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REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 10, 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, January 10, 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. Board Member William E. Hutton III was absent from the meeting. Also present for all or a portion of the meeting were: Town Attorney John Randolph, Town Manager Peter Elwell, Councilman Norman Goldbum, John Fernsler of Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC, 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 Alec Flamm. On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD MEETING ON DECEMBER 13, 2001, AND REPORTS OF NOVEMBER 15, 16, AND17, 2001.

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 10, 2002

The reports of the Strategic Planning Board of December 13, 2001, November 15, 16, and17, 2001 were approved through motion of Vice-Chair McAllister, seconded by Board Member Alec Flamm. On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

V. REVIEW OF DRAFT VISION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS' WRITTEN COMMENTS

Mr. Fernsler explained that the draft vision statement that he had prepared was constructed such that it synthesized the characteristics of the Town that citizens valued, based on the input from the community forums, with the achievements that maintained or enhanced those characteristics identified as of the year 2010.

Board Member Watchman commented that the draft vision statement was very well written, however, it did not make it clear that the achievements referred to the year 2010.

Board Member Flamm commented that the articulation of the vision statement must be uniquely straightforward. He explained that the community was currently fully developed, and the vision statement could be defined in a relatively simple manner – that the quality of life was basically satisfactory, however, those things that needed change/improvement must be identified on a priority basis. He suggested that it would be inappropriate to go into detail on specific items, since strategies had not yet been fully discussed.

Board Member Cooley commented that the draft vision statement was nicely done, however, there may be some editing that could be done. He noted that he also believed the description of the future Palm Beach could be clarified.

Chair Smith commented that the Board must determine which way the vision statement would be written – either the ten year result, or the vision for what would be in effect in ten years.

Mr. David Barton, 216 Jamaica Lane, commented that the current draft vision statement was wonderful as an insider document for the use of the Strategic Planning Board, however, he noted that he had written his own version of a draft vision statement which he distributed to each Board member. He explained that he believed his version would be better understood by the public. He presented a strategic planning matrix which summarized the concepts, contexts and conflicts related to strategic planning for the Town of Palm Beach, and a statement written by former Mayor Marix.

Vice-Chair McAllister commented that the draft vision statement submitted by Mr. Fernsler needed to recognize that there were tensions in the goals set forth – the efforts to achieve every single goal minimized, in some way, the ability to achieve other goals; he suggested that the pubic may be misled if a statement was published which indicated that all goals would be achieved. He suggested that the vision statement recognize that there were competing interests, that examples be used in the vision statement, i.e., when discussing beauty, mention a park, or Town Hall, etc., and that the public be presented with the final vision statement for approval and comments.

In response to Chair Smith regarding Town policy on handouts to the public, Town Manager Elwell replied that the back up for all public meetings was distributed to the membership, and was always available to the public in Town Hall. He noted that it was rarely distributed more broadly than that; at the Strategic Planning Board meetings copies of information had been made for the public in attendance on occasion.

Chair Smith suggested that a uniform policy be established that would include having the back up for the Strategic Planning Board meetings available at the Town Hall, with back up given to members of the Board, as well as to the members of the Town Council. She noted that it was anticipated that Town revenues would be down, and faxing voluminous materials to the public would not be a cost saving measure.

After further discussion relating to the draft vision statement, Town Manager Elwell commented that the longer and more detailed the vision statement was, the more difficult it would be for it to be a valuable communications tool. He suggested that the discussion today be focused on agreeing on a vision statement that would be brief, and concern the values expressed by the community, with a more detailed document being an accessory to the vision statement.

Zoning Commission Chairman James Bertles commented that the draft vision statement told everyone what was known, however, it had not, for example, addressed such issues as how to balance business/commercial. He stated that it had pointed out the various issues in a very broad manner, and that ultimately it would be the job of the Strategic Planning Board to indicate how a balance between business/commercial could be implemented, and then the Zoning Commission could help in developing regulations that would allow that balance to be fulfilled. In the same manner, the desired scale, character, and quality of structures in the Town would need to be specifically identified; the zoning districts must be reviewed, as well as the role of the Architectural Commission in the future as related to consistency in zoning applications. He stated that the Zoning Commission would be providing a statement identifying the various issues that it believed should be addressed by the Strategic Planning Board

Board Member Watchman commented that a strategic plan would call for strategies that related to various issues in the Town, and that it would provide direction for the groups that were dealing with those issues.

John Fernsler commented that it had been his understanding that the mandate for the Strategic Planning Board had been to identify initiatives that would need to begin in order to address challenges that were not being adequately addressed currently. He explained that there had not been a predetermined limit at what could be considered, and it was within the purview of the Board to take a broad scan of all current policy initiatives, including the work being done with regard to scale in neighborhoods. The Town Council would then consider the recommendations, and choose to direct various boards/entities to tweak ordinances, policies, and ongoing plans.

In response to the suggestion of Board Member McAllister regarding a sub-committee to draft the vision statement, Chair Smith replied that would be very difficult as it would involve choosing only certain members of the Strategic Planning Board, as well as the fact that all meetings must be held in the public.

Board Member McAllister explained that it had been his thought that the sub-committee would be made up of several volunteers. He suggested that perhaps a change in format of the meetings would allow more progress to be made, with a round table format provided to enable drafts being passed around, etc.

Town Manager Elwell suggested that the meeting room at the South Fire Rescue Station could be used for such a meeting. He suggested that the vision statement describe the community both as it existed and as it was desired to be; then the Board could move forward with the environmental scan, and the decisions that would need to be made about issues in order to formulate the strategic plan.

Board Member Cooley suggested that the Board hold a meeting in two weeks with the specific purpose of writing a vision statement.

