

Groton Planning Board

Community Planning Workshop

August 15, 2012

Summary Report

Introduction

In response to increased concerns about growth and potential negative impacts associated with growth, the Groton Planning Board enlisted the assistance of North Country Council to plan and facilitate a public meeting as a first step in a possible master plan update. The meeting was widely advertised and had 36 attendees. The meeting was organized into three parts:

- 1. Brief introduction by North Country Council Planning Director Tara Bamford to master plan purpose and presentation of some growth-related statistics.
- 2. Participants sat and talked in groups while writing answers to the following:
 - As we review the Master Plan and other tools for guiding growth, the Planning Board needs to understand the priorities of the community. What 3 qualities of the town do you value the most?
- 3. Responses were reviewed and summarized by Bamford and the most popular answers were reported back to the group. These were then organized into categories and a facilitated discussion was held on the needs and threats relative to each quality of Groton that was highly valued by the participants.

Results

By far the most popular answer was "rural." Residents went on to define rural in the other answers given:

- small population
- small town feel
- friendly
- unpaved roads
- seclusion
- homes spread out
- mountainous terrain and waterways
- safe
- agriculture
- a few small businesses
- darkness
- clean air
- wooded/wildlife
- quality of life
- recreation
- · single family residential
- beauty
- quiet

For the purposes of discussion, participants agreed to summarize "rural" using the categories listed below which represent those with the highest number of responses. The needs and threats to each were identified by participants and are listed below each category.

Quality: Agriculture

Threats:

- Erosion
- Land use conflicts
- Parcelization
- Inadequate zoning
- Unsustainable timber harvest
- Use of former farmland for develop types that require large level land areas, e.g. condos, industry

Quality: Woodlands/Wildlife

Threats:

- Public misconceptions that conservation easements negatively impact the tax base
- Roads fragmentation
- Population growth and development
- Fire

Quality: Recreation

Threats:

- · Posting of private lands by landowners
- Lack of organized nonmotorized trail program, e.g. to compile and disseminate information to the public on trail locations, organize grooming, and work to protect trail corridors
- Some ATV riders souring public opinion on trails in general
- · Lack of safe bike lanes

Quality: Single Family Residential

Threats:

- Conflicting land uses
- Condominium-type development
- Unregulated residential uses that may pose threats to health or safety

Quality: Quiet

Threats:

- Increasing population
- Increasing traffic
- Weak zoning that doesn't manage land use conflicts adequately
- · "McMansions" with helipads not precluded

Quality: Darkness

Threats:

- Population growth with more homes, and eventually, demand for more streetlights
- Poor lighting design, excessive lighting

· Security lights that lack timers

Quality: Privacy/Seclusion

Threats:

- Land use regulations allow lots that are too small and residential density that is too dense
- Inadequate setbacks

Recommendations

The public workshop results provided the Planning Board with clear direction for reviewing the master plan vision and goals. What is less clear is what tools residents will feel are most appropriate for achieving those goals. It is recommended that a survey be conducted as one means for getting feedback from residents on a variety of approaches.

It may also be helpful to form a zoning study committee comprised of the Planning Board and other interested citizens, including representation from those concerned about giving up private property rights for public benefits. This committee would participate first in reviewing and revising the land use recommendations in the master plan, and then in implementing them by recommending zoning changes to Town Meeting. To ensure ample time for this two-way dialog it is recommended that Town Meeting 2014 be the target date.

Examples of North Country Council member services available for this type of process include: guidance on survey questions and sample surveys; review of drafts of the new master plan language, survey, and zoning amendments; multiple meetings at each step to provide guidance and help facilitate the process.

We are about to begin an update of the Town's Master Plan and need your input to develop an understanding of what community members want the Town to be over the next 10-20 years. Please take time to complete the attached survey, telling us what you value about Groton and want to preserve, what you see as areas that need to be improved, and initiatives you think should be undertaken to keep Groton a vibrant and special place for the future. Note that your responses will be anonymous. We look forward to a high response rate. We all have a stake in the future of the town and we need to hear from you.

