

Town of New Lebanon
Comprehensive Plan Update Committee
Minutes – January 21, 2020

Present: Jesse Newton, Cynthia Creech, Jim Carroll, Greg Hanna, David Farren, Steven Muse, Winfried Fuchshofen; Deb Gordon, Michelle Bienes and Ted Salem

1. Committee vacancy – The committee welcomed Michelle Bienes as our new community member.
2. Grant application – David and Winfried are working on this. The Greenway grant is due 2/7. The town board’s resolution in support is already in hand. **Ted will provide David with a budget and task list. Cynthia will work with Grow the Valley for a letter of support and Michelle with the school Superintendent. CAC may also supply one. (If members can think of anyone else, let David know.) Ted will give bullets to Cynthia and Michelle**
3. Takeaways from previous public participation – The committee approved the DRAFT summary of past public participation with modifications: The first statement of what residents want should read: “A rural character/protect natural resources.” Essential features for the last item related to public institutions should specifically say “government.” Add “renewable energy” and associated essential features. The updated the table accompanies these minutes. (Renewable energy may need refinement.)
4. How obtain public participation for the current plan update – There was robust discussion centered around the timing for obtaining public input, specifically, whether to do so before or after drafting the plan. There was also discussion about the methods to be used. Per the task summary below, the committee decided to pursue several modes of participation, including a survey, topic-specific focus groups, a community forum and a public hearing.
 - a. Develop and conduct a validation survey of all households. Use the “takeaways from past participation as a basis and ask residents to rate statements on a Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree scale. We will supplement a mailed survey with in-person booth at the mall and other methods. We will also use the survey to notify the public of the focus groups. **Jim will draft a survey and send around for comment.** We will also pull together a list of community groups. **Michelle will coordinate**
 - b. Conduct topic specific focus groups to tease out community views about the overall strategies inherent in the list on the table. **Cynthia and Deb will group the 9 items into 4 or so focus group topics and send around for comment.** We will also consider doing more generic focus groups with specific groups or organizations such as seniors, LVHS/Historian, sportspeople, etc.
 - c. Draft the plan. This includes updating the demographic tables and maps, but does not include the action plan
 - d. Conduct a community forum(s) to get comments on the DRAFT plan and tease out priorities in order to sequence action plan items.

e. Refine plan based on forum feedback and develop action plan and generic environmental impact statement

f. Review with Town Board and refine as needed.

g. Hold public hearing and refine as needed.

5. Consultant Procurement – With the task list in hand, **Ted will develop an RFP** to obtain consulting services. The main tasks for the consultant are: update demographics and maps (as needed); facilitate community forum; draft action plan; facilitate public hearing.

6. Project Plan – Norman Rasmussen asked for a project plan for this project as he will be performing project management activities relative to the various projects being undertaken by the town. **Ted will flesh out the above task list and insert timeframes.** This is needed for the grants David and Winfried are working on anyway.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at 6:30 PM at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Salem, Chair

DRAFT – 1-22-2020

Takeaways from Previous Public Participation Surveys and Workshops

(2005 Comprehensive Plan; 2014 Behan Hamlet Revitalization, 2017 Library Community Conversations)

Residents want New Lebanon to provide:	Essential features:
A rural character/protect natural resources	open spaces, active farms, scenic roadways and view sheds, clean air and water, low density housing and commercial structures
A physically attractive place to live and work	well-maintained properties and structures; zoning rules enforced; design standards for structures/signs create positive “first impression” for travelers
An enriched lifestyle	community center (senior/youth/recreation center); recreational and social activities; historic and cultural resources and events; entertainment
A cohesive, caring community	trust, togetherness, tolerance for differing views/lifestyles; address varied housing, employment and social needs
A town center	a place to gather, interact, stroll and shop; safe, pedestrian-friendly; attracts
Ready access to the basics	grocery store and (or with) pharmacy
Sustainable economic development	serves the needs of the town and its environs; provides job opportunities for town residents, helps to lower property taxes
A destination for tourists/visitors	brings in “outside money;” creates jobs focus on recreational/natural resources benchmark event; board of tourism
Efficient, cost-effective and responsive public institutions	listen and respond to resident needs; enforce rules; effective town government, schools
Renewable energy opportunities	Facilitate solar, wind and other renewable, non-polluting energy