

Alfred Comprehensive Planning Committee – Minutes DRAFT
Thursday, February 4th, 2016
Alfred Town Hall, 2nd Floor, 6:30 p.m.
Facilitating: Amy Titcomb

Members present were Amy Titcomb, Amy Sprague, Andrew Bors, Lee Steele, Arthur Karcher, Stephen Gile, Seth McCoy, Jon DeFrance, Michael Towne, John Sylvester, Heidi Gendreau, Howard Dupree and Jim Allaire. Others present were guest speakers Bob Dawber and Jennifer Oulette of York County Shelter Programs, Brother Jerome of Brothers of Christian Instruction and Secretary Darcy Hobgood. The meeting was also attended by approximately 16 guests representing several Town committees and the general public.

Amy Titcomb opened the meeting by welcoming guests and reviewing the **agenda and timeline**. In expectation of a full agenda for the meeting on February 18, 2016, the Transportation GPS chapter discussion will be moved to March 17, 2016. Amy S. will email an updated timeline to CPC members.

Minutes from January 7, 2016 were reviewed. A motion was made to accept the minutes as written, it was seconded and all voted in favor.

Amy T explained to the members of the public when and how they would have the **opportunity to comment** and/or question CPC members or their guest speakers. No one chose to comment before the presentation.

Bob Dawber of York County Shelter Programs, began his presentation with an invitation to all to come visit them “up on the hill”. He then explained that they have entered into a 10-year lease with the Brothers of Christian Instruction after which time they would be sole owners of the property. The lease is the results of three years of negotiations and will be paid for in part by providing meals, housing, overhead and other services to the Brothers for the 10-year period. He stated there are few changes planned; they would continue to lease the orchards to Gile’s Family Farm, run the Spiritual Center and continue the Shelter as is. In spite of rumors, there would be no methadone clinic, no medical marijuana facility, nor would they act as an overflow for the jail. Possible changes would include increased participation with Master Gardeners, perhaps offering a farmers market in the old barn, better utilizing the forest to provide wood for heat and possibly reconvert office space back into two housing units.

Bob went on to explain the mission of York County Shelter Programs is to end homelessness and assist people to reach their fullest potential by providing access to various levels of housing, personal growth opportunities and community resources. He stated the Shelter is glad to be in Alfred since 1985 working closely with the Brothers.

Heidi asked if changes would be made when the lease expires on 1/1/2026. Bob restated that there are no major changes planned although he would love to do a summer camp and increase their gardening capabilities with the help of the Master Gardeners. Eugene Hall may become the location for family housing but would need major work before that could happen. The total number of beds could increase from 63 to 70 with the return of office space to housing. He stated that on average only 2 children per year attend Alfred schools, others are bussed to their home town schools. Again he doesn’t see that number increasing.

When Heidi asked where the funding for York County Shelters comes from Bob replied, “ It comes from 43 revenue streams: a substance abuse contract, mental health, and emergency shelter all primarily from the state. HUD from the Federal government, rent for housing, approximately \$100,000 from the bakery, \$280,000 from fundraising. Also, Maine Care, private pay, private insurance, \$12,000 from the Sanford book store and \$20,000 from the catering service.

Lee expressed concerns about possible increased educational costs in the future. Current educational cost per child is approximately \$6000 per year. Lee would like to limit the Town's liability for these costs by charging tuition for children staying at the Shelter and attending school in Alfred. Bob replied that the shelter would not be increasing the number of beds over 70, so the average number of children attending school in Alfred should also remain consistent.

Howard asked about the Shelter's commitment to the historic nature of the property. Bob replied that his vision includes sprucing up the area, defining walkways with fences and solar lights and maintaining the Shaker character of the old buildings.

In response to a question from Jon, Bob stated that although they don't pay property tax, they do pay State sales tax and provider tax. When they become owners of the property, they will decide if they will continue to have taxes abated or chose to pay real estate tax to the Town.