1. Please check which be:	st deserrace your rea	indence status in Grotor	rear round resid	lentSeasonal	Camp
Check which best desc	ribes your age	under 18	18 – 39	40 - 64	65 +
3. Is it important to contin	nue the support of re	creational opportunitie	s?Yes _	No	
4. How important are eac	h of the following ty	pes of housing develop	pment options:		
	Very Important	Quite Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	
Senior Citizen Housing					
Seasonal Housing					
Cluster Development					
Condo Development					
Single Family Housing					

5. Please rate the following services provided by the Town of Groton.

	Excellent	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Law Enforcement & Protection				
Fire Protection				
Rescue and ambulance				
Transfer Station				
Park and Recreation				
Library				

I

6. Remembering that the State Highway in town begins at the Hebron town line (No. Groton Rd.) and proceeds to Halls Brook Rd. down to the Rumney town line

	Excellent	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
What is the general condition of State roads in Groton?				
What is the general condition of Town roads?				

7. Do you agree that Groton is doing enough to protect the following?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
The natural beauty of town	T	T			I
Conservation areas (wildlife refuges, forests, etc.					
Waters (streams, ponds)				- t t	
Wetlands					
Watersheds					
Aquifer Management					
Steep slopes erosion control					
Night skies (from light pollution)					

8. To what extent do you agree that the following are problems in Groton?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Litter	T		1		
Crime					
Junk vehicles, boats and equipment in view of roads and neighbors					
Property value reduction due to commercial operations on adjacent properties.					
Inadequate zoning to guide future development.					

9. To what extent are you satisfied with the following?

	Very	Somewhat	Somewhat	Very	Don't
F	Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Know
Progress towards introduction of innovative,					
alternative and renewable energy sources in town					
facilities.					
Existing zoning district (Rural/Residential/					
Agricultural/Timber Management)					
Residential development density (currently 2					
acre minimum lot size					
Preservation of agricultural lands					
Preservation of historical buildings and town's					
heritage					
Use of natural resources e.g. forests, gravel, by					
commercial operations					
Protection of rivers and streams through setback					
guidelines					
Public park					

10. How would you like to see the town use income from the Wind Farm? Prioritize the following, I being the most important and 8 being least important.
Save for future Repair roads Improve transfer station Reduce tax burden Create library, separate from Town House Increase salaries of town employees Purchase large tract(s) of land for recreation/conservation Other Please Specify:
11. Are you in favor of regulating building on steep slopes to prevent erosion?YN
12. Would you like to see Transfer Station services expanded to include mandatory recycling?YesNo
13. Would you like to see Transfer Station accept construction debris?YesNo
14. Should we designate scenic roads in town?YesNo
5. Can you think of any other problem facing Groton that has not been identified?

16. What do you consider the most desirable aspects of living in Groton?	
17. What aspects of living in Groton concern you most?	
18. Briefly describe your vision of Groton 20 years from now.	
19. In order of importance please number the following goals that you consider most1 being most important and 5 being least important:	important to the future development of Groton
Maintaining quality municipal facilities and services Protecting our natural resources and environment Maintaining our rural, small-town character Encouraging new businesses/employment opportunities Keeping taxes to a minimum	

Please make additional constructive suggestions for the future development of Groton.							

