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REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD MEETING
HELD ON JUNE 19, 2001

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting of the Strategic Planning Board was called to order at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 19, 2001, in the Town Council Chambers, by Chair Lesly Smith. On roll call, the following board members were found to be in attendance: Chair Lesly Smith, Vice-Chair Bruce McAllister, Board Members William Cooley, Alec Flamm, and William E. Hutton III. Board Member William Watchman, Jr. was not in attendance. Also present were: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Town Attorney John Randolph, and Deputy Town Clerk Susan Eichhorn.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Agenda was approved through motion of Vice-Chair McAllister, seconded by Board Member Hutton. On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD MEETING ON MAY 16, 2001

The Strategic Planning Board Meeting Report of May 16, 2001, was approved through motion of Vice-Chair McAllister, seconded by Board Member Cooley. On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD MEETING OF JUNE 19, 2001

V. REVIEW OF WALLACE ROBERTS & TODD'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE TOWN'S STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS (See "An Approach to Meeting the Strategic Planning Challenge," Submitted by Wallace Roberts & Todd)

Board Member Flamm distributed a draft mission statement to the Board for use as a working document. He noted that it was intentionally over-broad as it hoped to achieve two things: 1) agreement from the Board about the mission statement; 2) a document that could be communicated to the community to solicit their input.

Mr. John Fernsler of Wallace Roberts & Todd, explained that a mission statement ought to include clarification that the Board was acting in an advisory capacity, that it would focus attention on strategic issues, that it would listen to the community, and that it would identify specific actions in the strategic plan. He reviewed the document "An Approach to Meeting the Strategic Planning Challenge," which included an overview, the purpose of a strategic plan, preliminary issues identification, proposed strategic planning process, proposed strategic planning schedule, and a reading list.

Vice-Chair McAllister suggested that more specifics be included in the mission statement regarding how the Board would accomplish its goal; for example, there were various commissions/boards, as well as Town staff, who had tremendous amounts of data that the Board needed to absorb and present to the community in an easily understood form, so that the community could start out with a broad consensus and a factual basis from which to develop a vision. He suggested that more specifics should be provided about what the Board intended to do in terms of getting the community input – the mission statement should include a charge to the Board to create community forums, surveys, etc., so that the community knows that its views will be sought in a variety of ways; the community and the Board could then together form a vision statement.

Board Member Hutton commented that he saw the Board as a coordinator with the community, suggesting meetings be held with associations in the community on an informal basis, with the information used by the Board to assist in creating a vision statement.

Town Manager Elwell suggested that the mission statement formulated for the Board establish the overall objective of what would be achieved; something more concise than the working document submitted by Mr. Flamm; then a longer document would outline how the Board intended to reach that objective – something about the strategic planning process. In addition, he suggested that the Board consider the degree to which the Town Council had asked it to address issues, as opposed to broader strategic vision – the more particular issues would be addressed within the framework of the strategic plan, however, he expressed concern that the Board may attempt to have the strategic plan address every particular issue facing the community in great detail, as there were already policy making bodies established for that purpose.

Board Member Cooley suggested that a draft mission statement be prepared, with a combination of opinions as well as the recommendations of Mr. Fernsler, for comments and discussion at the next meeting.

In response to Chair Smith, Mr. Fernsler advised that he would submit a proposal regarding costs for his participation and assistance to the Board – his current charge usually was $200 per hour.

Chair Smith responded that it was her feeling that Mr. Fernsler would be instrumental in running the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) groups, with a better result than the members of the Board trying to direct the groups.

Board Member Flamm commented that he did not believe that the recommended technical advisory board was needed – another layer of bureaucracy would be created, and input could be sought from the appropriate people when needed; liaison people could be identified and kept informed on issues.

Town Manager Elwell agreed and commented that staff members serving on a formal/official technical advisory committee may be hindered by what they could discuss with each other, as they would also be subject to the Sunshine Law.

Mr. Fernsler noted that it was important to differentiate between the "mission" statement and the "vision" statement: a mission statement would highlight action verbs... to serve, produce, build, grow, etc.; a vision statement would entail what the community seeks to be in the future, using adjectives to describe the place, and the future desired characteristics of the community. He explained that the definition of key issues that were not now getting necessary attention would establish the contents of the strategic plan; the reaction of the public to these key issues would need to be considered in coming to consensus on key issues. He identified key issues as one or more of the following: deficiencies, needs, trends, opportunities, constraints, and vulnerabilities.

