

Bow Master Plan

Community Visioning Session Summary

Wednesday, May 11, 2016 6:30 PM

Bow High School



Introduction

Mike Tardiff, Executive Director of the Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC), and Matt Taylor, Director of Community Development for Bow, welcomed participants to the session and reviewed the agenda for the evening. Mike also reviewed the purpose of a master plan and the role the visioning session plays in the development of a master plan.

Presentation of Survey Results/Review of Current Demographic Trends

Mike Tardiff shared the current survey results that will be used as part of the agenda for each of the breakout groups and described the current demographic trends for Bow and the surrounding region. He explained that the breakout groups are designed to provide important information for each of Bow's Master Plan chapters that are currently under development.

Summary of Breakout Groups

Land Use and Economics

Planning Board members: Betsey Patten, Don Berube, and Chris Nicolopoulos

CNHRPC Facilitators: Craig Tufts and Mike Larson

Economic Development and Commercial Land Uses:

- Participants supported the separation of commercial and industrial zones from the rural and residential portions of town.
- Attendees favor the idea of carving out an area along the River in the commercially zoned part of Town with public access to the river, including the use of existing conservation or Town-owned properties/accesses.
- It was agreed by those present to make the best use out of the existing public water in the commercial zones.
- There was a consensus that Bow should be proactive in encouraging businesses. A good website is important, but it is more important to proactively reach out and tell people about Bow.

- There was support for the Business Development Commission and their mission.
- As for attracting businesses, it was felt that Bow should play to its strengths in attracting businesses that Bow is a good fit for (location, access to highways, etc). Logistics companies were mentioned as “good fits.”
- Rail access was noted as a Town asset. One prospective business and other existing businesses were noted as being interested in Bow for this reason.
- A secondary idea for business types was to entice medical offices such as a branch of Concord Hospital or high-tech.
- There was an understanding that the Eversource coal-fired power plant may not be operating in the long-term, and to proactively seek alternative uses for the area in the event the coal fired plant is shut down. Uses that take advantage of the existing utility infrastructure (power lines) and rail access seemed most appropriate.
- There was consensus that there is no need to re-zone any more residential land to commercial uses.
- Find a buyer and good use/tax base for the “Mill lot.”
- It was agreed that options for higher energy efficiency should be explored.

Rural/Residential Land Use:

- Concerning the rural development in Town, it was felt that the land use and housing types should be similar to what Bow currently has.
- There was support for conservation subdivisions where homes are clustered in order to protect open space.
- It was noted that Bow has overall done a good job of maintaining trail access when new housing is being built, however this could be built upon or improved. Some attendees felt that the land set aside for trail use is oftentimes not suitable for trails because of steep slopes or wetlands.
- Formalizing existing trails through use agreements for summer use was seen as a good idea.

Village Area:

- Attendees overall liked the idea of creating a village. There was some regret that past plans and visions have not come to fruition or that opportunities have been lost.
- It was noted that plans in the past have not been approved because of the increase in taxes since the original design charrettes in the 90s.
- The preferred location for a village is in the area is the area around the Gazebo, with green space along the pond. The concept was for municipal buildings to be clustered there.
- The idea of a commercial/mixed use type village was discussed, and a consensus was that if it did happen it would be small with perhaps a coffee shop/convenience store gathering place and a post office. It was noted that such businesses might not be economically viable.

- There was a consensus that the Town should not give up on the concept of a village and that perhaps continued discussion, visioning, and charrettes may be in order.
- The possibility of adding sidewalks to the intersection at the gazebo, specifically on part of White Rock Rd, was discussed.

Housing and Community Facilities

Planning Board Members: Willis Sloat, Art Cunningham **Selectman:** Harold Judd

CNHRPC and Bow Facilitators: Matt Monahan, CNHRPC and Matt Taylor, Bow Community Development Director

Participants shared what they liked and disliked or felt needed improvement in Bow. This information will be used as the vision statements are developed and master plan chapters are prepared.

Like

- Proximity to Manchester and Concord
- Schools
- Rural Character/Open Space
- Trails
- Community Spirit/Volunteers
- Sports facilities
- Library
- Variety (housing)

Dislike/Needs Improvement

- Roads/paving
- Promotion of net zero homes
- Track maintenance at school
- More workforce housing
- Broadband coverage
- Accessory Dwelling Unit opportunities
- Facilities need more central location
- Sidewalks need linkages
- More than one cable company
- Local cable TV station
- School budgeting process

Participants reviewed some of the recommendations from the 2004 Master Plan and felt that the following recommendations are still valid and should be brought forward.

Housing:

- Revise Zoning Ordinance to expand and provide opportunities for accessory dwelling units.
- Ensure there are adequate and realistic opportunities to develop manufactured housing.
- Encourage the development of affordable housing in appropriate areas of Bow.
- Look for opportunities to allow flexibility in residential development (I.E. density).

Community Facilities:

- Review extension of municipal water and sewer annually.
- Consider creating a multi-use cemetery that would include traditional uses as well as open space, walking trails, etc.

Natural Features and Historic and Cultural Resources

Planning Board Members: Sandra Crystall, Adam Sandahl, and Christopher Fortin

CNHRPC Facilitators: Joanne Cassulo and Katie Nelson

Likes and Dislikes

Each participant shared what they liked and disliked about Bow. Many participants had similar answers, noted by numbers below. It should also be noted that some participants elected to pass on the exercise.

