

MINUTES OF THE EYES ON 30 COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
January 18, 2023 – 3:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Councilor Nancie Cameron, Chair
 Councilor Richard Michaud
 Planning Board Representative, Jason Barry
 Superintendent, Lori Lane
 Mayor Designee, Jenny Holmes
 City Manager, Bob Belmore
 Mayor Dana Hilliard

Staff present: Director of Planning & Community Development, Michelle Mears
 Director of Finance, Scott Smith
 City Clerk, Kristen LaPanne

Committee Chair Cameron called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting began with brief introductions of the Committee members and staff.

REVIEW VISION 2020 FINAL REPORT

The Committee Members received a handout of the Vision 2020 final report listing each of the goals that were previously identified from the Vision 2020 Committee; included with each goal were ways that the City successfully accomplished and met those goals over the last decade. Mayor Hilliard began by explaining that the Committee was created to work in sync with the City's Master Plan to reach common goals. He suggested that the Committee use the Vision 2020 plan as a model to develop and procure a modernized plan for the City's 2030 goals.

Mayor Hilliard suggested marketing and promoting the Eyes on 30 visions to the City's residents by utilizing channels 95 and 22, the City Newsletter and social media platforms. Mayor Hilliard suggested that the Committee begin by reviewing each of the goals from Vision 2020 to determine if the Committee still feels it is necessary to add to them or if it can be replaced by another goal if it has been achieved.

Councilor Michaud stated that the first goal to *make the downtown a livable, walkable, vibrant focal point for the City and region that is physically attractive, social and culturally energized and offers the opportunity for a diversity of business activity* could always use more attention. Jason Barry agreed with Councilor Michaud's comment and added ideas of reviewing more form-based codes throughout the City.

The Committee discussed the need to begin the 2030 vision with broad goals before narrowing in on how to accomplish them with smaller goals and to imagine what each member envisions the City to be in 2030 pertaining to culture, education, lifestyle, diversity, sustainability, economy, preservation, etc..

Manager Belmore suggested a goal relative to events that would continue to attract local businesses and increase community engagement. Mayor Hilliard suggested that a goal could be to identify and define the City's Center where events could take place and invest in the esthetics and maintenance of that Center. The Committee discussed events that the City hosts annually and Millennial Park was brought up as a great space. Superintendent Lane brought up the example of the City maintaining multiple baseball fields and perhaps looking into how many of them are actually utilized and perhaps revamping a space to become the City's Center or event space. Manager Belmore agreed with her suggestion and added that looking ahead to 2030 also means having to focus on how to meet the needs and desires of new youth in the Community; he added that the Recreation Department and Library are constantly reviewing and improving programs/events to meet the needs of our everchanging Community.

Committee Members discussed the topic of a potential recreation facility that could accommodate programs and events for children, adults and seniors within the Community but the realization of the high costs including building or the rehabilitation to an existing building, maintenance, staffing and utilities isn't feasible for the 2030 vision. It was noted that the Recreation Division works closely with the School Department to hold events within their facilities. Mayor Hilliard added that perhaps the Committee could have future discussions on gearing more recreation programs towards senior residents and looking at what we currently have within the City to do so. Superintendent Lane added that there has been discussion of the potential to add public restrooms if the High School football field is to become the Community field and that they had upgraded the concession stand.

City Manager Belmore recommended that the Committee have meetings with partners like the Somersworth Festival Association and Lion's Club as well as brainstorming ideas with the Recreation Supervisor, Librarian and Somersworth Youth Connection Coordinator. Mayor Hilliard suggested another goal could be to identify and preserve the City's proud past and celebrating its commitment to cultural diversity by forming relationships that will help with the City's preservation and growth.

The Committee discussed education goals; Mayor Hilliard added the need to modernize education allowing 21st century educational opportunities for students. Superintendent Lane agreed with Mayor Hilliard's idea and wondered how the Committee can craft a goal that continues to review student needs and explore other programs and trades that help to enhance the City's workforce while socially and educationally preparing children to be confident adults within the Community.

Mayor Hilliard asked the Committee to consider adding a goal pertaining to preserving and maintaining the City's approach and collaboration in our local government; the relationship between the City Manager and the Mayor, City Manager and Superintendent, City Council and City Staff play a big role in how goals have been able to get accomplished.

Jason Barry spoke to the identity of the City of Somersworth, questioning what defines us or what do we want the City to be known for. He added that there are great restaurants, shops, new projects, new developers and more however what is it that we want to define us and what type of demographic do we want to attract. There was discussion regarding what the City currently has that shows the visual success including being known as a welcoming city that is culturally diverse, the Hilltopper Spirit, small neighborhoods, lineage that has stayed and some that that come back and more. City staff was recognized for their continued efforts in attracting entrepreneurs and developers.

The Committee discussed the fact that it is okay if the City of Somersworth remains a bedroom community or commuter town where families live and raise their families and around that build shops, bakeries, and restaurants giving the City that small town feel.

Chairman Cameron asked the Committee if they felt this initial meeting was a good place to start the Eyes on 30 vision process and all agreed.

DISCUSS COUNCIL RESOLUTION 38-22 – CITY OF SOMERSWORTH “EYES ON 30” INITIATIVE

Resolution 38-22 was provided to the Committee for review. Mayor Hilliard noted that he is looking to appoint two members of the Community at Large who can provide a unique prospective, has good energy, and thoughtful ideas.

FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

The Committee agreed that they prefer a set meeting schedule. The next meeting is scheduled for February 15th at 3:00 p.m. and going forward will be scheduled on the last Wednesday of the month at 3:00 p.m.

MISCELLANEOUS

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

Jason Barry made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Jenny Holmes and passed 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen LaPanne, City Clerk