

Maine Quality of Place Council

Minutes of the Third Meeting, October 15, 2008
Taxation Committee Hearing Room, Augusta

Note: Next Meeting of the Council: Thursday, November 20, 2008, 9:00am to 12:00pm
Taxation Committee Hearing Room, Room 127, State House, Augusta.

Present: Council Members: Richard Barringer (chair), Edward Barrett, Kat Fuller for David Cole, Martha Freeman, Eleanor Kinney, Earle Shettleworth for Donna McNeil, Robert Thompson, Thaxter Trafton for John Richardson, Robin Zinchuk. **Council Staff:** Kate Reilly, Sue Inches, Jody Harris and Linda LaPlante. **Others Attending:** Bruce Kidman, The Nature Conservancy; Amanda Rector, SPO; Ruta Dzenis, SPO; Kirk Mohny, Historic Preservation Commission; Carolyn Manson, Maine Tourism Association; Greg Dugal, Maine Innkeepers Association; Pattie Aho, Pierce, Atwood; Liz Hertz, SPO; Jayne Palmer, Downtown Coalition; Christopher Glass, Maine Preservation; Jonathan Edgerton, Maine Downtown Center; Maggie Drummond, Grow Smart Maine; Greg Paxton, Maine Preservation; Garret Martin, Maine Community Foundation; Kristen Cady, Maine Downtown Center; Patsy Wiggins, Eaton Peabody; Pat Eltman, Tourism/DECD; Ken Young, KVCOG; Jacqueline Clark and Jim Haguewood, Vital Economy, Inc.; Frank O'Hara, Planning Decisions, Inc.

Introductions & Greetings: Richard Barringer, Chair, opened the meeting at 1:00pm with the introduction of council members, staff, and guests. He reviewed the agenda and expectations for the meeting.

1. Fairpoint's Community and Economic Development Program, developed by Vital Economy, Inc (VE). The Chair introduced VE's Jim Haguewood and Jacqueline Clark for their presentation of Fairpoint's regional, asset-based development program in eastern Washington state and southern Illinois, the model for what they intend to do in northern New England over a ten-year period.

Jim Haguewood: Mapping of regional economic assets is a core Vital Economy tool in assessing a region's potential for achieving economic transformation and diversification. The asset-mapping process is not easy. You should strive for 3 outcomes:

- Discovery
- Knowledge Transfer
- Look for opportunities

An Asset-mapping approach takes about 12 months and includes assets ranging from economic development resources and indigenous resources to land use trends and tax and regulatory environment.

Jim spoke of a matching grant program that Fairpoint will fund to assist three pilot regions (one in each state: ME, NH, and VT) with asset-based development.

Q. Dick Barringer asked when the 3 pilot projects were going to begin happening. Jim- The pilots will begin the 2nd quarter of 2009.

Q. Is there a competitive process between the regions? Jim: Yes, it is competitive. Projects will need to be collaborative and cross boundaries, even cross state boundaries. Criteria will come out such as: level of collaboration, probability of success, what is severity of problem, what is future vision. RFP will go out 4th quarter of this year.

Q: How did you get the message out? What assures it has a life?

Jim: Solid, leadership team of local leaders. Their job was to go out and communicate and talk about the sense of urgency. Have asset mapping become common language. It continues for as long as it is in front of people. Will need to look at resources and update. Local teams are in charge. Has to be engaging in order to bring and keep people in.

Q. What can state government agencies do to best support process? Jim: Enabling opportunities that help to achieve goals – in context of strategy to obtain goal. Fill gaps to achieve through investment and opportunity. Educational piece; how endorsed in Maine, other pieces besides asset mapping. Have clearly defined goals

2. Q of P Grant Criteria and Process (draft): Jody Harris stated that the criteria and process comes from the thinking of the prior Quality of Place Council, which held three assumptions: 1) there would be new money (either from bonds or other revenue sources) to implement QOP projects; 2) the projects to be funded would be based on regional priorities; and 3) projects would link to a viable economic opportunity. The purpose of the grants would be to enhance existing, authentic, place-based assets to strengthen the state and regional economies. The draft guidelines contain 11 criteria for projects:

1. Must demonstrate the potential for generating new economic opportunity for the region
2. Must be planned and implemented with strong community engagement and leadership
3. Must build collaborative relationships and partnerships in planning and implementation
4. Must be assessed with care for their quality and authenticity
5. Must have realistic and promising market opportunities
6. Must leverage indigenous community assets
7. Must balance preservation with promotion of the assets
8. Must accrue benefits to the region as a whole
9. Must build on or enhance the regional or the state brand
10. Must leverage multiple sources of funds
11. Must advance the principles and practice of “smart growth” in Maine

Since the grant program was conceived, times have changed. Jody encouraged council members to think about how quality of place initiatives could be funded through collaborative efforts using existing state grant funds rather than new funds. Council members were encouraged to read the whole document carefully (at

http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/agenda_minutes.htm) and send comments and questions to Jody at: jody.harris@maine.gov

3. Quality of Place Prosperity Awards (draft): Jody Harris provided a draft of an awards program that was suggested by the council at a previous meeting. The purpose of the awards would be to recognize significant contributions to preserve, sustain, enhance and market Maine's place-based assets that stimulate job creation and economic prosperity. Recognition is given for leadership, innovation, and entrepreneurship resulting in marketing quality of place products and services.

Award Categories:

- Public Service Leadership Award
- Business Leadership Award
- Quality of Place Development Award

Prior to the council meeting, forest landowners had suggested to staff that landowners be recognized to strengthen landowner relations and public access to private lands (will work with IF&W and Conservation).

