

## Imagine Nashua Public Meeting – 1/6/21 Minutes

Mayor Donchess opened the event at 6pm with introduction and then turned the meeting over to the Chair, Amber Louge. Utile team including Taskina Tareen, Will Cohen, Tim Love and Elizabeth Van der Els

Staff in Attendance: Sarah Marchant, Matthew Sullivan and Julie Chizmas.

Taskina Tareen and Will Cohen reviewed a power point presentation on the Master Planning process in Nashua including project schedule, existing conditions, results of the first Polis survey, visioning and goals prep.

89 participants were in attendance via zoom before breakout sessions.

Meeting attendees were shifted into breakout rooms to facilitate smaller conversations. Each breakout room gave a summary of comments:

Breakout room 1 – Elizabeth Van der Els – transportation wanted non-car users feeling more comfortable traveling around the city, focused on safety. Discussion around job opportunities beyond retail, revising zoning and land use codes, revisiting density. Vision statement: rewording to incorporate promoting Nashua as a great place to be.

Breakout room 2 – Will Cohen – Discussion education was missing from goals, but the importance of life long learning should be woven in. Lifelong learning ties to housing, families and jobs, open space as a place of learning. Vision – should include education and change it to focus on alternate modes of transportation and improving walkability

Breakout room 3 – Liz Fitzgerald – Discussion well stated goals overall, idea of Nashua being a connected community and connections to neighborhoods for sense of belong is important. Seniors and accessibility from housing to walking, safety and services. Can we look at non-Main St neighborhoods to promote restaurants and on-street event opportunities. Vision statement – how is fine but the what needs to be more about the people and tied to the how.

Breakout room 4 – Scott LeClair – discussion around policy , land use and development slide was focus, discussion around revitalizing the downtown to me more mixed use, multimodal and focusing on increasing density but leaving the outer neighborhoods the way they are in terms of density. Balance about lot size as it gets more rural. Vision statement – remove negative about automobile and focus on multimodal and liked supporting density.

Breakout room 5 – Ald. Tom Lopez – Vision statement – objected to automobile and focus on multimodal to frame as opportunities. Terms don't need to change but start with more emotional ideological statement. Discussion around access to housing data and ideas on how to incentivize ownership of multifamily by the renters, and how we view culture and ethnicity. Access to healthcare, differentiating between a wellness model Vs illness model. Master plan should be engaging vs educational.

Breakout room 6 – Cole Morgan – is increasing population density a goal? Lots of discussion on connections between open space and green spaces and housing. Housing affordability discussion on starter homes and general improvements in being able to obtain housing. Livability should be part of goals/vision, being able to work in the neighborhood you live in. Attractability for younger people to our city. Municipal broadband and technology would help us be attractive to young people. Jay Minkara – discussion on what does equity mean – vision statement needs to state we are welcoming city and touch on health. Talk about root causes of poverty and making sure those are being addressed.

Breakout room 7 – Mason Twombly – Job training and jobs should be highlighted with education and specialized trainings. Use words that are interesting like “engaging” and not too much planner speak. Focus on all the things Nashua does have, not what it does not. Allowing people to age in place and housing affordability is important. This is a city where people can be proud of culture and history.

Breakout room 8 – Cassie Mullen– Housing affordability and diversity and density was large part of discussion. Difference between downtown housing types vs Exit 1 and our more rural areas. Density is focused in currently developed areas and keeping more rural areas but affordability needed everywhere. Sense of community is very important along with sustainability, which works for younger and older generations.

Breakout room 9 – Adam Varney – Arts and Culture & Recreational opportunities – and increasing these around the city both indoor and outdoor, focusing on diversity of offerings and diversity of neighborhoods. Having more theater space, large and small. The focus is on downtown but need to talk about other neighborhood centers as well. Vision statement – not residents but community members to include all, density in specific areas but keeping neighborhoods.

Breakout room 10 – Justin Kates – mobility and transit needs more emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle networks, less on roadway network. Open space should focus on Merrimack river as well as Nashua river. How to we incentivize open space that is privately owned staying open. Lots of need to nurture the

cultural diversity of the city and welcoming. Vision statement – encourage sustainable and add educational opportunities.

Breakout room 11 – Jennifer McCormack – need diversity of employers in the city and larger employers that are non-retail. The need for more affordable housing and housing. Both economic growth and housing are connected to transit. Multimodal transit center is important but scale in relation to public health is important. Public safety should be mentioned in the goals. Arts and culture is important but not a higher priority than housing and jobs. Vision statement needs reworking as it's too planner speak. They have a redraft.

Breakout room 12 – Kerry Miller – connectivity and connected communities, so all are connected to the areas around it and not isolated. Discussion around what equity means – socially equitable and social responsible is clearer. Discussion around reduction of automobiles, with the introduction of rail to the city but the car will remain. Lack of affordable housing is important and needs focus. Neighborhoods in the south end that are designed to focus on Boston area instead of Nashua.

Next steps consultants introduced Social Pinpoint – digital mapping engagement online tool. Next meeting will be in April, continuing smaller focus groups.

Meeting adjourned after 8pm.