Board Member Flamm pointed out that it was not the role of the Strategic Planning Board to address problems that other entities were already working on, i.e., zoning, drainage.

Mr. Fernsler responded that although immediate concerns would be heard in the community forums; it was important to reference the mission statement with the notation that certain types of issues would be excluded; for example, drainage may be a severe problem, however, efforts were being made to address it and the Strategic Planning Board did not need to address it, as it was being taken care of by others.

Chair Smith noted that some residents believed that the Strategic Planning Board would be a cure-all, and that it was very important to clarify that the Board was not dealing with immediate questions, such as mega mansions, flooding, beach restoration, taxes. The Board would not be changing Town policy – all recommendations would be turned in to the Town Council as the ultimate authority.

Mr. Fernsler replied that the primary focus of the Strategic Planning Board was to address issues and policy, as opposed to operations; the Board could consider strategic approaches as to how to manage a problem, for example it could consider how the Town was addressing the redevelopment issue – advice could then be offered to the Town Council to give direction to create certain types of regulatory structures.

Chair Smith responded that the Board would not be addressing issues, such as redevelopment in July 2001, however, may be addressing such issues in March 2002 – many thought that these problems would be dealt with by the Board right now, however, that was not the purpose of the Board. She suggested that it was important the Board construct a mission statement that would describe what the Board would be doing initially, and have the public understand that certain problems that they believed had not been addressed, i.e., drainage, would not be passed over to the Strategic Planning Board.

Mr. Fernsler commented that the Strategic Planning process sometimes would identify an issue that was of such urgency that it would require immediate action.

Board Member Flamm noted that the reason for immediate action on an urgent issue was that if the problem was not solved in the short term, it would interfere with the achievement of the vision statement.

Mr. Fernsler noted that the Town Council had specified that the Strategic Plan be submitted for its consideration by May 2003, or approximately two years from the initiation of the effort; in his experience that was more time than may be required – he suggested that the effort should require no more than 18 months to complete, culminating in the submission of a Draft Strategic Plan for Town Council consideration by October 2002, and documentation of the final Strategic Plan by November 2002. He identified the following phases:

Phase One: Project Organization and Mobilization (June 2001 through September 2001): The consultant and the Strategic Planning Board will confirm the planning approach, establish working arrangements, review existing databases, conduct initial informal stakeholder interviews, and schedule the initial community forum, to be held in October 2001. In addition, members of existing boards and commissions may be invited to participate in a Technical Advisory Committee during this period.

Phase Two: Community Perceptions and Vision (October 2001 through February 2002):

Phase Two will occur throughout the Fall-Winter 2002 peak season. Using input from the first community forum in October 2002, consultant and Strategic Planning Board will prepare a draft Vision Statement for public review and comment in a second community forum in February 2002.

Phase Three: Alternative Scenarios, Concept and Strategies (March 2002 through June 2002):

Phase three may overlap in part with Phase Two, as work in preparing the information base may begin during preparation of the Vision Statement. If necessary, a third community forum and/or public survey may occur in June 2002.

In response to Chair Smith, Mr. Fernsler advised that in his experience, strategic plans were more often than not accepted, rather than adopted, particularly if an immediate next step was suggested, such as the creation of a new comprehensive plan.

Vice-Chair McAllister stated that in order to discuss an issue, the Board would need to focus on specifics, obtain the opinions of the public, and ensure that the data was being understood correctly.

Mr. Fernsler suggested that the Strategic Plan be thought of as having three chapters: chapter one would say this is the kind of community we choose to be; chapter two would identify the rate at which we are having changes, and the future vulnerability; chapter three would identify what would be done about an issue; identify a resolution of an issue. He noted that the function of the Zoning Board, for example, was reactive – to enforce the codes and regulations now existing; he suggested that there be a collaboration between the community, the Strategic Board and the Zoning Board that would aid in strategic planning, helping to craft a tool to address the issue.

Mr. Jim Bertles, Chairman of the Zoning Commission, commented that he believed that the Town and the members of the various commissions were counting on the Strategic Planning Board to build a model of where the Town ought to be; he suggested that the Strategic Planning Board should not tell the commissions what they already knew, but tell them what Palm Beach should look like 20 years from now – the balance between the business and residential community, the balance between permanent and year round citizens. He suggested that the existing problems be identified as well as the problems that may be foreseen, the issues could then be delegated to the Town Council and the other Town bodies. He suggested that once the Strategic Planning Board figured out what it was supposed to do, that the meetings be made more public – attendance by members of various commissions and others that would be important to have involved in the process was necessary in order to help the Board make decisions.

