

# **OUTREACH STEERING COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES**

**May 8, 2008,**

**7:30 PM**

Location: Room 204, Acton Town Hall

**Next Meeting: Thursday, May 21**

Present: (need to confirm with attendance sheet)

### **1. New Committee Chair**

Due to her new responsibilities as Chair of the Board of Selectman, Lauren Rosenzweig has resigned as chair, nominating Ann Sussman as new chair of the Committee. Ann accepted. Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann will be Vice Chair.

### **2. Minutes**

Minutes were approved for the March 19 and April 3, 2008 meetings.

### **3. Update on Outreach Activities**

So far 1,112 surveys have been received by mail and 295 received through the website. The deadline for the survey has been extended to May 12, 2008. The return rate for the resident survey is 14.9% residents, and business rate 4.8. The almost 15% return rate is well within the desired 10-20%, and compares very favorably with other towns. Ultimately, the results of this survey will be compared with several other Town of Acton surveys, such as the recent Open Space/Recreation.

Joe looked at the former Master Plan, and noted two top priorities were 1) slow down of residential growth and 2) preservation of open space.

Partial results for the web resident survey are in. Daphne provided a handout with some preliminary results, but the committee was asked NOT to share results outside the meeting since they are a small and preliminary sample. (See hand-out for details.) Maryann requested Planner's Collaborative look at income splits when analyzing results, also noted that the web survey appeared to be heavily skewed towards residents with school-age children: 43% volunteer in schools.

Another set of questions will be finalized for the telephone survey. A postcard will be sent to those homes to alert them in advance. A random sample of 550-600 people will be called the last week of May and into early June.

**The telephone survey questions will be developed next week- please send Daphne ideas for what should be included in the telephone survey, especially looking for trends seen in the partial results of the web survey.**

Daphne would like suggestions of where Acton residents congregate so that a sample can be interviewed in person. Interviews will be conducted on both weekends and weekdays. Lisa suggested Sweet Bites.

**Please send suggestions to Daphne- cite specific cafes, playing fields, etc.**

Results from the first Visioning Session will be available next week- Daphne to mail out.

Linda suggested sending a timeline of activities and the process and Terra suggested adding that to the website.

The summary of the targeted Outreach Meeting to the Indian Community (May 4) was handed out as part of the packet. (See hand-out for details.) Daphne noted two themes that emerged specific to that community: 1) Dewali- more awareness and sensitivity needed (i.e., schools not scheduling tests on this important holiday) and 2) space needed for cultural activities.

Lisa noted that greater awareness and sensitivity was also needed for children with disabilities and their families, that this was an ongoing issue as well, specifically welcome and responsiveness. Lauren suggested that this might point to a need for overall greater awareness.

A meeting with the Brazilian community will be scheduled; a June 4 meeting with Town of Acton department heads is already in place with more meetings to be scheduled (Finance Committee, business leaders, School Committee, etc.) Daphne will try to set up a meeting soon with the Chamber of Commerce (Larry and Terra to assist.) Terra suggested committee members should be made aware of them in case anyone wanted to attend.

**Daphne will e-mail the committee a list of future dates of targeted meetings in case anyone would like to attend. (All welcome.)**

#### **4. Preparation and Publicity for May 31 Public Workshop**

Two versions of the flyer will be available- a more streamlined version for posting on bulletin boards, etc., and one version with more details.

**Daphne or Kristin will e-mail when they are available.**

Larry mentioned that it was difficult to find information about the Comprehensive Community Plan if going through the Town of Acton website- we need to make this initiative much more prominent and easy to find. The logo is prominent.

**Daphne will work with the Town to do this.**

Terra suggested that Daphne send the PowerPoint presentation for May 31 event in advance for the Committee to review.

The committee agreed that the message for the May 31 event has to be extremely clear- i.e., why bother/how it is different that the earlier event, perhaps something like “Help Us Get it Right” or “Last Chance” or “You can Be a Part of Shaping Acton’s Future.” Daphne agreed but mentioned for accuracy the message would need to be balanced with the fact that there would be other types of meetings next year.

The committee agreed that publicity efforts should get underway ASAP to get a good turn out. Larry suggested that the advertising be colorful and consistent for maximum visual impact. Ann and Larry emphasized the need to be bold, stress THIS IS IT, convey a sense of importance and urgency about the event to grab attention. Plans to publicize included the supermarkets (late afternoon, Sundays, and around Memorial Day especially), the Transfer Station on Saturdays, the Acton Memorial Library, boards in Town Hall, banner, flashing sign, school backpacks (only once.) A-frame signs are possible (confirmed by Lauren). Maryann mentioned that the school marquee sign is hopefully all set. Kristen will look at other options as well. Terra suggested that we hand out a smaller-sized flyer as easier to read at a glance and save on paper. Dick suggested an insert in grocery bags and in the Beacon (he will contact them about that.) Advertise the fact that interpreters and services for hearing impaired residents will be available, and that children and youth will be presenting (as an incentive for parents to attend). Make sure it’s clear that the event is NOT happening Memorial Day weekend. Lisa noted that friends and neighbors were unaware of the event; really need to get the word out.

The committee discussed including information at the Memorial Day Parade- committee not sure if this was appropriate given the solemnity of the occasion and also that it lacked a precedent.

Dick is the point person for press- he will send a full summary to Daphne, Lauren and Ann. In brief, May 31 will be covered by Channel 8 (not sure if they can do a live feed from the Parker-Damon Building). Notices have appeared in Action Unlimited (May 3), Boston Globe (May 4), Beacon (May 8.) Press releases sent to Beth Petr and Charlie Kadlec (among others). Daphne will also do the in- person interviews on the street. He mentioned Channel 8 will loan cameras, etc. Need volunteers- will do training. Terra volunteered to be trained for the camera. Terra and Linda volunteered to help with

interviews once they are established. Maryann suggested Elderberries might want to assist in some way.

**Kristen re-sending e-mail with what committee members already signed up for; Linda to e-mail sign up sheet for flyer distribution.**

Bill K. will hand out flyers at the Senior Center, check on number of people needing transportation and van arrangements. Bill will also post a sign up sheet at the senior center for those needing transport to sign up. Lisa suggested including the phone number of the Planning Office on any information regarding transportation in case there are questions. Whether the van is used or not, ultimately, Lauren will make sure that those requesting transportation will have it.

Linda will once again procure refreshments. Both water and coffee will be available, but perhaps moved next to the food where it will be easier to spot. Many compliments on the food, especially the samosas.

Leigh will be sending a letter May 10 to 90 businesses requesting door prizes for the May 31 session. At the event, Leigh will act as greeter to make sure participants are warmly welcomed and that the door is fully accessible (One resident in a wheelchair was not able to locate the button to open the door at the March event. (A sign will be posted this time to mark it just in case.)

At the May 31 event, participants will get an overview of results from the last visioning and surveys, with a focus on themes, concerns and desires, followed by a discussion of developing a vision statement, priorities, goals, leading to an action plan. Participants will respond in small, facilitated groups to explore key themes and priorities. **Lisa and Lauren have agreed to facilitate small groups. Anyone else?**

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 P.M.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann.