

MALVERN BOROUGH
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TASK FORCE
Zoom Conference
Malvern, PA 19355

March 17, 2021
7:30 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TASK FORCE PRESENT:

Dr. Helise Bichfskey, DO
Mr. Joe Bones
Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D.
Mr. Danny Fruchter
Mr. Fran Givnish
Dr. Dave Knies, Ph.D. (**VICE-CHAIRMAN**)
Mr. Chris Mongeau (**CHAIRMAN**)
Ms. Cathy Raymond, Esq.
Ms. Julie Raynor
Mr. Brian Walker
Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D.

ABSENT:

None

Staff & Professionals Present:

Mr. Christopher Bashore, Borough Manager
Ms. Meredith Mayer Braine, Brandywine Conservancy
Mr. Grant DeCosta, Brandywine Conservancy
Ms. Tiffany M. Loomis, Assistant Borough Manager & Zoning Officer
Ms. Alicia Marziani, Park & Recreation Coordinator & Administrative Assistant
Mr. Kevin Myers, Chester County Planning Commission
Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz, Thomas Comitta Associates

2. CALL TO ORDER & PREPARING FOR THE COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP

Chairman Chris Mongeau called the meeting to order.

Mr. Christopher Bashore recommended that the Community Visioning Session be moved to May 2021 due to the Pandemic and for weather related reasons. Chairman Chris Mongeau was in agreement and there was consensus among the Comprehensive Plan Task Force.

Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. asked if the consultants were comfortable with the time frame. Ms. Meredith Mayer Braine confirmed such.

Mr. Danny Fruchter asked if any of the new dates proposed would interfere with obtaining a different venue that would be indoors. He is concerned that an outdoor venue will have issues such as noise, focus, and etc.

Chairman Chris Mongeau commented that this will be looked into.

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Mr. Christopher Bashore replied that the public works building is available, however due to parking and logistics this is not a beneficial location to achieve the desired results.

Mr. Danny Fruchter asked if where voting takes place, the First Baptist Church, could be the indoor venue for the Community Visioning Session.

Mr. Christopher Bashore responded that as of May it is expected that there will be many that will not be comfortable attending an indoor event leaving the outdoor event as the best possible option giving it is expected to have a high turn-out.

Chairman Chris Mongeau is in agreement with moving the date and directed to potentially look at the Fire House to hold the event. The location of the Community Visioning Session can be discussed at the April 21, 2021 meeting upon Borough Management looking into this matter further.

Ms. Alicia Marziani confirmed that the Fire House does not have any indoor space offered to the public.

Dr. Dave Knies, Ph.D. commented that if the event is to be held outside to hold later in May and if the event is to be held indoors to hold the event earlier in May.

Mr. Christopher Bashore will provide dates that are available to hold the event.

The Comprehensive Plan Task Force is in agreement of moving the date of the Community Visioning Session event. All further details can be planned at a future meeting.

Chairman Chris Mongeau directed Borough Management to coordinate accordingly.

Ms. Julie Raynor commented that is premature to hold an indoor gathering and an outdoor gathering is much safer to be scheduled for in May.

Chairman Chris Mongeau asked for Ms. Meredith Mayer Braine to review the schedule and the current timeline scheduled. The schedule is posted on the Borough Website for the public's review and information. It was discussed that the Community Vision Session will be moved accordingly.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz confirmed that reviewing the survey results, Malvern's Community Goals, with appropriate exercises, will be reviewed prior to the Community Visioning Session. If the schedule needs to be rearranged revisions will be made accordingly. No changes are being currently made to the schedule.

Chairman Chris Mongeau requested an update from the Land Use Sub-Committee at the April 21, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Danny Fruchter asked what the vision statement is for the Land Use Sub-Committee and when their meeting is scheduled for.

Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D. offered to be the Chairwoman of this Committee. She confirmed that a scope of work had been received and the Land Use Sub-Committee will meet soon to discuss accordingly. An official meeting date has not yet been set.