In response to Vice-Chair McAllister, Mr. Bertles advised that a joint meeting with the Zoning Commission, Landmarks Preservation Commission, Architectural Commission and staff had not yet occurred, however it was in the planning process. He suggested that the Strategic Planning Board keep the commissions apprised, send them copies of any pertinent documents, and copies of the reports of the Strategic Planning Board.

Chair Smith suggested that the Zoning Commission discuss what they feel the Strategic Planning Board should be addressing at one of their regular meetings, and provide the Board with any pertinent information. She suggested that the Architectural Commission and Landmarks Preservation Commission also add the Strategic Planning Board as an agenda item for discussion.

Mr. Bertles suggested that an appropriate packet of information be gathered to send to the members of the various commissions, with a letter addressing the issues that were of concern to the Strategic Planning Board, and identifying the dates of its meetings.

Town Council President Pro-Tem McLendon commented that he was very pleased and proud to have the Strategic Planning Board in existence.

Board Member McAllister expressed concern that the timetable included in the proposed strategic planning schedule was too short – he suggested that there be two to three community forums, with a late October/early November timetable. He questioned how the data would be collected, how relationships would be created with organizations that would help the Board?

Mr. Fernsler clarified that the phases were suggestions as to the window within which certain phases would be performed.

Town Manager Elwell advised that staff could provide the Board with copies of documents that the Board ought to be aware of; he suggested that the Board meet face-to-face with senior staff that were responsible for analyzing data and managing the Town on a daily basis. He expressed concern with addressing the nuts and bolts details too early in the process, as it may take away from the broader vision of the Strategic Planning Board.

Board Member McAllister commented that an approach to the data was needed – some sort of roadmap or organizational structure which would help in absorbing the data. He suggested that meetings with one or two department heads, and/or chairmen of commissions may be a good idea.

Town Manager Elwell responded that he had been speaking to input from staff, as input from commissions was a whole separate process; staff could provide assistance in a more pinpointed way.

Chair Smith suggested that each Board member identify specific questions for the different department heads, with individual meetings then being set up with them; she cautioned that she did not want to create a situation where members of the public were interrogating the department heads about subjects that had nothing to do with the Strategic Planning Board.

Town Manager Elwell commented that staff was a resource to provide information to the Strategic Planning Board, and any concern by any Board member could be addressed by staff.

Ms. Polly Earl, Director of the Preservation Foundation, offered to provide the Board with the Preservation Foundation booklet that had started to address the issues of monster houses and jack-in-the-box houses, which would give a very brief look at the characteristics of the Palm Beach style, and the types of things that should be looked at when considering out of scale houses. She also offered a copy of the address delivered by Andres Duany in Palm Beach, which had been very well received. She explained that both of these things were the conceptual basis for addressing zoning concerns, and were directly relevant to Palm Beach.

Chair Smith suggested that the Preservation Foundation send concerns/questions to the Strategic Planning Board as it developed a mission and vision statement.

Board Member Cooley suggested that a more formal request, in the form of a letter from the Chair, be made for input from various boards/commissions/associations.

Board Member McAllister stated that he supported that suggestion. He explained that he had originally thought that it would be useful for two or more members of the Board to meet with groups during the summer, but would now withdraw that suggestion, because of the complications of the Sunshine Law, and because it now appeared to him that there was a tremendous amount of sheer fact gathering to be done. He proposed that letters from the Strategic Planning Board be sent, requesting for formal presentations from various organizations/groups in the community. He encouraged each member of the Board to informally, on a one-by-one basis, seek out information from stakeholders in the community.

Board Member Flamm suggested that the mission statement be created as soon as possible, and that it then be sent to the various community organizations/associations, as well as the various commissions, to request questions/concerns, to inform them when the community forums would be held, why their input was desired, and to encourage them to inform their members of the community forums.