Board Member Flamm expressed concern with the length of time being used in the creation of the vision statement, explaining that the bulk of the creative work should go into the development of the strategies related to the key issues.

Board Member McAllister agreed that the vision statement should not and could not be lengthy or overly detailed, however, the vision statement should recognize that some of the goals that were hoped to be achieved would also compete with each other; the vision statement would need to be infused with examples in order to indicate to the public that they had been heard and understood.

Resident William Guttman commented that he shared the concern of the length of time being used to create the vision statement; he suggested that the Board determine whether a generic, short vision statement was desired, or a longer version; he also suggested that it may be beneficial for Mr.

Fernsler and some volunteers from the Strategic Planning Board attempt to write a revised vision statement that could be circulated to the Board before the next meeting. In addition, he suggested that input be taken from the public in attendance today concerning what the vision statement should contain.

Chair Smith commented that if the vision statement got too specific, with examples being used, etc., some items may be left out that would then create more problems. She requested the comments of the Board in this regard.

Board Member Flamm commented that the vision statement should be generic; it would be premature to include specifics.

Board Member Cooley agreed with the statement of Board Member Flamm.

Board Member Watchman agreed that the vision statement should be generic and not too specific.

Board Member Watchman commented that it was very difficult for an entire group to create a document such as the vision statement; he suggested that perhaps a few Board members work with Mr. Fernsler to edit the document.

Chair Smith responded that would leave some members of the Board out, and that she did not see the point. She suggested that after the discussion that had taken place today, all Board members could re-write their own vision statement, with a meeting held in two weeks to review and discuss them.

Board Member McAllister agreed that a sub-committee would not work if selected by the Board; it would need to be self-selected by volunteerism or it would not work.

A Strategic Planning Board meeting was scheduled to be held on Wednesday, January 23, 2002 at 10:30 a.m. in the meeting room at the South Fire Rescue Station for the purpose of agreeing on the substance of the vision statement.

Town Manager Elwell clarified that each Board member would draft individual vision statements and submit them to his office by12:00 noon on January 18, 2002. He suggested that the six statements would then be distributed to the Board members so that each would be prepared to discuss them at the meeting.

In response to Chair Smith, Mr. Fernsler replied that many vision statements were of a one-page length, others were more specific and identified what was intended to be accomplished by the strategic plan. He suggested that it may be useful to identify the initiatives that reflected the will of the community.

Resident Gerald Frank commented that the vision statement should be brief; the strategic plan could address the details. He stated that the document submitted by Board Member Flamm was very suitable.

VI. UPDATE REGARDING PROPOSED TOWNWIDE TRAFFIC STUDY

Town Manager Elwell reported that funding in the amount of $7,500 had been approved by the Town Council in order to collect traffic data during peak season so that preparations could be made to move forward with a broader traffic study than the annual traffic counts allowed. He noted that he had received some comments of concern regarding doing a Townwide study because of the constraints of further development of roadways in the Town. He explained that because of those constraints the approach for the past several decades had been to identify problem locations, study those locations, and monitor annual traffic counts in particular areas that were of concern. He explained that ultimately it would need to be determined how broad a Townwide study would need to be, and what specific issues would need to be addressed.

Councilman Norman Goldblum commented that the changes being made by the City of West Palm Beach relating to Dixie Highway and Olive Avenue; as well as completion of the new bridge construction would need to be considered before any broad traffic study was done.

Board Member Flamm noted that the request for a traffic study had been made because the community had indicated that it was an important issue, and the Board also needed complete information in order to make recommendations.

Town Manager Elwell noted that the Competitive Consultants Negotiation Act procedure was required when professional consultants were hired by governmental entities. The process would entail several months, and staff would begin the process immediately. He noted that there was some breathing space available for the Board to reflect on the scope of the traffic study, and to receive additional input from staff as to the appropriate scale of the study. He explained that every year traffic counts were done at locations coordinated as problem intersections and areas of congestion; these studies were reviewed by staff for indications of worsening of levels of service for any particular area.

VII. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF OTHER MAJOR THEMES FOR STUDY/ANALYSIS

Town Manager Elwell reported that a library of documents included in the information gathered for the environmental scan had been created for the use of the Board. He suggested that a series of sessions with the Board to review issues with the applicable staff members may be necessary in order for a determination to be made of items of concern that were being addressed, and items of concern that were not being adequately addressed.

Chair Smith suggested that each Board member be prepared to determine what elements should be discussed first, and the appropriate staff members could then be available at the meeting scheduled on February 14, 2002.

Town Manager Elwell clarified that final action on the vision statement would be taken at the February 14, 2002 meeting, and direction would be received from the Board on the priority order of issues to be addressed with staff at future meetings. He indicated that it was the intent of staff to help the Board review documents; he noted that the drainage material provided had been voluminous, and that he had received feedback that the material was more burdensome and less helpful. He noted that there would be a Special Town Council meeting held on February 13, 2002 in this regard, and there would be much more evolution of the issues during the next several months, and the Strategic Planning Board members would be kept advised.

VIII. ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were none.

IX. PROPOSED NEXT MEETING DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2002, AT 10:00 A.M.

The next meeting of the Strategic Planning Board was scheduled for Wednesday, January 23, 2002 at 10:30 a.m. in the meeting room of the South Fire Rescue Station. The following meeting remained as scheduled on Thursday, February 14, 2002 at 10:00 a.m. in the Town Council Chambers.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Strategic Planning Board Meeting of January 10, 2002, was adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

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Chair Lesly Smith

Prepared by:

Susan Eichhorn
Deputy Town Clerk
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Next Scheduled Meetings:
January 23, 2002 @ South Fire Rescue Station
February 14, 2002 - Town Council Chambers