3. HIGH LEVEL OVERVIEW OF INTERIM SURVEY RESULTS

Ms. Meredith Mayer Braine gave a summary of the survey results to date. The survey was opened as of January 31, 2021 and will stay open until the end of March. A massive advertising campaign was initiated including email blasts, post cards, and internet flyers reminding the Malvern Community to take part. Four hundred and seventy nine (479) responses have been received to date.

Ms. Meredith Mayer Braine explained that the largest response in surveys is received early on and from there responses trickle in. Twenty (20) responses were received so far via post cards. It appears a majority of the responses have been received and a full update will be given at the April 21, 2021 meeting.

Most of the responses were from single family residences that have lived in Malvern Borough for over twenty (20) years. The top two (2) reasons why people chose to live in Malvern are because of the attractiveness and character of the area, as well as the walkability of the area. Individuals are very satisfied with the services provided by the Borough. Many of the survey responses thanked the Borough for asking for input.

There was very strong support for more ecological conservation work, preservation of historic resources, and access to open space. The number one concern in the Borough is vitality and business opportunity in the King Street corridor.

The purpose of the update is to prepare the Comprehensive Plan Task Force for the workshop boards that will be presented with this information at the Community Visioning Session.

Mr. Danny Fruchter asked if any more email blasts were scheduled to distribute the survey and if it could be emphasized that every member of the household is invited to take the survey.

Mr. Christopher Bashore confirmed that another email blast is scheduled and that the wording “every resident” is included in the invite.

Mr. Danny Fruchter asked that it be re-worded to make it known that every resident is invited to take the survey.

Mr. Christopher Bashore will make changes accordingly.

Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D. suggested that the survey be posted on the Malvern Community Facebook page to bolster results.

Mr. Christopher Bashore and Ms. Alicia Marziani confirmed that the survey was posted on the Facebook page within the past week. She confirmed that a significant amount of reaction was obtained.

Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D. suggested that a countdown to the last day of the survey be email blasted and posted to encourage more responses.

Mr. Danny Fruchter asked how many responses were received from outside the Borough.

Ms. Meredith Mayer Braine confirmed that approximately eighty-five percent (85%) of respondents were resident of Malvern Borough. Additionally, responses were received from Willistown, East Whiteland, and Eastown Townships.

Ms. Meredith Mayer Braine explained that she has been working with Ms. Alicia Marziani to create a poster for the Community Visioning Session that will be distributed to encourage attendance.

4. DISCUSSION AND FORMATION OF THE PLAN'S VISION STATEMENT AND GOALS

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz thanked everyone who submitted their visioning statements in advance of the meeting. She reviewed all statements received in key ideas and components. The Word Cloud was presented – Exhibit A as an attachment to the minutes.

Key categories were the following: Small town, the idea of green, service and community, growth management, how the community grows, respect, and walkable. There were a total of 10 committee members that submitted vision statements.

Cathy responded that small town applies to Malvern Borough, however Malvern no longer is a town.

Mr. Danny Fruchter asked what lens the vision statement should be viewed through. He commented that the shortest sample vision statement of the three (3) given was sixty (60) words, and were instructed to make ours twelve (12) words. He asked what is specifically being looked for and the overall objective and fewer words were better.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz clarified that the vision statement is to summarize complex or simple concepts. The idea of requesting three (3) separate statements with a maximum of twelve (12) words was to get at different themes to determine which ideas are most prevalent. The goal was not to have the end statement be twelve (12) words but to use what words that appeared most to create the vision statement. She explained that it is easier to start bigger and size down and ultimately is in agreement with Mr. Danny Fruchter. His concern is phase 2 of the process.

Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D. commented that she liked small town, however the historic piece needs to be coupled with this concept. A distinguishing feature is that Malvern was a small farming community that has evolved over time and it is important to point back to Malvern's history in the vision statement. There was consensus and agreement on this statement from the Comprehensive Plan Task Force.

Ms. Julie Raynor commented that historic character, small-town, and a quiet small community were the main concepts she touched upon. She thanked Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz on her work and presentation of the Word Cloud.

Chairman Chris Mongeau commented that historic and small town are the concepts he touched upon. He also commented that this encompasses many towns. He most identified quiet small community as a description.

An historic quiet small community was suggested by Ms. Julie Raynor as the key concepts.

