

Town of Huntington — Selectboard Strategic Planning Session

Saturday, June 06, 2015

1:00-5:20 pm @ 1335 East Street

RECEIVED

APPROVED MINUTES

DATE

June 16, 2015



<p><b>Agenda</b></p>	<p><b>Selectboard (SB) Strategic Planning Session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction (purpose, products/outcomes; SB roles/responsibilities)</li> <li>• Wake-up Exercise (principles for fostering communication &amp; cooperation)</li> <li>• FY14-15 Review (work completed; core work)</li> <li>• FY15-16 Work Overview (work in process; items not tackled; new items)</li> <li>• Breakout Session (top priorities)</li> <li>• FY15-16 Work Plan (priority agreement; subcommittee sign-up)</li> <li>• Next Steps; Wrap-up &amp; Reflection</li> </ul>
<p><b>SB Members present:</b></p>	<p>Dori Barton (Chair), Andrew Hendrickson, Helen Keith, Roman Livak, Nancy Stoddard (Vice-Chair)</p>
<p><b>Staff Present:</b></p>	<p>Barbara Elliott (Town Administrator)</p>
<p><b>Call to order</b></p>	<p>Barton called the planning session to order at 1:03 pm.</p>
<p><b>Planning Session Introduction</b></p>	<p><b>Purpose, Products/Outcomes</b></p> <p><u>Purpose</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To become aligned around the most important work that the Selectboard (SB) can accomplish over the next year.</li> <li>• While we expect the majority of the items on the priority list will be accomplished this FY, it is a given that the SB can't plan all work and that many unplanned events (i.e. FEMA events) need to be addressed immediately. In these cases, the SB will need to shift planned work as needed.</li> </ul> <p><u>Products/Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed upon, clear priorities and ownership of work.</li> <li>• Maintain our focus for getting work completed this year.</li> <li>• Agreement on what we plan to accomplish this year.</li> <li>• List of principles in support of good communications and cooperation.</li> <li>• Capture all ideas (some may need to be addressed later).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principles for Fostering Communication &amp; Cooperation</b></p>	<p><b><u>Principles the SB embraces to foster effective communication &amp; cooperation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Behavior             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintain tolerance &amp; patience for SB members' individual differences, personalities, and diverse opinions.</li> <li>○ Create a welcoming atmosphere so all SB members feel comfortable expressing opinions (it is okay to disagree).</li> <li>○ Respect each other through active listening.</li> <li>○ Set aside our own personal goals / agendas; in our language and discussions focus on issues, not people. SB members cannot use the broad authority given to us as SB members to work our own personal agenda items. If we have an agenda item to be worked, it needs to be brought forward to the SB, discussed and then prioritized.</li> <li>○ Maintain a goal of understanding and information sharing.</li> <li>○ Use positive language &amp; humor.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- Time Management
  - Agree on and respect the established priorities – including using meeting time and SB volunteer hours to work on established priorities.
  - Priorities are a living, breathing, dynamic process. As new issues are brought forth and discussed by the SB, changes to priorities should be reviewed and agreed upon by the full Selectboard (and not determined by individual SB members).
  - Respect time limits – but also complete topics of conversations so others aren't shut down from expressing ideas/concerns/opinions.
    - Eg: Training might be taken offline; follow-up might be delegated to sub-committees, items might be tabled for future agendas, etc.
    - There are no 'bad' questions.
- Decision making
  - Have goals, understand those goals, and have the information that is needed to make effective decisions.
  - Work toward consensus, if no consensus, decisions are majority vote.
  - In our 'public face' we should be able to discuss and explain decisions even if we did not agree with the decision.
  - After decisions are made, support the majority decision (it's okay to say you didn't vote for something, but it's not okay to undermine SB decisions).
- Interaction with other Committees, Boards & Commissions (CBC)
  - Be cognizant and respectful of the members of other CBCs and Town officials/volunteers, and assume the good intentions of others.
  - Respect the boundaries of responsibility that fall under the statutory purview of other CBCs and Town officials (avoid Selectboard 'mission creep').
- Selectboard (SB)—Town Administrator (TA) communication & process for making requests
  - For our Town employees to effectively manage their time, work requests and direction should come from the SB Chair or from agreement at a SB meeting and not directly to staff by individual SB members.
    - Limit the number of 'bosses' who are making requests and/or giving direction to staff.
- SB Orientation
  - Do up-front work/training so new members are brought up to date and gracefully integrated into the work of the SB.
  - Outline/clarify SB roles & authority.
    - BCA, elections, quasi-judicial functions
    - Statutory authority & limitations (such as the role of the SB vs the PSB; the SB having no authority over other elected officials who have independent statutory roles)
    - SB members cannot act individually as SB members—only as a board
  - Provide an overview of operating norms.
  - Kick-off with a thorough review of the work prioritization spreadsheet; SB annual calendar; Town website; SB Resource manual; Professional Audit; Town policies, procedures, ordinances & plans (Town Plan, Land Use Regulations, Personnel Policy, Purchasing Policy etc.); and VLCT resources.

