

Town of Barnstable
Town Council
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TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
STRATEGIC PLANNING
October 13, 2022
7:00 PM

Councilors:

Matthew Levesque
President
Precinct 10

Paula Schnepf
Vice President
Precinct 12

Gordon Starr
Precinct 1

Eric R. Steinhilber
Precinct 2

Betty Ludtke
Precinct 3

Nikolas Atsalis
Precinct 4

Paul Cusack
Precinct 5

Paul C. Neary
Precinct 6

Jessica Rapp Grassetti
Precinct 7

Jeffrey Mendes
Precinct 8

Tracy Shaughnessy
Precinct 9

Kristine Clark
Precinct 11

Jennifer L. Cullum
Precinct 13

At the start of the meeting the Town Council President opened the meeting at 7:05pm Town Councilor Administrator took a roll call of the members present: **PRESENT: Nikolas Atsalis, Kristine Clark, Jennifer Cullum, Paul Cusack, Jessica Rapp Grassetti, Matthew Levesque, Betty Ludtke, Jeffrey Mendes, Paula Schnepf, Tracy Shaughnessy, Gordon Starr, Paul Neary** **ABSENT: Eric Steinhilber**

The Town Council President announced the following:

A quorum being duly present, President Matthew Levesque called the October 13, 2022, Town Council meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

An announcement was made by President Levesque regarding the meeting being taped and questioning if anyone was actively taping the session to please make their presence known. This session will be recorded and broadcast on Channel 18.

The October 13, 2022 Special Meeting of the Barnstable Town Council shall be conducted remotely and shall be physically closed to the public. Alternative public access shall be provided as follows:

The meeting will be televised live via Comcast Channel 18 or may be accessed via the Channel 18 on the Town of Barnstable's website live stream: <http://streaming85.townofbarnstable.us/CablecastPublicSite/watch/1?channel=1> or may be accessed via the following Zoom webinar link: <https://town.barnstable.ma.us/details.asp?EntryID=D786A8000010132022&StartDate=10/13/2022>

BARNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

October 13, 2022

High-Level Meeting Outcomes prepared by the [Consensus Building Institute](#)

● Meeting Process

On the night of October 13, 2022, the Town Council of Barnstable, MA held a special meeting with the following purpose:

- To ground the Town Councilors in a thorough understanding of the Barnstable Strategic Plan (the Plan), its purpose, how it is currently used, and how it may be used in the future;
- To preliminarily prepare the Councilors for a broader assessment and revision of the Plan intended for 2023; and
- To capture any high-level feedback about essential areas of improvement for the Plan, to be documented and integrated into the 2023 planning.

Administrator:
Cynthia A. Lovell
Cynthia.Lovell@

As an elected body, the Town Council is the legislative leadership that develops the plan and sets the policy, while the Town Manager's office implements the plan and determines how to do so. The Town Manager, Mark Ells, provided an overview of the purpose of strategic planning and reviewed each priority area in the 2020-2022 Strategic Plan:

- Finance
- Communications
- Economic Development
- Environment & Natural Resources
- Regulatory Process & Performance
- Public Health and Safety
- Housing
- Town Infrastructure & Assets
- Education

This document summarizes comments from the Town Council about strategic planning and in response to Mr. Ells's presentation. The comments may be used for future strategic planning.

● Meeting Outcomes

Throughout the meeting, the Councilors' comments expressed that the next iteration of the Plan should reflect/incorporate the following elements:

- Collaboration and coordination with other entities
- Alignment with other plans
- Clear understanding and definition of the roles of the Town Manager's Office and the Town Council in both planning and implementation of the Plan
- Adaptation strategies to variables like climate change and a changing economy
- A way to reflect progress and changing priorities within the two-year Plan cycle

Specific comments from the meeting are grouped below by theme.

