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Strategic planning board report 3-14-02

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON MARCH 14, 2002

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Strategic Planning Board Meeting was called to order by Chair Lesly Smith at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 14, 2002, in the Town Council Chambers. On roll call the following Board Members were found to be present: Chair Lesly Smith, Vice-Chair Bruce McAllister, Board Members William Cooley, Alec Flamm, and William Watchman, Jr. Also present for all or a portion of the meeting were: Town Manager Peter Elwell (via conference call), Town Council President Pro-Tem Norman Goldblum, 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 Board Member Watchman, seconded by Board Member Cooley. On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD MEETING ON FEBRUARY 14, 2002

Board Member Cooley moved approval of the Report of the Strategic Planning Board Meeting held on February 14, 2002. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair McAllister, and carried unanimously on roll call.

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON MARCH 14, 2002

V. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Discussion began of the "Outline of Environmental Scan" document submitted by Town Manager Elwell. Mr. Fernsler noted that there were nine topics included, and that the currency and adequacy of information available varied greatly from topic to topic.

In response to Board Member Watchman, Town Manager Elwell explained that item I. - Overall Demographic Trends, included population figures, and demographic shifts within those figures.

Vice-Chair McAllister questioned the procedure as to how applications, such as the Worth Avenue Trolley, were handled administratively. He suggested that such applications, that may affect the quality of life in Palm Beach, could be included under a topic, "Staff Management of the Town/Internal Procedures."

Mr. Fernsler suggested that although item IV. - Controlling Development and Redevelopment, included a thorough examination of regulatory controls, the Board may wish to consider the actual growth trends and susceptibilities that exist on the Island – for example, if the

issue of staying on top of redevelopment patterns became an issue, the Board may choose to see where redevelopment had occurred over the past several year, as well as a depiction in some manner of the net composite limits on growth, based on the identified levels of service.

Mr. David Barton commented that he had spoken with the assistant manager of Publix Supermarket, which was the only grocery store on the Island, who had expressed interest in obtaining the parking lot located behind them, however, they would not be able to afford the costs without the partnership of the Town. He also suggested that the communications of the Town to the public and vice versa needed improvement.

Chair Smith suggested that a separate category, Public Communication, be added to the environmental scan outline.

Mr. Barton suggested that on-Island health facilities be included under category VIII. - Off-Island Facilities.

Town Manager Elwell suggested that the issue of limits on growth based on identified levels of service be inserted under item IV. - Controlling Development and Redevelopment, as item A. He suggested that the Publix Supermarket issue be considered under Item VII. -Traffic and Parking. He suggested that Public Communication and On-Island Medical Services should stand alone and should become items XI. And XII on the Environmental Scan Outline. Item X. would be Staff Management of the Town/Internal Procedures.

Town Council President Pro-Tem Goldblum commented that there had been more effective public communication, and suggested that further discussion may not be needed in that category.

Town Manager Elwell agreed that progress had been made in the area of public communication, however, there were also other items on the outline that had been somewhat addressed, and that would be discussed to some degree with the Board, so that it could be determined if more action was necessary in those areas.

In response to Board Member Cooley, President Smith advised that the public school would be making a presentation regarding its re-design to the Town Council on March 25, 2002, and that discussion of all schools in Town could be added as Item XIII on the Environmental Scan Outline.

Board Member Cooley suggested that the beach renourishment project should be discussed by the Board.

Mr. Fernsler noted that there were a number of items that were not worthy of having their own category, but had been raised as issues. He suggested having a "Miscellaneous"

category, under which things such as noise, pets, Town aesthetics, landscaping, property inventory, historic resources, schools, etc. could be included.

Chair Smith noted that various department heads would be coming to the Board to discuss the items on the Environmental Scan Outline, and suggested that the Board decide which items would be discussed first.

Board Member Flamm suggested that Item III. - Infrastructure and Basic Services, be considered first, with Public Works Director Al Dusey addressing the issue.

Town Manager Elwell suggested that coastal management and traffic/parking also be included in the discussion that day.

Chair Smith clarified that the meeting would last all day if discussion of both items, and their related issues, took place; Public Works Director Al Dusey, Town Engineer Bowser, Finance Director Skittone, and perhaps the coastal engineers would be present to discuss coastal management.

