeting to order at 11:00AM.

II. **Approval of Agenda:**

Motion/Vote: Mr. Kitchener made a motion to approve the agenda and the motion was duly seconded by Mr. Lowell and the motion was carried unanimously.

III. **Public Comment for items not included on the agenda:**
There was no public comment.

IV. **Enabling Legislation Discussion:**

Discussion: There was a brief discussion clarifying the structure and roles of a workgroup related to commission's tasks. There was a question about whether there is a moderator among the staff members and if the work group consists of six people and a moderator. The Commission had voted for the Chairman to pick three members. There was question whether non-commission members should be involved. Mrs. Snell stated that she thought that this was going to be an open and informal dialogue between commission members and Hillary and her team. It was agreed to self-moderate. A document was introduce outlining the current situation, identified gaps, and the potential need for compromise. The goal is to avoid failure and create a solid plan to present at the Special Town Meeting even if action isn't taken immediately at a Special Town Meeting. Hillary Rayport introduces herself and her team and shares concerns about challenges facing the island such as traffic and environmental pollution. Ms. Rayport stated that the current plan is outdated. Ms. Rayport explained that structural changes to the Planning Commission could improve planning efforts and that an article related to these changes was passed at a Town Meeting in 2023 with a previous article referred for study in 2022. There was a suggestion of proposing an amendment at the upcoming Special Town Meeting rather than taking no action. Ms. Hillary Rayport introduced Rick Atherton, a former Board of Selectmen member and Georgia, a lawyer with a strong background in historic preservation were both introduced. Mr. Atherton and Georgia both were involved in the discussion about improving the article. It was stated that regardless of the work group's outcome the article will likely be called at the Special Town

Meeting, however, there was hoped to improve the article and move the planning process forward collaboratively. Ms. Rayport believe there's an opportunity to improve the article because its main purpose is to guide the state on our intentions, which will evolve over time and could involve multiple Town Meetings. Mr. Atherton stated that with this article as it stands, if they all could come to a consensus. Chair Rector stated that they need to find a common ground, also they need to address all aspects of what's being asked to avoid surprises. Mr. Kitchener felt that it's important that they understand the full scope of the changes that are being proposed, beyond focusing on one area like the historic preservation. Ms. Rayport felt that the main difference between their proposal is the method of selecting at-large members. Ms. Rayport believes that long range planning requires fresh perspective and currently no one passionate about planning can directly serve on the commission unless appointed by it. The proposal is that At-large members be directly elected. A suggestion of an appointing committee made up of County Commissioners and Board members selects the At-large members. With this approach it would diversify the decision-making process and allow for a careful selection of individuals with specific skills and experience. The purpose is to focus on whether the appointing process versus direct elections would best serve the community. Ms. De Molina opposed against elections due to that it can be costly and limit accessibility, while appointments could provide broader access to a diverse group of candidates without the financial barriers. Mr. Kitchener stated that when they were appointed to the Planning Board, it felt like a thorough process, like an election. Mr. Kitchener stated that they were evaluated based on their skills and experience. Mr. Kitcher believes a well-structured appointment process can be effective with proper guidelines making sure that it isn't just a way for a small group to choose who they want. Mr. Atherton stated that an appointment committee consists of only one group, such as the Planning Board or School Committee, however it should be more of a diverse selection process. Mr. Atherton felt that self-appointment where a Board appoints its own members, lacks transparency and might appear as an insider deal to the community. Mr. Atherton stated that instead have a broader committee, involving different groups like County Commissioners or Town Representatives, could have some fairness and diversity. Ms. Rayport explained that electing members brings transparency, as candidates must present their values, goals and qualifications publicly. By do this, this allows the community to decide whether to support them. Ms. Rayport stated that elections provide accountability since voters can remove someone who doesn't meet expectations. The discussion continued about balancing the pros and cons of elections and appointments. There were concerns about accountability and the influence some Boards might have if they appoint members to other committees. The discussion stressed the importance of clear communication and collaboration to move forward effectively. Mr. Kitchener expressed frustration about ongoing personal attacks and a lack of effective communication and that there needs to be focus more with working together toward a more accountable and effective future for the community. There was discussion to address the timeline and responsibilities associated with the master plan. One Board member clarified that the plan is criticized for being outdated, however it is technically a recommendation to update every ten years. The members focused on the Commission's vision, mission and objectives, debating whether they agree on the overall goals.

V. Establish schedule:

The Board discussed the possibility of holding another meeting before the Special Town Meeting to resolve outstanding matters. There was a consensus that meeting on Monday morning would be efficient due to a pressing deadline for the upcoming Special Town Meeting article. The Board agreed to hold a meeting at 10AM on Monday, stressing the need for collaboration to resolve structural concerns.

VI. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 12:30PM.

Submitted By: Catherine Ancero