<p><b>FY14-15 Review</b></p> <p><i>Follow-up: Elliott to update FY14-15 Spreadsheet</i></p> <p><i>Follow-up: Additional items to build into committee or full SB work plans</i></p>	<p><b>FY 2014-2015 Priority List</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SB reviewed the list of projects for items accomplished (celebrate!), items in process, items that may have changed or been dropped, and items that are still 'in the queue'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tasks were organized into categories: Building &amp; Grounds; CBCs (general &amp; specific); Finance; HR; Highway; Selectboard; Town Administrator</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Elliott will update the 14-15 Spreadsheet with the following tabs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Items Done; Items Dropped; Open/Ongoing Items</li> <li>○ Note: some items will appear on both the 'done' and 'open/ongoing' \</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Follow-up items noted included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We have a better understanding of the Library Trustee roles &amp; responsibilities and policies &amp; procedures. This needs to carry over into the Town Report and overall budgeting process. (E.g.: the budget dollars reflected in the Town Report are just a subset of expenses as the General Fund budget is supplemented by special revenue funds.</li> <li>○ The SB needs to continue to focus on relationship building with other committees, boards, commissions (CBCs) including the School Board.</li> <li>○ It was requested that where appropriate, highway projects include burying utilities underground as part of the project's scope.</li> <li>○ The precedent has been set that if there is a major re-write or changes made to the Zoning Regulations, the proposed regulation will be brought to the Town residents for a vote.</li> <li>○ The SB should review the Town Plan for recommendations that were made in the plan that relate to SB priorities for possible SB follow-up / action.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>FY15-16 Work Overview &amp; Top Priorities</b></p>	<p><b><u>Proposed Annual Strategic Planning Process</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sub-Committees &amp; Ad-Hoc Committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SB agreed on a 'Sub-Committee / Ad-Hoc Committee / Full Selectboard' structure for addressing priorities. In addition, there are ongoing/mandatory items that fall under the 'standard' work plan for the SB and for the Town Administrator.</li> <li>○ Decisions are not made at the sub-committee / ad-hoc committee level – instead, proposals are drafted and presented to the full Selectboard for decision making.</li> <li>○ In order to address priorities, work has to occur outside of meetings. There is an expectation that SB members will be active members &amp; chairs of standing and/or ad-hoc committees, and may also be asked to be a resource for committees.</li> <li>○ Committee membership may include non-SB members.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Annually the full SB will review &amp; discuss the previous year's accomplishments and upcoming priorities. SB members will sign-up to chair and/or participate on the various committees.</li> <li>• Following the annual planning meeting, SB sub-committees and SB ad-hoc committees will review their previous year's Purpose, Process &amp; Products/Outcomes document (or create a new one if needed); review the priorities established at the annual strategic planning meeting, and develop an updated committee project plan with timelines and work assignments for review/approval by the full SB. The work of other CBC's will be considered when updating or creating the committee's project plan.</li> <li>• Once work plans are finalized and approved by the full SB, they will be shared with other Town committees, boards, commissions and officials.