Mr. Barton suggested that discussion should take place regarding the seawalls along Lake Worth, and whether there should be a transfer tax to pay for them. He explained that in some cases in the north end the seawalls had been raised voluntarily.

Chair Smith acknowledged that the subject of seawalls would be inserted under Item III. - Infrastructure and Basic Services - H. Utilities. She suggested that the infrastructure and basic service category be discussed first at the next Board meeting, with coastal management next.

Town Manager Elwell commented that staff would go into some depth in the discussion of items, to ensure that the history of each item was known, as well as the current plans for the future. He considered that once the Board had heard that discussion, further details delving deeper into the issues could be determined at the discretion of the Board. He commented that the source documents, available in the library behind the Town Council offices, would most likely be more valuable after the Board had heard the comments of staff.

Board Member Cooley commented that anyone considering reading the Town Coastal Management Plan should read the Peer Review first, in order to get a better prospective.

Former Town Manager Robert Doney suggested that the prioritization of consideration of items considered by the Board should focus on item V. -Security/Emergency Services.

Board Member Flamm commented that the Board would create a strategic plan, which would not be ready for another year and a half; it would then go to the Town Council for

approval; he considered that the Board should first consider what would have the maximum effect on the creation of the plan, such as the understanding of Town finances.

Board Member Watchman commented that the memorandum from Alec Flamm on capital expenditures was excellent; he explained that there had to be limits and some plan as to how those limits would be defined for funding purposes. He suggested that a sub-committee be created for studying the issue.

Former Town Manager Doney commented that the capital improvement program was the focal point for current events, however, security/emergency services still deserved some timely consideration.

Chair Smith replied that security/emergency services would indeed have timely consideration; there were many measures underway at this time, already in place, that would not be discussed publically.

Town Manager Elwell advised that the Outline of the Environmental Scan document would be updated and copies made available for all those who were interested.

Board Member Flamm commented that the Town was entering into a period of extremely high capital expenditures; the Board would need to make recommendations as to which expenditures were of the highest priority, and which could be safely deferred. He explained that he had suggested in his memorandum of March 6, 2002, that capital expenditures be categorized into three segments: must do, should do, and would like to do. He suggested that an example of a "must do" project would be: if a capital project was not accomplished a water main would break within three years; an example of a "should do" project would be things that staff would determine were meaningful projects, for example, the drainage project. He suggested that drainage was a high priority "should do" project, because the Town had been living with the effects of not doing it, albeit it some people had done so very uncomfortably. The debate of whether a project was a "should do" or a "must do" would tend to indicate that it was a very high priority "should do" project. The "would like to do" project would be, for example, putting in underground wiring. The dialogue that would take place in discussion of the prioritization of projects would help the Board understand the listing of the priorities, the magnitude of the dollars, the projected time expenditure, and funding.

Board Member Watchman suggested that some ground rules would be necessary before discussion took place on the priority of projects. He explained that, in his view, there was a contract between the taxpayer and the Town that required the Town to protect the taxpayer in terms of safety, health, and property to a reasonable degree. He noted that during the forums he had found that safety was a major issue with residents, and that he had not anticipated that – he had believed that zoning, and beach renourishment would be the priorities brought forth. He suggested that the Board think about ground rules in order to avoid spending a lot of time debating and discussing projects that would not take place.

Town Manager Elwell commented that he believed it was important for the Board to see what had occurred, what was occurring, and what was concretely planned for the future at the April 11th meeting. Unless the Board wished to make some comment on those projects already approved by the Town Council, the discussion would be quite limited as it related to those items. The financing alternatives available to the Town for the major work to be done would then be discussed. He explained that the difference between the G.O. bond and revenue bond would be further investigated, and brought to the Town Council at the April 9, 2002, meeting. Staff recommendation was that the first half of the drainage project be funded with a bond, and that bonds be issued for the Fire-Rescue station and other Town facility work, although that was not a final decision at this point; there was still room for the Board to consider the financing in terms of long term financial planning, since the Town had not yet reached the point of issuing bonds for the work.