Town Manager Elwell advised that staff would provide a draft letter to various organizations/associations at the next Strategic Planning Board meeting; at that time the mission statement would be finalized, and the Board could formulate a list of the organizations that would receive the letter. He advised that Mr. Fernsler would furnish samples of mission statements from other communities to the Board for review; he indicated that the Board members could then provide input towards a working document on an individual basis to him prior to the meeting – copies would be circulated prior to the meeting for review. He suggested that Board input be submitted sometime during the first week of July.

Chair Smith noted that Board Member Watchman would be provided a copy of the report from today's meeting, as well as any necessary data, so that he could participate in the process discussed today.

Mr. Fernsler advised that he would be responsive to the needs of the Board – he would furnish a cost proposal that would be based on the most that he could imagine that the Board would require from him.

Town Manager Elwell acknowledged that the cost proposal from Mr. Fernsler may not be concrete for budgeting purposes; however, there would always be the opportunity to draw on the contingency within the general fund. He noted that if additional monies were needed before the August Town Council meeting he would need advice in that regard today.

Mr. Fernsler encouraged the Board to do as much on their own initially; he suggested that some form of communication be put out to the public as to the mission statement, the process, and the opportunities for public input.

Town Manager Elwell commented that information could be put on the Town web page for review of the public.

Mr. Fernsler suggested that he act as master of ceremonies at the community forums, giving instructions to the Board members as facilitators approximately forty-five minutes in advance of the meetings.

Chair Smith suggested that the community forums be scheduled at the September Strategic Planning Board meeting, with the input of Mr. Fernsler.

Mr. Fernsler suggested that the community forums be held in a fairly sequential manner, as if they were staged weeks apart there was a risk of having the same individuals coming to each one.

After further discussion concerning the fee of Mr. Fernsler, Board Member Cooley moved approval of a not-to-exceed figure of $15,000 to be budgeted for the period between now and October 1, 2001. The motion was seconded by Board Member Flamm. On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FACT FINDING PROCESS AND ASSIGNMENTS FOR SMALL GROUP CONTACTS (See Letter Dated June 6, 2001, Submitted by Strategic Planning Board Vice Chairman Bruce McAllister)

As noted above, Vice-Chair McAllister withdrew this request.

VII. NEXT MEETING: July 11, 2001 AT 1:00 P.M. or JULY 12, 2001 AT 9:30 A.M.

Town Manager Elwell indicated that the following items would be included on the agenda for the July 11, 2001, Strategic Planning Board meeting:

1. The mission statement would be created by the Board.

2. He would provide a draft letter for submission to be provided to various organizations/associations, as well as a draft list of those to receive it.

3. The Board would agree upon the content of the letter, any attachments to the letter, as well as a list of organizations to whom it would be sent.

VIII. ANY OTHER MATTERS

Vice-Chair McAllister suggested that Mr. Elwell organize a guided tour of the existing documents, data, plans, etc. - information regarding resources the Town consumed on a daily basis.

Mr. Fernsler suggested that a thick looseleaf binder be developed to keep all appropriate documents – a "data book" would be a subset of the binder, which was raw information about the Town. He advised that he would provide examples of what should be included in the binder. He also suggested that a special meeting of the Strategic Planning Board be held, where each department head would present information as to important items.

Town Manager Elwell advised that he would work with Mr. Fernsler and staff to develop something to present to the Board; he suggested that the Board hear from the department heads at the August Strategic Planning Board meeting.

In response to Vice-Chair McAllister regarding communicating with department heads, Mr. Elwell suggested that further discussion would evolve after the August Strategic Planning Board meeting, when department heads would provide information.

Chair Smith suggested that a letter eventually be sent to Warren Newell, Chairman, Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners, to advise him of the strategic planning process and to request input.

Board Member Flamm suggested that the Board consider having a SWOT session with the

Assistant Town Manager and the Town department heads to get their input on Town strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from their vantage point.

Chair Smith commented that a SWOT session would be more beneficial if staff did the exercise privately, with the results provided at the August Board meeting.

Town Manager Elwell indicated that a SWOT exercise would be conducted with staff, with results submitted for discussion at the August meeting.

Mr. Fernsler explained that the community forums typically lasted for approximately two hours; the layout of the room was very important, where people could gather around tables.

Chair Smith clarified that Mr. Fernsler would not be present at the July 12, 2001, Strategic Planning Board meeting.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The Strategic Planning Board Meeting of June 19, 2001 was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

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Mayor Lesly Smith
Chair, Strategic Planning Board

Report Prepared by:
Susan Eichhorn
Deputy Town Clerk