

Minutes

Regional Policy Plan Subregional Public Hearing

Wednesday, October 11, 2018 4:00 p.m.

Sandwich Town Hall

130 Main St, Sandwich, MA

Summary of Action Taken:

A public hearing was conducted by hearing officer, Jonathan Idman, to receive public comments on the 2018 Draft Regional Policy Plan (RPP).

Regional Policy Plan Subcommittee members in attendance: Jacqueline Esten, Elizabeth Taylor, Charles McCafferty

Cape Cod Commission members in attendance: Harold Mitchell

Cape Cod Commission staff in attendance: Kristy Senatori, Erin Perry, Heather McElroy, Jonathan Idman, Jessica Wielgus, Chloe Schaefer, Patty Daley

The hearing was convened at 4:00pm. Jonathon Idman, Chief Regulatory Officer at the Cape Cod Commission, thanked everyone for attending the first of three public hearings on the Draft Regional Policy Plan. Under the Cape Cod Commission Act, the agency is required to update the plan every few years. This current draft has been put out for comment and the purpose of today's public hearing is to receive feedback from the public.

He said the main reason for the public hearings are to solicit public comments on the Draft Regional Policy Plan (RPP). Minutes are being taken and all comments will be collected by staff. He advised attendees that if they had detailed questions or comments which need in-depth responses, staff will respond in writing. All clarifying questions will be answered during the meeting.

Erin Perry, Special Projects Manager at the Cape Cod Commission, with the use of a Powerpoint presentation, gave an overview of the Regional Policy Plan. She said the Regional Policy Plan is a plan with a broad regional vision and goals for the region to protect natural resources balanced with economic development and growth.

She said this draft takes a different approach than was taken in previous documents. This plan is systems based, recognizing the importance of three major systems- natural, built and community- and the need to balance each of these when thinking about planning and regulations. Goals and objectives are connected to each system. The plan is context sensitive, it recognizes the different types of places in the regions and identifies performance measures to track progress. The 2018 RPP places an emphasis on local comprehensive planning and local capital facilities planning and regional capital planning.

She said this update to the plan includes identification of performance measures allowing for progress to be tracked across the region. The plan also places a greater emphasis on local comprehensive planning, local capital planning and regional capital planning.

She reviewed the 11 sections in the plan. The first overviews the Commission's responsibilities based on the Cape Cod Commission Act. The Act outlines the 8 purposes:

- The conservation and preservation of natural undeveloped areas, wildlife, flora and habitats for endangered species;
- The preservation of coastal resources including aquaculture;
- The protection of groundwater, surface water and ocean water quality, as well as the other natural resources of Cape Cod;
- Balanced economic growth;
- Provision of adequate capital facilities, including transportation, water supply, and solid, sanitary and hazardous waste disposal facilities;
- The coordination of the provision of adequate capital facilities with the achievement of other goals;
- The development of an adequate supply of fair affordable housing;
- And the preservation of historical, cultural, archaeological, architectural, and recreational values.

Erin Perry continued to discuss chapter two of the RPP. She said that Chapter 2 identifies and discusses the evolution of the RPP. She said that the Commission was established in 1990 and the first RPP was issued in 1991. The vision of this plan was to protect the best of the region and repair the mistakes of the past. This was the first plan to identify goals, policies and implementation strategies in 13 issue areas and included Commission and town actions. The plan also identified and mapped important natural resource areas and proposed to map economic centers and village centers.