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Mr. Joe Bones identifies with small town, quiet, and historic as the main concepts due to be surrounded by growth while maintaining a small historic town charm. He feels that community is generic and needs to be better defined.

Chairman Chris Mongeau commented that quiet is an important concept due to Malvern Borough not being located on Route 30. It what makes is unique and off the beaten path. Mr. Joe Bones is in agreement.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz asked the Task Force to focus on what best describes their community as it fits into Chester County as a whole.

Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D. asked how quiet will affect the business community that is located in the King Street corridor. Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. and Mr. Danny Fruchter are in agreement.

Mr. Danny Fruchter thanked Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz presentation and work. He suggested discussing particular words and their meaning versus how many times a word appears. It is important to precisely address the concept. He touched upon County Town as a meaningful concept due to the notion of the history of Malvern. He further explained what has been preserved is considered a County Town.

Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. asked to move forward onto the other concepts.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz asked how the Task Force felt about the words proposed such as welcoming, high quality of life, etc. as it pertains to community.

Dr. David Knies, Ph.D. commented that the piece on accessible and close-knit community does not speak to him and asked if these concept belongs in the Word Cloud.

Dr. David Knies, Ph.D. commented that he likes the diverse culture, bringing together, welcoming and the high quality of life concepts that have been listed. Mr. Joe Bones agrees with him.

Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. commented she likes the phrase bringing together.

Dr. David Knies, Ph.D. suggested the phrase melding be used.

Dr. Helise Bichfskey, DO suggested the phrase relaxed/ serene community be used which makes Malvern Borough sound less sleepy.

Mr. Danny Fruchter is in agreement with many of the comments made by Dr. David Knies, Ph.D. and commented the phrase welcoming which takes into account opportunities and new comers. He does not care for the phrase high quality of life or desirable place to work as these concepts apply to all communities.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz asked how the Task Force felt about the words proposed that address the business community, etc. as it pertains to services and amenities.

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Dr. David Knies, Ph.D. commented that urban convenience is better addressed an urban access. Mr. Danny Fruchter is in agreement.

Dr. David Knies, Ph.D. commented that Malvern Borough runs on volunteerism and this may need to be addressed under the community section.

Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. commented that anyone who does not think Malvern Borough has urban convenience has not lived in a small town.

Chairman Chris Mongeau commented that Malvern Borough is surrounded by urban convenience. He restated the question to the Task Force as to what is the meaning of small town in Middle America.

Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. commented that it is important that the words used for concepts have a concrete meaning. Small town could mean different things to different people, therefore more concise words needs to be chosen for the Vision Statement to eliminate confusion.

Chairman Chris Mongeau is in agreement.

Dr. Helise Bichfskey, DO commented the accessibility is appropriate to be included in the concept due to Malvern Borough being walkable and bike able. A car is not necessary to travel throughout the area in Malvern Borough due trains, buses, and being able to walk most places. It needs to be decided whether accessibility is included under community or amenities and services.

Mr. Danny Fruchter commented that a vibrant business community is something everyone agrees on needing, as well as a vibrant investment in recreation and open space. He further commented that the concept of inspiration to get involved covers volunteerism.

Mr. Danny Fruchter commented that the concept of urban convenience has too many meanings to attach to the phrase itself, but certainly Malvern Borough has access/ connection to the region and the world.

Dr. Helise Bichfskey, DO commented that Malvern Borough has established programs through park and recreation that are only offered here, as well as developing committees when there is a need such as the Environmental Action Committee, Randolph Woods, or etc. Malvern Borough is not about what exists now but what is available next week, next year, or ten (10) years by listening to what the Community wants and needs and responding to such. Malvern Borough is not run by the local government but by volunteers, Borough Council, and residents. This concept needs to be addressed.

Mr. Danny Fruchter commented that Malvern Borough is unique and it is important that our Community does not get confused with some south western town. The concepts need to define Malvern Borough as a one and only.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz asked how the Task Force felt about the words proposed that address the green concept, etc. as it pertains natural resources, energy conservation, and open space. She further asked if green was specific enough or needs to be better defined as a concept.