● Overall Perspectives on the Plan

- If the Town Council wants to prioritize any priority area over another, that should be described explicitly in the Plan.
- The Council's narrative guidance in the Plan needs to be at a consistent level of detail (not too task-specific) and in line with the jurisdiction of both Council and Town staff.
- The Plan must be more concise and accessible to focus on attainable, long-term key goals.
- The Plan and accompanying Council guidance must not be overly broad nor too prescriptive. The Council needs to provide high-level direction and then trust staff to address the details of the plan.
- The Plan must reflect considerations for fiscal and regulatory constraints.
- New councilors need to be made familiar with the Plan when they are onboarded.

- Suggested Plan Implementation Practices

- Schedule an annual discussion between councilors and staff about operational plans and tactics, so the Council understands how staff are implementing the Plan.
- The Plan can feel outdated; a regular written status report could help acknowledge accomplishments and identify needed adjustments.
- The Plan needs to be fluid and adaptable in the face of hard-to-predict changes like climate change, fluctuating economies, natural disasters, and public health emergencies such as COVID.

- Ways to Foster Collaboration

- The Town must make a concerted effort to build bridges with community members who haven't provided input into lawmaking before.
- The Plan needs to identify how to take advantage of opportunities for collaboration when new, willing partners present themselves.
- Pursue or strengthen these specific collaborations/partnerships to advance the priority areas:
 - YMCA (Education, Communication)
 - Cape Cod Community College (Education, Communication)
 - Potential new drivers of economic development (Economic Development)
 - Medical care providers, since Barnstable is the medical care base for the Cape (Economic Development)
 - Housing Assistance Corp (Housing)
 - Association to Protect Cape Cod (Environment & Natural Resources)
 - Substance abuse prevention & education organizations (Public Health & Safety)
 - Partners that helped address COVID, in case of future emergencies (Public Health & Safety)
 - Renters, to share what they need and want (Housing)
 - Developers, to discuss how to increase the number of affordable or market rate units (Housing)

- Methods to Improve Coordination

- Have clear and explicit coordination with other guiding documents, including:
 - Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP) update
 - Hazard Mitigation Plan
 - Historic Preservation Plan
 - Open Space and Recreation Plan
 - Housing Production Plan
 - Regulatory agreements
- Invite the LCP Committee Chair (or Director of Planning and Development) to present to the Council and strategize how to coordinate the two plans effectively.
- Invite the Police Chief to inform what Town goals and strategies can help to protect public health in the context of how policing is changing.
- Continue to work and plan closely with fire and water districts.

- Specific Issues to Address

- Define how Barnstable uses the term “open space”.
- Align the annual permitting process for shellfishing.
- Be explicit about mechanisms for feedback from the public and metrics for success.
- Extend state of the art water treatment processes throughout the entire Town and consider how to use water sources that are impacted by nutrients other than nitrogen, such as phosphorous or contaminants of emerging concern.
- Include roads and sidewalks in the Public Health and Safety priority area.
- Increase the number of affordable housing units.
- Thoughtfully assess what assets to retain, dispose of, or acquire.
- Address impending budget impacts from future energy contracts.
- Treat ball fields as Town assets.
- Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into strategic planning thoughtfully and aggressively as a priority spanning the entire Plan.

- DEI

- The Council needs to reach out to underrepresented Barnstable residents, such as people of color, people with disabilities, people who do not speak English or whose first language is not English, and unhoused people.
- A focus on DEI would empower underrepresented Barnstable residents to have a say in the goals of the Town in a way that improves quality of life for everyone.
- A focus on DEI can enhance engagement with schools and other partners.
- Virtual Town Council meetings are more accessible, fostering DEI and improving representative democracy.
- It is the responsibility of all Town Councilors to reach out and communicate with the diverse residents of Barnstable and encourage their active participation in Town government.

VOTE: ADJOURNMENT:

Upon a motion duly made and seconded it was

VOTED TO ADJOURN:

VOTE: PASSES UNANIMOUS

Adjourned at 10:48 PM

- Next Steps

Town Council leadership will use these high-level notes to inform strategic planning in 2023 for 2024-2025. Councilors are invited to send additional comments to Town Council Administrator, Cynthia Lovell. In the meantime, the Town Manager’s office will continue to use the current Strategic Plan to inform budget planning for the upcoming fiscal year.