She said the 1996 and 2002 updates to the RPP took a similar approach. The 2009 update was the first major shift in the document. It separated planning from regulatory aspects. The plan focused on planning aspects and the technical assistance the Commission could provide to communities. She said several years ago when this recent update was initiated, the Commission set about to gather input from stakeholders on how the RPP could continue to evolve to meet the needs of the region. She outlined this stakeholder process as including-

- Issuing a homeowner survey and holding subregional hearings in 2014
- Subregional stakeholder meetings, six meetings in each subregion, held in 2015.
- A second homeowner survey was issued in 2017
- A Cape Cod Commission RPP subcommittee was established and met throughout 2018. They have reviewed draft of the RPP and are currently reviewing technical bulletins.
- The current round of public hearings in 2018 is a continuation of the outreach process and public process

Erin stated that the outreach process has helped the Commission identify key priorities for the region. She said that these issues are woven throughout the document and include the need to address housing needs, promote regional and capital infrastructure planning, ease local comprehensive planning, protect natural resources and preserve character.

Erin Perry then discussed chapter three of the RPP. She said that chapter three identifies a regional vision for Cape Cod, to protect and preserve the region's resources and focus growth in existing center

of activity. She said the vision for the future of Cape Cod is a region of vibrant, sustainable and healthy communities, and protected natural and cultural resources. The growth policy supports that vision and focuses growth in centers of activity and areas supported by adequate infrastructure and guides growth away from area that must be protected for ecological, historical or other reasons. She said development should be responsive to context allowing for the restoration, preservation and protection of the Cape's unique resources while promoting economic and community resilience.

Erin Perry then described chapter 4 of the RPP. She said section four discusses Cape Cod systems and the need to balance these systems to achieve a sustainable region overall. She said the systems and the areas they cover include:

- **Natural systems**
 - Groundwater
 - Marine water
 - Freshwater ponds and lakes
 - Wetlands
 - Habitat
 - Open space
- **Built systems**
 - Development
 - Drinking water supplies
 - Wastewater management
 - Stormwater management
 - Transportation network
 - Utilities
- **Community systems**
 - Cultural heritage
 - People
 - Economy
 - Housing

Erin Perry then described section five of the RPP. She said section five discusses key challenges facing the region and that these challenges include-

- Loss of forest cover 2,300 acres have been lost regionally, more than 83% was for residential development. An issue related to forest cover loss is additional impervious surfaces leading to increased stormwater runoff which can affect water resources.
- Significant development which has impacted water quality. The manner in which land is used impacts the region's supply of drinking water.
- Excess nitrogen in coastal waters has led to 34 of the Cape's 53 Cape embayments, to require nitrogen reduction to meet water quality goals. This is due to the heavy reliance the region has placed on septic systems across the region.
- The need to focus on improving resiliency of the region's coastline. There is about \$9,000,000,000 of assessed value at risk in special flood hazard areas (SFHA) which includes over 13,000 single-family homes. This will likely become worse over time.

- The region's historic resources are vulnerable to threats. More than 40% of inventories historic buildings 100 years and older have no protections. Historic resources are key to our community character.
- Housing across the region is very expensive, very few Cape communities come close to having an individual earning the median income able to afford the median home price.

Heather McElroy of the Cape Cod Commission staff then gave the remainder of the powerpoint presentation on the RPP. She said the goals and objectives of the Draft RPP are organized under the three systems- natural, built and community.

Heather said that the goals and objectives of the natural systems aim to protect and restore the quality and function of the region's natural resources that provide the clean water and healthy ecosystems upon which the region depends. The goals and objectives address areas such as water resources, wetlands, open space etc.

Heather also said the goals and objectives for the built system are to protect and enhance the built environment and infrastructure necessary to support the region and healthy activity centers. This include improving community design, coastal resiliency, supporting and coordinating capital infrastructure, transportation planning etc.

She said the goals and objectives of for community systems are to protect and enhance the linkages between the built and the natural environment that support the way of life on Cape Cod by protecting the region's cultural heritage, supporting and promoting the economic development, promoting a diversity of housing resources and availability.

Heather further said that the Cape Cod Commission has been working towards coordinated regional and local planning. The Regional Policy Plan provides an umbrella for these goals and objectives. Targeted areas of planning include the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the 208 Water Quality Plan, Ocean Management Plan, Regional Transportation Plan, a housing needs assessment, coastal resiliency planning and the RESET program.