4. The Downtown Coalition: Maggie Drummond, GrowSmart Maine, and Greg Paxton, Maine Preservation talked about funding needs of downtowns. They described their coalition consisting of more than 100 people and some of the work the group is doing. They identified their priorities as:

- Funding for capital investment in downtowns, Maine Streets, villages (more discussion needed)
- Ensure that federal buildings remain in downtowns (immediate priority)
- Education campaign to highlight the economic return from revitalization efforts (immediate priority)
- Provide up-front preservation planning assistance for historic tax credit projects (immediate priority)
- Develop a "revitalization" agenda for the Legislature, publicize, track it and hold Legislators accountable (immediate priority)
- Recruit more Main Street communities & support existing (more discussion needed)
- Ease parking restrictions, particularly MSHA rules (immediate priority)
- Create a Communities for Maine's Future program for strategic community investment, modeled after LMF(immediate priority)
- Ensure that MSHA counts the historic tax credit as leverage (immediate priority)
- Ease elevator standards and streamline elevator licensing (more discussion needed)
- Develop a pool of preservation professionals and work with education community to get programs in place (long term priority)
- Seek dedicated funding sources (immediate priority)
- Require government offices to locate downtown, and ease restrictions (parking) that prevent this (more discussion needed)
- Funding for transportation improvements, particularly pedestrian & alternative transportation (more discussion needed)
- Support the New Century Fund (more discussion needed)

Greg Paxton spoke of why it is important to make our downtowns vital and the need for better funding, and substantial funding. Historic preservation-based economic development works...why? Tourism, retirees with resources, commitment and time, relates to and improves real estate, best marketing improvements. When one owner of an historic building fixes it up, others are inspired to do the same. Historic preservation based on and stresses unique quality of the community. New and historic development need to be geared in to a different way. If action is not taken soon, Maine will lose.

Four areas of possible funding to strengthen downtowns:

1. Public infrastructure – sidewalks, pocket parks, visitors centers, etc.
2. Revolving fund to acquire endangered properties
3. Grant Fund Community Revitalization Grant Fund – rehab existing buildings
4. Community design and architect pool

Kristen Cady, Maine Downtown Center: Working on a program for smaller communities, including an on-line library. Maine Downtown Coalition has 6 workshops coming up, starting January 2009.

5. Entrepreneurship Education and Training in Maine – Update: Amanda Rector, SPO

Amanda provided an overview of her research of entrepreneurial education and training programs in Maine, which was undertaken at the behest of the council. Entrepreneurship programs are offered all over the state and need to continue to be so in the future.

Impediments for entrepreneurship in Maine found by Kellogg Foundation;

- Culture constraints
- Community business climate
- Lack of networking opportunities
- Limited technical assistance
- Capital availability

Recommendations for developing entrepreneurship in Maine, six areas of focus (as identified by 2000 Entrepreneurship Working Group):

1. K-12 education
2. Higher Education
3. Adult training
4. Support systems
5. Policy
6. E-Team comprised of successful Maine entrepreneurs

Q: What does the future hold for the State of Maine and the rest of the country? How are we preparing youth for these jobs? How do we re-tool ourselves to bring entrepreneurship to schools and teach the kids to run small businesses?

Amanda: To best support and encourage entrepreneurs, government and non profit entities should be as entrepreneurial as the clients they assist. Coordination across the state would likely

make it easier for those interested in taking advantage of training. There is still a great deal of debate around the issue of whether entrepreneurship can be taught. The current state of entrepreneurial education presents tremendous opportunity for growth. Until a belief in the importance of entrepreneurship at all levels is widespread, interest in and resources for entrepreneurial education will likely remain limited.

Amanda will follow-up with the Learning Results staff to determine how the Council might advance their efforts in entrepreneurial education K-12.

6. Draft Legislation Outline: Martha Freeman, Director, SPO, Frank O'Hara, Planning Decisions, Inc. Martha Freeman provided a draft framework for the council's legislation. Martha noted that it does not address all of the issues that the council might want to consider. It includes establishing the Maine Quality of Place Council in law and outlines its composition and duties. It identifies the regional structure for carrying out many of the quality of place strategies. And it identifies the staffing role of the State Planning Office. To see the outline:

http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/agenda_minutes.htm.

Martha asked Frank O'Hara, Planning Decisions, Inc. to describe the work of the Governor's Working Group to Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the State Economic, to which Frank serves as staff. That group is looking at ways to enhance the state's business assistance efforts and has some parallels to quality of place.

Q: Is the notion that certain business assistance efforts would be devolved to regional levels as opposed to state level? Frank: Looking to the regions to do more. Local folks can come together to develop/enhance/make attractive for economic development. Also go beyond business assistance, coordinate. Maximum support by existing or hopefully new money.

Build in economic assets to legislation draft: guidance, accountability, structure.

Martha discussed an approach to funding quality of place efforts by using existing funds. Implementing regional quality of place plans unlikely to be funded by new bond programs. Advocate for more funding for existing programs. Have proposals for existing, relevant program funds tied to regional Quality of Place Plan and get extra preference points. Place-holder in with DAFS for bond funding.

Other proposals from other departments may align with Q of P principles:

- Site Law
- LURC
- Maine Downtown Center
- Landowner Relations

New Capital Funding Possibilities

- Revolving Fund for Historic Properties

Quality of Place Projects of Statewide Significance

- An outstanding issue needing QP Council discussion
 - Seek bond?
 - Maine Quality of Place Council to review proposals, give grants
 - Would need funding for staffing

7. Next meeting: Thursday, November 20, 2008, 9:00am to 12:30pm, Taxation Committee Hearing Room, Capitol Building to review draft legislation, go over in detail

Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm