

Minutes of the Committee on Best Practices in Municipal Decision Making  
August 6, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 6 PM in the meeting room at the Lilly Library in Florence.

Present were committee members Jim Palermo (moderator), Lisa DePiano, Wendy Foxmyn, Alex Ghiselin, Michael Bardsley, David Narkewicz and Bob Reckman. Members of the public that were present were Jesus Leyva and Susan Enz.

The minutes of our meeting of 7/24 were accepted.

Lisa DePiano described her report from our last meeting about community comments at the Forum. This document will help guide our future work.

Wendy Foxmyn reported on the activities of the in-reach committee. She passed out a memo which contained a proposed letter to some elected or appointed officials asking for their input and listed some questions that they would answer in an interview. They also offered the option of a questionnaire if they chose not to answer questions personally and a group lunch meeting if they prefer that. They also proposed a list of questions that might be asked of department heads. The BPC encouraged them to develop their questions and begin to conduct the interviews if they can before our next meeting. They may also prepare a feedback form for use by the interviewers and a form to leave behind for further feedback to the committee by the interviewees.

David Narkewicz presented a self-review form for City Boards, Commission and Committees. They hope to present the form to most committees at their regular meeting.

David talked about the activities of the research committee. He and Bob agreed they would have some initial information in writing for the BPC at our next meeting.

Alex Ghiselin reported on the Meadows Forum. The committee approved Wendy's revision of the press release drafted by Alex. Alex said he would take the press release to the Gazette. Bob will get it to the Republican, the Advocate, members of the City Council and the Ward 3 Neighborhood Association list serve. He will also ask the Planning Department to distribute the press release to their list serve.

Michael Bardsley continued the discussion from our last meeting about establishing standing subcommittees and the open meeting law. He reviewed our history on this matter and urged us to think again about establishing

permanent subcommittee meetings and posting such meetings. David explained that he had made a practice of posting any meetings he is part of as a meeting of the entire BPC and believes that this keeps us in compliance with the OML. The BPC agreed that any meetings would be accordance with the OML and that all groups would be responsible for making sure their meetings are in compliance. We agreed that any two members of the BPC could meet to discuss any issue and that we welcome the participation of any member of the public at our meetings.

Bob said that he would e-mail two documents about Northampton Design Week to the BPC. Michael told the BPC about the next meeting of the Rezoning Committee at Forbes Library on Monday, August 11 at 5 PM. He will distribute a draft of the proposed language for the rezoning committee to the BPC.

The Research Committee will meet on August 18 at 9 AM in the hearing room or the Council Chambers at City Hall. The Meadows Committee will meet on August 11 at 8 AM in the hearing room or the Council chambers. The In-reach committee will meet on August 11 at 6 PM at the City Council Chambers. The next meeting of the BPC will be on August 28 at 6 PM in the DPW Conference Room.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM

Respectfully submitted;

Bob Reckmam