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Proposed FY15-16 Sub-Committees and Ad-Hoc Committees</b></p>	<p>The Sub-Committees and Ad-Hoc Committees proposed for FY15-16, with a first pass at possible chairs, membership, and resources are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Buildings &amp; Grounds Sub-Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chair—Hendrickson</li> <li>○ Membership/Resources—N Stoddard volunteered to do a knowledge transfer if the 2013 Buildings &amp; Grounds report for Hendrickson. Hopefully some members from the 2013 committee (Don Dresser, Barbara Elliott, Ryan Elliott, Dan Stoddard) and/or members from the Energy Committee and other community members knowledgeable about buildings.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Draft Finance Sub-Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chair—Keith</li> <li>○ Members—Town Treasurer Kathleen Clark, Town Administrator Barbara Elliott, Town Auditor Patty Baumann</li> <li>○ Resources—N Stoddard</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Draft Highway Sub-Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chair— Livak</li> <li>○ Members—Stoddard, Road Foreman Yogi Alger</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Draft HR Sub-Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chair— Stoddard</li> <li>○ Members— Barton, Elliott, Livak</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Draft Ad-Hoc Lower Village Traffic Calming Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chair—TBD</li> <li>○ Members—Keith, hopefully members from the original Scoping Study Steering Committee (Jeanine Carr, Knox Cummin, Megs Keir, Mark Smith, Aaron Worthley, Debbie Worthley)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Selectboard Top-Level Special Projects/Work Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chair—Barton</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Next Steps</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic Planning Session Next Steps</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elliott will update FY 15-16 Sub-Committee Work Prioritization Spreadsheet, organized by sub-committee/ad-hoc committee and top level SB/TA, detailing projects agreed on as priorities plus ongoing items &amp; open items from FY14-15 (minus the dropped items). This will be sent to the SB separate from the Strategic Planning Session minutes.</li> <li>2. SB members will review the spreadsheet for additions/corrections.</li> <li>3. Selectboard sub-committee and ad-hoc committee assignments will be finalized at the 6/15 SB meeting.</li> <li>4. Establish target dates for presenting sub-committee and ad-hoc committee updated Purpose, Process &amp; Products/Outcomes &amp; work plans with timelines to the full-Selectboard.</li> <li>5. Schedule periodic committee updates as part of the SB meeting agenda.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Offline Follow-up Items</b></p>	<p><b>Miscellaneous Items for Follow-up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Audit report &amp; process: orientation for new SB members (Elliott, Hendrickson, Keith).</li> <li>• Review spreadsheets with new SB members for clarification and background information (Elliott, Hendrickson, Keith).</li> <li>• Water/Waste Water: SB to discuss with HPC the issue of who drives the next steps as follow up to the Stone Environmental study/report.</li> <li>• Library Status: are there still open issues to address (eg: how the budget is presented in the Town Report)?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Reflections</b></p>	<p><b>What shifted as a result of the planning session?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledged the value of the communication, cooperation, collaboration exercise – should do this every year.</li> <li>• Hold the Planning Session as soon after Town Meeting as members can commit to a 4-hour block.</li> <li>• This is a helpful process for getting on the same page.</li> <li>• Optimistic that the sub-committee structure will be productive and engage all board members in the work that needs to be tackled.</li> <li>• It would be helpful to schedule periodic review of the Work Prioritization Spreadsheet throughout the year.</li> <li>• It would be good to use the Town Plan as one of the references for working on next year’s plan.</li> </ul>
	<p>06/06/15 – Meeting date  06/10/15 – Draft/unapproved minutes distributed and posted on website.  06/15/15 – Final/approved minutes approved  06/16/15 – Approved minutes sent to Town Clerk for recording &amp; website posting</p>