

DRAFT
Town of Raymond
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE MINUTES
Monday, April 14, 2003

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Stephenson (7:10), Co-Chair; Harold Burnham; John Rand; Ben Levy; Greg Foster; Charlie Turner; Charlotte Lester; Priscilla Rand (7:20); Jean Carter ; Charles Leavitt; Chris McClellan (7:15); and Brad McCurtain (7:20)

STAFF PRESENT: Rich Rothe, Planner; Amanda L. Simpson, Secretary

GUESTS: Sandra Caldwell, School Superintendent and Norma Richard, Elementary School Principal

1. **Call to Order:** In the absence of the co-chairs, C. Turner called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and turned the meeting over to R. Rothe to begin the discussion on land use.
2. **Minutes:** A. Simpson apologized for not having the minutes prepared for the meeting.

3. Discussion on Schools:

R. Rothe indicated that although the committee had worked on the Public Facilities section, the school portion had not been completed. He asked if S. Caldwell would share with the committee the goals of the schools with regard to facilities for the next 10 years and discuss the challenges.

B. Levy noted that is was page 8 of the handout.

S. Caldwell introduced herself as well as N. Richards. She stated that she had read the school section of the background information and had some additions and corrections.

- ◆ In 1997 the School Committee adopted a vision statement, a mission and guiding principles.
- ◆ The district has some unique programs that benefit the whole community such as RED extended day care program which provides families with day care from 6:30am to 6:00pm.
- ◆ In addition there is a mentoring program which has been cited as a state model.
- ◆ The district is currently working toward an independent adult education program, with the current program in conjunction with the towns of Gray and New Gloucester.
- ◆ Community use of buildings including athletics, adult programs and seminars.
- ◆ Pursuit of “One Raymond”, a program to evaluate the integration of school and municipal facilities and staff where feasible. One example of this is a Maintenance Director.
- ◆ Senior dinners are hosted by the school with the food service provider catering the meals. Typically there is a program or class along with the dinner.
- ◆ Recreation programs coordinated with other groups include skiing, swimming, tennis and running.

The school also maintains a close relationship with the library in the development of curriculum materials and additional reference materials for students. S. Caldwell stated that Raymond is very fortunate to have a great new elementary school, a renovated middle school and space to offer programs to the community.

G. Foster asked how many children are in the day care and if it was subsidized by the town. S. Caldwell responded that the day care is run by a separate non-profit with their own staff. The school provides the facility.

B. Levy asked if the schools were achieving their goals as outlined in the handout. N. Richards stated that they are currently working on a local assessment program. This is required by the state and they are currently behind schedule, mostly due to the focus on the building projects in the recent years. S. Caldwell added that they will begin reporting to the state this next year and that budgets are generated as a reflection of their goals. N. Richards noted that there is a “report card” issued and is located in the school calendar mailed each fall.

J. Stephenson asked about the Jordan-Small school. Are students attending college at a greater rate? S. Caldwell stated that now that Raymond has students going through 9 years of education in Raymond they will be tracked through high school as well.

C. Turner questioned the logic between the decrease in enrollments and enrollment projections as a contrast to the building boom. S. Caldwell stated it is unusual to see a decrease in enrollment between October and April. Typically there are one to two dozen new students coming in during the school year. J. Stephenson noted that we do have an aging population which might explain the drop. J. Carter stated that she understands that this is occurring state-wide, families are having fewer children. N. Richards confirmed that new parents do not typically enroll more than two students. Another factor may be the reduction of winter rentals and the seasonally influx of families during the school year.

J. Rand added that many new homes in Raymond are starter homes, which might cause a bubble in school enrollment in the coming years.

R. Rothe suggested that specific increase cannot be planned for. He is wondering if a high school is on the horizon. S. Caldwell responded that the district has a 10 year contract with Windham and a contract with Westbrook that ends in 2007. Their agreement with Poland has expired except for siblings of current students. The overall comment from school staff was that Raymond may need a new middle or elementary school before it would consider a high school.

Discussion continued about what feedback the district gets in terms of the desirability to live in Raymond because of the schools.

B. McCurtain asked about the cost per student. S. Caldwell explained that elementary/middle school students cost the town somewhat less than the state average while high school students are somewhat more than the average.

Other topics discussed were how private schools fit into the equation for high school, the effect of the new school on costs, use of LRHS, the adult education program, vandalism, use of schools by community groups, recruitment of teachers, increase in the school budget, work being done on curriculums, teacher training, kindergarten program, sharing of purchasing with neighboring towns, use of computers, safety in the schools, traffic in and around the schools, and the integration of special needs students.

Land Use Workshop

The committee discussed the date for a regional land use workshop and display for town meeting.

Options for Growth

R. Rothe asked if the committee would review the options laid out for land use policy. They can be reviewed separately and be combined in any manner for implementation.

- A. Status quo: This option would mean leaving the current policies and related regulation in place with some minor changes. There would be no changes in the growth and rural areas designated nor in the zoning districts.
- B. Building Cap: This would address the number of new home starts that would be permitted in a year. Housing starts cannot be stopped but can be slowed to a reasonable rate. This technique postpones growth. A selective cap in certain districts would also adjust growth geographically.
- C. Changes in lot sizes in current districts: this option would increase lot sizes in the rural districts and decrease them in the growth districts.
- D. Zone Changes: ideas include looking at new village districts, combining the rural districts.

J. Rand stated that the committee should adopt a standard by which to evaluate these options. The standard should come from the information already collected in the surveys of residents. These included preserving rural character and water quality to name a few. B. McCurtain responded that the status quo does not address these standards. C. McClellan said it would be interesting if the impact to the community from these options could be seen. C. Turner said that controlling the rate of growth to the average growth of Cumberland County would be an idea to pursue. B. McCurtain responded that it is a temporary solution and does not address the long-term growth impacts, but could provide some breathing room. He asked if building caps could be permanent. R. Rothe stated that a number of towns have had them in place for more than several years. There does not need to be an expiration date on them, however some towns adopt language that requires the cap to be revisited as a policy at a certain point.

Another solution discussed was buying land. R. Rothe indicated that a town's buying power typically causes this to have a minute effect on growth. J. Rand stated that it sounds like a combination of these tools is the right way to go. H. Burnham wants to look at each and have a clear understanding of the impacts.

C. McClellan said she supported a combination of B & D.

H. Burnham moved to discuss the status quo as an option. The motion was seconded by C. Turner. During the discussion A. Simpson talked about Cost of Community Services studies and the results, that open space costs towns the least, then industrial, commercial and residential. No matter what kind and how much growth taxes will increase in a typical community as the population increases.

J. Stephenson asked if there was a vote to withdraw the motion.

C. Turner moved to eliminate the status quo as a viable solution. C. McClellan seconded. Discussion about tabling the motion ensued.

J. Stephenson indicated that it seemed to be a general consensus to table the discussion. B. McCurtain moved to table the discussion. With a second by G. Foster, the motion passed unanimously.

The committee continued the discussion started earlier about the need to have a presence at town meeting and how that would occur.

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 28 at a location not yet determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda L. Simpson, AICP
Assessing/CEO Assistant