Dr. David Knies, Ph.D. commented that he is in agreement with the concept phrases proposed except for green county town.

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Dr. Helise Bichfskey, DO commented that she is in agreement with the concept words proposed and likes the sustainable future verbiage.

Dr. Zoe Warner, Ph.D. commented that the green concepts needs to be better defined and more specific. Ms. Julie Raynor is in agreement.

Chairman Chris Mongeau commented that the amount of open land that Malvern Borough has, given its size, makes the community unique and is one of the community's most unique features.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz asked the Task Force its response to the concept term "growth management" in how it pertains to welcoming growth and expansion economically.

Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. commented that this is a discussion to have at the Community Visioning Session.

Chairman Chris Mongeau asked Ms. Meredith Mayer Braine to summarize the survey results received to date regarding the responses relating to growth management.

Ms. Meredith Mayer Braine explained there were mixed views regarding East Side Flats whether it should be in existence or not. She will formally report to the Task Force when the survey closes.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz asked the Task Force their response to the concept term "respect" which encompasses small town values including its past, present, and future.

Dr. Helise Bichfskey, DO suggested including the word "inclusivity" which includes the entire community and more defined than respect.

Dr. David Knies, Ph.D. suggested including the words "work cooperatively".

Mr. Danny Fruchter is in agreement with both of these suggestions. These additional concept phrases are inclusive of Malvern Borough's place in society and connects the community to all by welcoming others. He further commented that the Environmental Advisory Council is the embodiment of these concepts and preserves forests for all to par-take in.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz asked the Task Force if the verb aware implies responsibility.

Chairman Mongeau commented that the concept words "respects the past" describes where you have been and where you are going to go.

Dr. Helise Bichfskey, DO commented that the word "respects" is about respecting of the Borough residents and volunteers.

The overall consensus is that too many definitions could be placed on the concept word respect.

Dr. Amy Finkbiner, Ph.D. asked if the Borough respects its past or celebrates its past. The Task Force was in agreement with the concept of celebrating the past as concept words.

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Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz asked the Task Force for its response to the concept term “walkable” which is a part of “accessible”.

Dr. David Knies, Ph.D. commented that this could be better defined as “circulation” or “mobility”.

Mr. Danny Fruchter commented that “walkable” is not best defined with the words “circulation” or “mobility” and is in agreement with Dr. David Knies, Ph.D.

Dr. Helise Bichefskey, DO asked why “walkable” has been separated out from services and amenities; if this is the case why not have a category for Parks & Recreation & Waterways.

Mr. Danny Fruchter requested that the visioning statements be re-sent to the Task Force to further comment now that there has been considerable discussion.

Chairman Chris Mongeau is in agreement with the request and directed the consultants to do so.

Mr. Danny Fruchter requested the revised word cloud be circulated.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz explained that this exercise will be after the Community Visioning Session.

Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz said that the goals portion of this exercise will be discussed at the April 21, 2021 meeting and briefly reviewed the responses received to date. Discussion and questions ensued. All responses will be reviewed in detail at the April 21, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Kevin Myers addressed how the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code affects the goals that will be ultimately discussed and approved.

Chairman Chris Mongeau directed that the goals revision be discussed at the April 21, 2021 meeting, as well as to email him and/or the consultants in the meantime with any ideas, questions, or concerns.

Ms. Cathy Raymond, Esq. requested that the marked up version of the goals be circulated. Ms. Jennifer Leister Reitz will circulate accordingly.

5. APPROVAL OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TASK FORCE FOR FEBRUARY 17, 2021

The meeting minutes for January 20, 2021, prepared by Ms. Tiffany M. Loomis, were approved by the Comprehensive Plan Task Force, as presented, and will be placed on the Malvern Borough Website.

Chairman Chris Mongeau directed for meeting minutes to be circulated one (1) week in advance prior to scheduled Comprehensive Plan Task Force meeting. Ms. Tiffany M. Loomis confirmed the minutes will be circulated as such.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was made.

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7. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Chris Mongeau adjourned the meeting at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,

Tiffany M. Loomis
Assistant Borough Manager & Zoning Officer