Heather then said that the Commission through this RPP update would like to promote coordinate regional capital planning, which is included in the Cape Cod Commission Act. This is an area that has not received a lot of attention in the past. The RPP wants to support the local comprehensive planning process and is looking at streamlining the planning process.

Heather McElroy then described the Cape Cod Commission's program, the Regional Economic Strategy Executive Team, or "RESET". She said the RESET Program is an opportunity to plan within a community at their request. Three recent RESET projects include-

- Improving pedestrian connections between business and the waterfront in Orleans
- Looking at including mixed use development and the walkability on Route 132 in Barnstable
- Davis Straits, Falmouth- Revitalize the Davis Straits area in Falmouth, looking at possible mixed use and improved function of the area.

Heather McElroy then described section eight of the RPP. She said section eight addresses Cape Cod

Place types, a new concept intro in this plan, recognizing the different types of land uses across the Cape. She said Placetypes include:

Natural areas- to minimize adverse development impacts to sensitive resource areas, to preserve lands that define Cape Cod's natural landscape and to contribute to its scenic character, and to improve the Cape's resilience to severe storms and effects of climate change.

Rural development areas- To ensure that development is located, sited, and scaled appropriately to avoid impacts on scenic and/or cultural resources, and to help maintain the economic diversity that agriculture can provide for the region including opportunities for the continuation of traditional agricultural occupations, and for the availability of locally-grown food.

Suburban development areas- To improve their design and function so that they are better integrated into surrounding neighborhoods, complement uses in existing activity centers, and are more pedestrian-friendly.

Historic character areas- To protect historic resources and to support infill development that respects the form, scale, and character of existing historic areas.

Maritime areas- To protect historic resources and to support infill development that respects the form, scale, and character of existing historic areas.

Community activity centers- To accommodate mixed-use and multifamily residential development in a walkable, vibrant area, preserve historic buildings, and to provide diverse services, shopping, recreation, civic spaces, housing, and job opportunities, with adequate infrastructure and pedestrian amenities to support development.

Industrial activity centers- To support their development as significant employment centers with adequate infrastructure and support services for employees.

Military and transportation areas- To support comprehensive master planning with community input, encourage growth of industries appropriate to the diversification of the regional economy, and encourage partnerships for use of shared infrastructure.

Heather then said section nine addresses regional regulatory review. A significant role of the Commission is review of Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). This draft takes a streamlined regulatory approach while continuing to have goals and objectives which are derived from the Commission Act. The approach will include technical guidance that supports the goal and objectives and provides methods by which a DRI could meet those objectives. The placetype and the resources present where a project is located will also inform how methods are applied to meet goals and objectives.

She said an example of this is the transportation goal to provide and promote safe multi-model transportation with the objective is to provide a reliable efficient transportation system. The technical guidance will provide methods, a requirement or a menu of options, to reach this goal. The place type will inform how those methods are applied.

Heather then reviewed section 10 of the RPP. She said section 10 incorporates regional performance measures to track progress toward meeting established goals. Nine performance measures are

identified in this section. These measures were chosen because there is data available to base progress off of and they correspond to the goals established in the draft plan.

Heather then reviewed section 11 of the RPP. The last section addresses recommended actions recognizing that the Regional Policy Plan is a framework and there remains additional work that needs to be done. These recommendations are based on the three systems and include-

Natural systems: update and identify priority lands for future water supply development, update data layer to support future water supply development and support water quality planning in protected watersheds.

Built systems: Develop a regional capital infrastructure plan to support sustainable economic development which is crucial for coordinating regional infrastructure with local plans.

Community system: Develop a regional housing plan, identify the affordability and the diversity of housing and set target regionally and subregionally for affordable and diverse housing.

Heather then reviewed the timeline for the review of the RPP. She said the review process and timeline for the draft RPP began in September when the draft was issued for public comment, followed by the three regional hearings. The public comment period ends on November 19, 2018. Once public comment ends, Commission staff will have 30 days to respond to comments and make revisions to the plan. The Cape Cod Commission will review the document and hold a public meeting. The Commission will then vote to forward the plan to the Assembly of Delegates for their approval by ordinance.

