

TOWN OF TRENTON Comprehensive Plan Committee – Meeting Minutes

Date: July 22, 2026 **Location:** Trenton Town Office

Attendance: Greg Askins, John Bennett, Aaron Brown, Steve Heckman, Christina Heiniger, Chantal Longo-Guess, Ann Luther, Jarod Rollins, Judy Sproule, Mary Turner (by Zoom), Jacob Wartell

Absent: Peter Lazas

1. Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m., Co-chair Jarod Rollins presiding.

2. Approval of Minutes

- Christina moved approval of the minutes from the June meeting as submitted; Jacob seconded. VOTE: the minutes were unanimously approved as submitted by roll call vote with Mary voting remotely. John subsequently raised a question as to whether members attending remotely were permitted to vote; Jarod will resolve this question by the next meeting.

3. Planning Technical Assistance & Public Engagement Strategy

- Averil Varney from the Hancock County Planning Commission (HCPC) presented a toolkit for public engagement strategies.
- Averil made herself available to answer questions from committee members, but requested that all such requests be directed through the chairs to keep them abreast of developments and to avoid duplication.
- Key take-aways and recommendations include the following:
 - The core purpose of engagement events is to simultaneously gather input and share information with the community.
 - All in-person engagement events should provide opportunities for both spoken discussions and written feedback.
 - Recommended engagement methods include visioning sessions, community conversations (focus groups), future land use workshops, surveys, stakeholder interviews, and pop-up events.
 - The committee should aim for a 10% response rate from Trenton's year-round population.
 - To maximize engagement, the survey should officially launch in tandem with an in-person visioning session.
 - A test group should review the survey prior to launch to identify any software bugs or biased phrasing.
 - Demographic questions (such as income or age) must include a "prefer not to answer" option.
 - Survey responses must remain anonymous, and access to raw data containing personal identifiers should be restricted to a few members to protect privacy.
 - Paper copies of the survey must be made available for residents without internet access.

- Town officials or committee members should not directly administer the paper surveys to avoid bias.
- Setting a hard deadline for survey closure is discouraged until the committee is close to its target response rate.

4. **Community Survey Development, Public Outreach & Event Planning**

- Jarod will compile a draft survey combining committee questions and HCPC templates for review at the next meeting.
- **Kickoff Visioning Session:** The committee agreed to host a visioning session to formally launch the comprehensive plan process. The event will feature large format maps where residents can place stickers or notes to indicate areas of interest, growth, or protection. This event will also be the launch party for the survey.
- **Event Timing & Venue:** The committee determined that an October kickoff is more realistic than September to allow for adequate planning. The Trenton school gym was identified as the best location to hold a large crowd.
- **Future Land Use Workshop:** A specific workshop regarding future land use should be held later in the process to present draft growth areas to the community for feedback before anything is finalized.
- **Marketing:** To advertise the events and the survey, the committee discussed using "Every Door Direct Mail" (EDDM) postcards, flyers, the town newsletter, and the new town sign. There is a question to be resolved whether we can use that service with a shared 5-digit zip code as long as we have a unique 9-digit zip code. Judy will find out.
- **Pop-Ups & Stakeholders:** Pop-up tables at local events, such as the Fire Department's pancake breakfast, were recommended. The committee also discussed distributing survey business cards with QR codes and conducting specific stakeholder interviews.
- **Student Representatives:** The committee expressed strong interest in creating an application process to involve high school students as representatives on the committee. The timing and logistics of this, including both high schools, is to be determined.

5. **Chapter Committees & Initial Reports**

- Jarod will assign chapter leads for each of the proposed chapters, to be negotiated if necessary.
- **Tabled Items:** The review of chapter requirements was tabled until the next meeting.

6. **Administrative & Infrastructure Updates**

- **Data Repository:** The committee's Google Drive repository is now active, holding state data, checklists, draft budgets, and previous comprehensive plan summaries.
- **Communication Rules:** Committee members are requested to use single-subject lines in emails to prevent confusing threads.
- **Agendas & Website:** Official meeting agendas should be sent to the Town Clerk to be posted on the official town website at least a week in advance. The committee noted that the "Trenton Town Crier" Facebook group is a private page, not an official municipal posting location. On behalf of the committee, Judith will request a dedicated webpage on the town's official site.

7. **Public Comment - None**

8. **Adjournment**

- There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.