Like

- Schools (x4)
- Location and proximity to Concord, Manchester, I-93, I-89, and Boston (x3)
- Rural nature, including open spaces (x8)
- Snowmobile trails and easy access to snowmobile trails
- Walking trails and easy access to walking trails (x3)
- Community spirit (x2)
- Natural resources, including ponds, rivers, and brooks (x2)
- Quiet community (x2)
- Various organizations within Town
- Library (x4)
- Historic culture of the Town (x2)

Dislike

- Taxes (x5)
- Lack of volunteers
- New residential development (x1)
- Inadequate cell service
- High speed of cars on rural roads (x1)
- Lack of Town Center

Review and Comment of Recommendations from the 2004 Master Plan

Recommendations from the 2004 Master Plan Chapter on Natural Resources and Historical and Cultural Resources were presented. Discussion occurred.

- It was noted by many attendees who are active on the Town's Heritage Commission that the recommendations presented related to Historical and Cultural Resources have already been accomplished or are in progress and are expected to be completed in the near future. A group discussion occurred, noting that many residents are not aware of the historic resources and sites in Town. Attendees' desired historic markers be placed around Town and on any trails to point out the Town's historic buildings and sites. Members present from the Town's Heritage Commission noted that it is anticipated historical documents will available soon for public viewing. Attendees from the Commission also wanted to be included in the development of the Historical and Cultural Resources Chapter once it is under development.
- Planning Board members present gave an update to accomplishments related to the Natural Resources recommendations presented, including the development of the Drinking Water Protection Committee.
- After a group discussion, it was agreed that more information on the trails in Town should be available. Some attendees expressed confusion on the location of trails and public access. A new map was suggested that should include all lands held by the Town and other nonprofits, such as Bow Open Spaces. It was also mentioned that easements approved as part of subdivisions should also be identified on a map. Information on trailheads and signage (including snowmobiling signage)

should also be noted. It was also suggested that this could be a potential student project for students at Bow High School.

- A common theme discussed by attendees is the need for a connection between the Town's Heritage Commission, Conservation Commission, and Parks and Recreation Department regarding historic and natural resources. Examples of this include coordination on mapping and working on joint projects and initiatives or common planning goals and recommendations.
- It was recommended that a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) be completed as the first step in identifying where critical resources are located, what areas are significant and how to include the information in land conservations planning and zoning. An NRI will also help in identifying areas where more site specific assessments should be pursued. There was also discussion of NH's Wildlife Action Plan as a great resource on wildlife and habitats that could be incorporated into an NRI.
- New regulations were recommended for added protection to the Town's drinking water.

Transportation

Planning Board Members: Bill Oldenburg, Allen Lindquist, and Tony Reynolds

CNHRPC Facilitators: Dean Williams and Sam Durfee

- Attendees seemed generally satisfied with local road maintenance and welcomed the news that South Street, Logging Hill Road, Bow Center Road and Woodhill Road would be getting resurfaced this summer by NHDOT.
- The group was supportive of some changes at the I-89 southbound on ramp. The general consensus was that drivers are going too fast on I-89 and often some drivers don't merge onto the highway, creating a queue.
- In general, those present would like to see changes along the entire I-89 and I-93 interchange and all of the exits nearby, including the Hall Street and Route 3A intersection as well as the Exit 12 interchange.
- Concern was expressed with the Logging Hill/Knox/Bow Center/White Rock Hill Roads intersection. Difficulty turning left at peak hours has resulted in some people turning right and cutting through the Fire Station. Those present were generally not opposed to the roundabout concept even though there has not been strong support in the past. Turning traffic in and out of White Rock Senior Living Community was also mentioned as an issue.
- Attendees expressed support for a sidewalk, large shoulder or path connecting the Middle School, White Rock Senior Living and the Fire Station (future community building). They were also interested in having a sidewalk connect to the Bow High School and looking at ways to encourage students to walk or bike to both schools to help reduce peak hour school traffic.
- Attendees were also concerned with the Grandview Road and Route 3A intersection, particularly its geometry and how it lends itself to dangerous high speeds and limited sight distances.
- There was also concern for the Vaughn Road and Route 3A intersection although residents seemed pleased that there will be more safety improvements along the NH 3A corridor.
- One citizen stated that most of the roads in Town were adequate for biking in the sense that they were smooth. There was concern for a culvert/bridge on Foote Road that has created a large bump

in the road. The group liked the idea of narrowing road lane widths to slow vehicles down and providing a large shoulder for bikers.

- Attendees were in favor of a more frequent bus service between Bow and Concord, particularly for seniors and people with disabilities. The once a week service now is not sufficient and/or convenient. The group was receptive to the idea of Bow owning a community van that could be used as a senior shuttle in addition to other community events. Some residents mentioned they would like to see transportation available to people who have no available options during elections and voting.
- Attendees were in favor of high speed rail connection to Boston. There was a discussion about how an intermodal center in Manchester or Concord could create more need for buses and in effect increase the likelihood of expanded bus routes throughout the region.

Presentation of Breakout Group Results

Summaries were provided by CNHRPC staff of the four breakout groups. Matt Monahan provided a summary on Community Facilities and Housing, Sam Durfee provided a summary on Transportation, Katie Nelson provided a summary on Natural Features and Historic and Cultural Resources, and Craig Tufts provided a summary on Land Use and Economics.

Conclusion and Thank You

Art Cunningham, Bow Planning Board Chair, thanked everyone for coming and answered any final questions.