

Joint Meeting with Lyme Planning Board and Community Development Committee
9 October 2018

Present: Sue MacKenzie, Rusty Keith, Mike Smith, Eric Furstenburg, Jonathan Voegele, Vicki Smith, Tim Cook, John Stadler, Chris Ramsden, Rich Brown

Members of the Public: Jeff Valence, Karl Furstenburg

Called to order at 7:03pm

Agenda:

- Determine if this most recent version of the report is a final product ready for the forums?
- To determine whether having our first public forum on 17 October is realistic
- Discussion of the Questionnaire

The most recent version from Resilience Planning, submitted as a "final product", arrived at the town offices by email at 4:05pm on 9 October 2018. This is more than a week after the contracted date of the first public forum, that had been scheduled for 1 October. Because it arrived shortly before this meeting, most of the attendees did not have a chance to review it beforehand.

Sue MacKenzie led the review of this version. Detailed comments about individual pages are summarized at the end of these minutes. Here are general comments:

- Pages with detailed data should be summarized to show trends, perhaps as a graph with a small number of representative data points. Example: summarize the traffic count information to show a few important points along Route 10 and its tributaries.
- Some members felt that use of Grafton County as a for comparison doesn't seem to show the whole picture. The county includes towns in the "Littleton orbit", while excluding similar towns (Acworth, Lempster, Sunapee, New London) to the south in Sullivan and Merrimack counties. (The contract specifies "Compare Lyme's economic situation to comparable N.H. towns.") Data from the entire State of NH and Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning District (or other representative district) would provide useful comparisons if those are easily available.
- Commercial development was of primary interest in the RFP, yet the report offers no data or conclusions. Some members felt that the consultant's statements about traffic counts show there is not a large incentive for commercial development, but this version does not make it clear.
- There was disagreement about this version's use of a single town-wide average number of students per dwelling. This is a major driver of school expense. The report

does not justify the use of that average, despite Lyme's experience of modest price (\$250K) dwellings at 85 Dartmouth College Highway and the Pond View having a very small number of students.

Summary of our impressions:

- At this point, we are disappointed with the state of the report. There was a sense that the data presented by the slides should be self-evident, and not require an in-person explanation to understand it. One committee member said the presentation was "unprofessional." This version of the report did not contain the contracted "engaging infographics". In addition, our detailed questions on the underlying data seem to have resulted in only trivial changes from the initial (23 August) draft. Some members said that the report was good enough to go forward, and that we should avoid micromanaging the work. The consultants are now saying that further work would be out of scope/out of budget.

- We will not go to a public forum on the 17th due to lack of consensus about the report and little time available for publicity.

- Some felt that the PB and LCDC need to be able to stand behind the numbers of the report (if not the conclusions drawn from them), so that we avoid having the numbers picked apart from the floor of the forum. Others felt that there will be questions about the numbers anyway - it comes with the territory.

- We believe holding three forums is critical. We discussed ways to do this:

- Raise \$4,500 funds for consultant time.

There was significant sentiment against this, since the Lyme Foundation was unwilling to support this.

- Negotiate with the consultants to decrease the cost:

Perhaps only one consultant would need to be present at the two additional forums.

- Videotape the first session, and use that as the basis for additional presentations.

There was a difference of opinion as to whether it would be acceptable/feasible

for members of this group to present the data well at the additional forums.

- We could hold the first forum, to see if it's worth asking them to do again

- A questionnaire to collect resident's opinions was not discussed at this meeting.

- The consultants will produce a final report, incorporating the results of the public forums. We also expect the consultants to provide all the data underlying their presentation and analysis.

Next Steps:

- Chris Ramsden will touch base with Resilience to say that we are not satisfied with the current form of the presentation, and will not be holding the 17 October forum.
- Sue MacKenzie will send a note to the listserv to say that there will not be a forum on 17 October.
- Rich Brown will write up the specific comments on the report. He will send these to David Robbins for distribution to all members of this group. Members should send any additional comments back to David Robbins who will summarize them for feedback to the consultants via Chris Ramsden.
- The selectboard will look to see if any funds might be available for additional forums.

Adjourned 8:53

A video recording of the meeting is
at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8T0ZeeJ7B4>

Respectfully submitted,
Rich Brown

===== Comments on specific pages of the presentation =====

- The page numbers of the PDF and the PowerPoint presentations seem to be slightly different. Page numbers below come from the "October 2018 Forum Presentation.pptx" of 9 October 2018.
- p9 - Traffic counts. Summarize the trends in a chart, showing only key traffic points: Rt 10, East Thetford Road, Dorchester Road, Goose Pond Road. It would be good to include a map (perhaps as an inset) on the slide to show those measurement points.
- p12 - We need an explanation of where the 2023 population data comes from. Also include UVLSRPC and St of NH values.
- p13 - The slide should incorporate a "Taxable, not market value" heading (or use "Assessed, not Appraised" value.)
- p14 - Include UVLSRPC and St of NH values.
- p15 - Heading might be "Non Residential Tax Base: Fraction and Growth is Minimal"
- p16 - Is the label "Not Equalized" correct? These appear to be the equalized numbers.

(More importantly, is the equalized/not equalized distinction critical to the understanding of the chart? If not, relegate it to the speaker notes at the bottom.)

- p16 - It would be helpful to show the (percentage) trend of these numbers, perhaps in the headings of the charts.

- p17 - Include UVLSRPC and St of NH values.

- p18 - Include % increase. Same question about equalized/not equalized.

- p19 - Heading should indicate whether these are K-8 or K-12 numbers.

- p20 - There is a lot on this slide. Could it be broken into two?

- p20 - Why only K-8 enrollment shown?

- p20 - Also include UVLSRPC and St of NH values.

- p21 - Are these correct? Do you mean K-8 or K-12? Lyme has 194 K-8 students from its 1,763 population, which comes to 11%. Using ~300 students for Lyme's population comes to the 17% shown on the chart.

- p21 - It's useful to have other town student populations. It would be helpful to display the stats for the entire state of NH as well.

- p22 - We found this slide confusing: what does "The Big Picture" mean? (It seems to conflate Sources & Uses...) Could it be split into two slides?

- p22 - Why show both Estimated and Actual Revenues? Are we supposed to compare them? Could the categories be shown as a pie chart?

- p22 - Tax rate breakdown: table is hard to understand: why call out Local+State Education specially?

- p23 - Impact scenarios. Why no mention of commercial scenario? Don't all illustrations provide modest positive impact?

- p24 - This is perhaps the most important information of the presentation. It's very dense, and the information is simply not self-evident. How will the forum attendees understand its import?

- p25 - No summary of their presentation?