Heather said comments can be made today at the meeting, can be sent by email to rpp2018@capecodcommission.org, or attendees could also add comments to posters in the back of the room, or write on the comment cards, also available in the back of the room.

Mr. Idman introduced the public comment portion of the hearing. He asked that attendees state their name, the town they reside in and affiliation, if relevant.

Public Comment:

A resident of Barnstable said the Cape Cod Commission did a great job including climate adaptation and resiliency in the plan but the plan is missing a focus on mitigation. It was suggested the Commission could work on setting a baseline on how much energy the region is using in each sector to set a baseline and track it to see the region's progress, similar to how the state and Pioneer Valley do it. The plan mentions green communities but currently there are only four on Cape, the plan could do more to promote this. The Commission in years past had a staff person, half-time, who was focused on energy, it would be nice if that position could be filled.

Rosemary Carey, of North Falmouth, a volunteer of 350 Cape Cod, said the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a report earlier this week. The IPCC report is addressed to policy makers. The Commission should review the report to see if the Draft RPP meets the challenges outlined in the IPCC report. She encouraged everyone to read at least the executive summary of the report. A key point is global warming causes extreme weather. Unprecedented changes are needed to reduce global warming. The Draft RPP provides guidance on adaptation and resiliency, it fails entirely to address climate mitigation. If the region does not have goals for mitigation it will face great impacts from climate change. Climate change will affect the economic and spiritual wellbeing of the Cape and its residents.

Keeping the Cape special requires rapid change to 100% renewable energy by 2050; using solar and wind energy, electrifying our transportation system and encouraging similar technologies. The Cape has innovative resources to get this done, the broad majority of Americans agree with taking bold action on climate change.

Lee Brown, resident of Sandwich, said sometimes there is a discussion on the validity of climate change, (refers to handout he brought about climate change). The Draft RPP omits specific climate goals and a timeline to meet those goals. There is a need to be aggressive on this issue, to lower the carbon footprint significantly. There needs to be more solar on residential homes, businesses need to be encouraged to use solar. There need to be more activism from the top down.

Steven, a resident of Sandwich, asked how the Commission handles efforts to mitigate climate change. He said the Commission is an influential body in the community and asked if the agency is in a position at this stage to make a statement of if the agency needs convincing about the validity of climate change. He asked if the Commission able to state a view on climate change and carbon emissions? What can residents do to encourage and support the Commission on climate change mitigation and other environmental issues?

Mr. Idman said the existing RPP encourages renewable energy. Submitting public comments is a good way to support the Commission and its efforts.

Ms. Senatori said providing public comment to Commission plans is a good way to inform and support the Commission.

An attendee asked if public comments are available online. Ms. Senatori said comments will be made available as part of the public process.

Rob Wilson, resident of Barnstable, said he would like to see what the ultimate goal is for Cape Cod. He asked if there was a long-term goal for many people the region wants to have and the amount of development the region wants. It seems as though the region will continue to grow forever. He asked if the regional plan is only the five-year plan based on the RPP.

An attendee said one of the things that is charming and frustrating about the Cape are the 15 towns and the nature of New England. He would like the Commission to would to encourage and incentivize communities to work together. The big issues that the region needs to deal with, for instance wastewater, is not a problem that has a town by town solution. Residents need to embrace and encourage communities coming together to solve problems by committee or other aggregations of community. If the region cannot work together in the interest of the Cape communities will be at cross purposes.

Mr. Idman thanked everyone for attending and reminded attendees that there are comment cards if anyone would like to submit further comments. He noted the next meeting would be held in Truro.

List of Documents Used/Presented at the Hearing

- Power point presentation by Cape Cod Commission staff on the 2018 Draft Regional Policy Plan
- Climate change graph submitted by Lee Brown