Board Member Flamm commented that at the next Board meeting, it would be helpful if the Board could obtain a feeling of what items were of highest priority, so that when the meeting was finished, the Board would know the costs, when the cash flow would take place, etc.

Town Manager Elwell replied that staff would present a prioritized list of projects; the distinction between "must do" and "should do" would be discussed; the Board would then be in a better position to identify the degree of discussion that would take place.

Mr. Fernsler noted that assigning relative importance to projects was a value judgment and a policy judgment, and was not the appropriate role of staff. He explained that the role of staff was to present the facts, and the consequences of not doing a project versus the consequences of doing the project. That would then enable the policy makers to objectively assign relative importance to projects.

Chair Smith requested that Board Member Watchman prepare the ground rules that would be used to evaluate and prioritize Town projects.

Board Member Flamm suggested that staff also share projects that staff has concerns about, but that were not planned projects, at the next meeting.

Mr. Fernsler suggested that both quantitative and qualitative measures of growth be considered; under the Comprehensive Plan the Town was required to establish certain levels of service standards, or limits to growth, based on quality of life issues. He suggested that the levels of service standards be examined to ensure that they were consistent with the vision statement; physical capacity of development and the degree of threat of over-development were also considerations, as well as whether the growth issues were Town-wide, or localized issues.

Board Member McAllister suggested that Town Attorney Randolph advise the Board

as to whether the combination of ordinances, zoning rules and regulations, and internal procedures of the Building Department, Zoning Commission, etc., were sufficient mechanisms with which to control growth.

Chair Smith suggested that Zoning Commission Chairman Jim Bertles be included when development was discussed at a future Strategic Planning Board.

Discussion took place regarding the circumstances that would be considered growth and the consequences of various regulatory tactics.

Board Member Flamm gave the following scenario: someone purchased two lots with 2,000 sf feet homes on them, and then built an 8,000 sf mansion, with run-off to the drainage system being no greater than the previous homes– he questioned if that would be considered growth.

Mr. Fernsler commented that the Board would carefully consider the adequacy of the Town's present tactic to deal with the scale issue; if the Board found that the tactic selected was to manage scale in proportion to the size of the lot, then that may accelerate the phenomenon of the consolidation of multiple lots to accommodate larger homes, as opposed to the different effectiveness of a tactic that would regulate the maximum scale of a home, regardless of the size of the lot.

Town Manger Elwell commented that Building Director Moore, Town Attorney Randolph, and Zoning Commissioner Bertles should be included in development discussion, to understand what the current zoning regulations of the Town controlled.

Mr. Barton commented regarding a building moratorium, the drainage requirements, and that the staff presentation to the Zoning Commission regarding a moratorium had been ludricious.

Former Town Manager Doney commented that the Zoning Commission and the Town Council fine tuned the zoning ordinance every year, and that there was a good process in place.

Board Member Flamm commented that every strategic direction would have a trade off, and a conscious choice would have to be made on each decision.

Mr. Fernsler suggested that the department heads and the Board should be reminded that the purpose of the environmental scan was not to receive an enormous quantity of information on issues which were well documented and well taken care of; it was precisely to the contrary – to identify issues that were not being well documented, or well understood. He considered that it was important to let the department heads know that the Board was as interested in the issues that had not been adequately considered, studied, documented, verified, etc., as opposed to simply hearing hours of documentation of the studies that have already been

done.

VI. ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were none.

VII. NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2002, AT 10:00 A.M. IN THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The next Strategic Planning Board meeting would take place at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 11, 2002, in the Town Council Chambers.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The Strategic Planning Board meeting of March 14, 2002, was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

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Chair Lesly Smith

Prepared by:
Susan Eichhorn
Deputy Town Clerk
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Future Scheduled Meetings:

April 11, 2002 @ 10:00 a.m. - Town Council Chambers
May 16, 2002 @10:00 a.m. - Town Council Chambers
June 13, 2002 @10:00 a.m. - Town Council Chambers
July 11, 2002 @10:00 a.m. - Town Council Chambers
August 2002 - meeting will not be held
September 12, 2002 @10:00 a.m. - Town Council Chambers
October 10, 2002 @10:00 a.m. - Town Council Chambers