Jennifer answered Jon's question concerning the average length of stay for the typical person by explaining they serve a spectrum of people, each with differing needs. The traditional resident stays roughly 2 months, a single adult, approximately 4 months. Families are relocated to the Family Welcome Center in Sanford as soon as possible. She also explained that for short term stays children often attend their home schools.

Art asked about policing at the Shelter and voiced concerns about hypodermic needles found in the area. Bob explained that they receive the same services as the rest of the Town and they do not have many calls for police. He added that the State Police received one phone call concerning hypodermic needles and it was determined the person in question had no association with the Shelter. The Shelter does random urine drug testing.

Jim explained that the Shelter is in the Critical Rural Zone which would not currently allow the Shelter in the area but because they were approved initially, they are grandfathered at their current capacity. Any expansion or change of use would require Planning Board review and possibly a change in zoning. Jim and Bob agreed that in moving forward there needs to be better communication between the Town and Shelter.

In response to Heidi's question about ambulance calls, Jennifer explained that they have on-call clinical staff that by policy must approve all ambulance calls. She thought there may on average be one call per month. Maine Care is billed for ambulance calls.

When Amy S asked Brother Jerome if he had anything he would like to share, he replied that they have had a nice working relationship with the Shelter over the years and see this as a great opportunity to reduce their own operating costs while helping the Shelter.

The guests were then given the **Opportunity for Public Comment**. Tony Palminteri questioned the cost of education and emergency services and suggested the Shelter reimburse the Town for these expenses. Tony will ask Matt Bors for figures concerning the number of ambulance calls and the unrecovered cost to the Town. Jerry Rand suggested the Shelter put a rider on their insurance policy to cover unpaid expenses for emergency services supplied by the Town of Alfred. Bob agreed this was a good idea.

John Crowley had questions concerning zoning. Al Carlson of the Planning Board stated a need to document what the various uses of the buildings currently are to know going forward what changes may be made. It would be helpful to get advice on what the Shelter can and can't do. Bob replied "We welcome you to come up and look around. "

Jon D added that there needs to be an agreement on what activities will be allowed when the Shelter takes ownership in 10 years. He suggested that perhaps there should be a committee formed to ensure the Shelter's plans and the Town's requirements are in sync and the proper regulations are followed. Bob was in agreement with this suggestion and looks forward to opening a dialog with the Town. Amy S will ask Kathy Connor for advice.

Seth asked Bob if the Shelter is or will be subject to personal property tax. Bob explained that although they are tax exempt, they chose to pay taxes on some properties. They will make a determination concerning possible payment of taxes when they take ownership of the Shaker Hill property in 2026. Bob was unsure if the Shelter had personal property subject to tax. Seth offered to look into it.

In closing, Lee thanked Bob Dawber for coming and stated additional conversations will help alleviate concerns about the Shelter's future plans.

Amy S continued the meeting with an update on the **Annual Report and March Town meeting**. Amy S explained that Kathy Connor of SMPDC recommended that the proposed ordinances to create a Design Review Committee and an Economic Development Committee not be included in the 2016 Annual Town Meeting warrant but be created after the Comp Plan is approved by the Town. Amy S asked if the CPC's letter for the Town's Annual Report met everyone's approval. All agreed it did.

John S gave a brief **update on Water District Proposal** stating that he has received copies of 5 or 6 charters from across state with town wide representation. John supports amendment of the charter. Jim Allaire, CEO will attend next Water District meeting.

A letter from Fred Frodyma was shared with the committee and considered for future discussion.

A letter from Barbara Carlson suggesting changes in the Budget Committee and Board of Selectmen was shared with the committee. Amy T has invited Barbara to come to our next meeting on February 18, 2016, when the Public Facilities GP&S will be reviewed with Kathy Connor.

Amy S suggested that CPC members start sharing information on the GPS with the public. This could be done via email, personal interaction or sharing the GPS packet.

The meeting was adjourned 8:55 p.m.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 18th, 2016

Anticipated Agenda: Discussion of Public Facilities and Services GP&S Chapters, including Lee Steele's proposal regarding the water district.