

Rumney Planning Board
Master Plan Hearing
April 5, 2012

The Rumney Planning Board convened at the Russell Elementary School for a public hearing on the updated town Master Plan. Tom Grabiek opened the hearing at 7:00 pm. Present were Planning Board members Tom Grabiek, Kathy Wallace, David Coursey, Brian Flynn, and Mark Andrew-Selectmen's liaison to the Board.

Tara Bamford, North Country Council, coordinator of the plan was present.

Town residents present were: Richard Winpenny, Tom Wallace, Kathy Grabiek, Gary McCool, David Saad and halfway through the meeting Sharon Seabrook joined.

Also in attendance were 10 members of the sophomore class at Plymouth Regional High School, Civics class doing a report on the format of the hearing. They included Hannah Winpenny, Amanda Proia, Abby Hill, Allie Trojano, Sam Dimick, Sarah Lachapelle, Ohmkit Patel, Stephanie Aube, Jacob Buford, Dylan McIntosh accompanied by parent David Lachapelle.

The Chair opened the hearing with an explanation of the Master Plan that it is required by the State of New Hampshire, and is required to be updated every 5 to 10 years. Rumney's plan had not been updated since its inception back in 1985. Several attempts had been started over the years and the Board finally recruited the services of North Country Council, Tara Bamford, to finalize this process.

Tom Wallace, Library Trustee, spoke of a change they requested within the library section regarding pointing a chimney. He felt it would be completed prior to the printing of the M. P. and it was a definite project being mentioned. Tara stated it helps if applying for grants when a specific project is defined in the plan. Tom W. felt a project such as reviewing how to make it more energy efficient would be more appropriate to mention in the plan.

David Saad, Facilities Committee, stated the committee never made a priority list. They had identified issues, but never made recommendations. Tom Wallace, of the same committee, stated they had summarized, but not allocated priorities. The Chair questioned what was negative about this and they both suggested we change "recommended" to "identified" in the plan, for the library section and the highway department. Further discussion regarding the facilities committee led the Chair to suggest he would check with Janice Mulherin, chairman of that committee, and determine the process used. They will contact the members of that committee and review the list as presented to the PB before Wednesday, April 11, 2012.

Kathy Wallace stated there were a couple of additions she would like to see to the plan. One concerned the cemetery and digitizing of the records. Tara stated that was not a concern of the Master Plan. Secondly she wanted to add test results of the water quality from the Baker River from prior years as done by the Baker River Watershed Assoc. Instead of adding prior year's information, it was decided to add the web site to the appendix and all results could be accessed.

David Saad questioned the MP being policy and not regulatory. The process and use of the MP was reviewed again and it was explained it was compiled from citizen's information provided at the Community Profile and from the PB's questionnaire. Richard Winpenny questioned how many questionnaires were sent and how many responses were received – the result was a 13% return of the questionnaires. He further questioned where he could access the entire plan and was told on line at the town website.

David Saad questioned the wording “discourage building in a floodplain”. Tom Grabiak stated it was for public safety, public health concerns, DES regulations, wetland destruction and the need to protect people downstream from debris and septic discharge and other chemical of toxic waste affecting water quality. We can only discourage at this time. The future could see an ordinance or regulation passed to prevent it entirely. Mark A. stated different wording in future updates to the MP could reflect this change.

Gary McCool stated he was impressed with the updated MP and thanked all involved with this process. He liked the history and the vision presented and did remark on the absence of “zoning”. He further stated the important role and legal weight the plan holds. Courts have upheld issues discussed in a MP.

Richard W. stated he felt this was a precursor to zoning and was very concerned for his future plans for a farm on his 20 a. abutting the Baker River, much of it lying in the floodplain. He hoped to build on the land, have cattle, horses and a barn. The Chair told him this plan was not a regulation that would prohibit his farm. David S. felt the tone of the plan did discourage building in the floodplain. Tara stated the 1985 plan did mention the possibility of zoning in the future – this plan does not state that. He still questioned the chance of a regulation being passed. Kathy W. stated if any such regulation did pass it would be because the town's people wanted it. It would have to be voted in at town meeting. The Board could not institute a regulation.

Sharon Seabook questioned the legal standing of the MP and if it would have the strength to stop “Northern Pass” or other such situation. It was explained that it would give the town a basis for denial but would probably not stop the

Federal or State Government from proceeding with such projects simply because it might be opposed by the Town of Rumney and its citizens.

The Chair stated any changes would be made and the updated Master Plan would be finalized and voted on at the next Planning Board meeting.

The hearing adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Diana Kindell
Clerk