		***************************************	***************************************				

Total # of suveys = 134 Total # responders = 135

rotal # responders = 133			· • · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		~			
1. Please check which best describes your re	sidence statu	s in Groton.						
				Year round	Seasonal/Camp	Total		
				92	38	130		
			Percent	70.77%	29.23%	100.00%		
3 (0) 1 1 1 1 1 1 1								
2, Check which best describes your age		1: 1 10	10.20	10.61				
		Under 18	18-39	40-64	65+	Total		
		0	6	81	51	138		
	Percent	0.00%	4.35%	58.70%	36.96%	100.00%		
3. Is it important to continue the support of	recreational o	opportunities'		<u> </u>				
			Yes	No	Total			
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~			91	20	111			
		Percent	81.98%	18.02%	100.00%			
4. How important are each of the following t	unas of housi	ng dayalanma	L					
4. How important are each of the following t	ypes of nousi	Very	Quite	Fairly	Not	-		
		Important	Important	Important		Total		
Senior Citizen Housing		22	14	28	Important			
Senior Chizen Housing	D				59	123		
	Percent	17.89%	11.38%	22.76%	47.97%	100.00%	***************************************	
Seasonal Housing		18	34	20	43	115		
<u> </u>	Percent	15.65%	29.57%	17.39%	37.39%	100.00%		
Cluster Development		12	14	13	77	116		
	Percent	10.34%	12.07%	11.21%	66.38%	100.00%		
Control Development			4		100	110		
Condo Development	<u></u>	6 5 000/	4	8	100	118		
	Percent	5.08%	3.39%	6.78%	84.75%	100.00%		
Single Family Residence	<u> </u>	63	28	18	12	121	The state of the s	
	Percent	52.07%	23.14%	14.88%	9.92%	100.00%		
			2077170	17.0070	7.7270	100.0070		
Multiple Family Residence		9	7	25	79	120		
***************************************	Percent	7.50%	5.83%	20.83%	65.83%	100.00%		
					0010070			

Total # of suveys = 134 Total # responders = 135

5 Please rate the following services provided	l by the Tov	vn of Groton.							
		Excellent	Fair	Poor	Don't Know	Total			
Law Enforcement & Protection		62	42	7	18	129			***************************************
	Percent	48.06%	32.56%	5,43%	13.95%	100.00%			
Fire Protection		39	45	<u> </u>	35	130			**************
	Percent	30.00%	34.62%	8.46%	26.92%	100.00%			
Rescue and ambulance		42	41	10	39	132			
	Percent	31.82%	31.06%	7.58%	29.55%	100.00%			
Transfer Station	<b>+</b>	59	51	4	9	123			
	Percent	47.97%	41.46%	3.25%	7.32%	100.00%		~	
Park and Recreation		35	39	14	35	123			
	Percent	28.46%	31.71%	11.38%	28.46%	100.00%			
Library		20	37	25	50	132	····		
	Percent	15.15%	28.03%	18.94%	37.88%	100.00%			
6. Remembering that the State Highway in to	wn begins a	t the Hebron	town line (No	. Groton Rd.)	and proceeds to I	Ialls Brook			
Rd, down to the Rumney town line			-						
		Excellent	Fair	Poor	Don't Know	Total			
What is the general condition of State roads in Groton?		15	56	56	1	128			
	Percent	11.72%	43.75%	43.75%	0.78%	100.00%			
What is the general condition of Town roads?		6	54	64	5	129			
	Percent	4.65%	41.86%	49.61%	3.88%	100.00%			
		<del> </del>	<del></del>						

Total # of suveys = 134 Total # responders = 135

Total in responders = 155			T		1	<u> </u>		
7. Do you agree that Groton is doing enough	to protect t	·····						
		Strongly	Somewhat	Somewhat	Strongly	Don't		
		Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Know	Total	
The natural beauty of town		21	54	21	18	14	128	
	Percent	16.41%	42.19%	16,41%	14.06%	10.94%	100.00%	
Conservation areas (wildlife refuges, forests, etc.		24	52	17	14	25	132	
	Percent	18.18%	39.39%	12.88%	10.61%	18.94%	100.00%	
Waters (streams, ponds)		31	44	22	13	23	133	
	Percent	23.31%	33.08%	16.54%	9.77%	17.29%	100.00%	
Wetlands		25	45	17	12	31	130	
	Percent	19.23%	34.62%	13.08%	9.23%	23.85%	100.00%	
Watersheds		23	43	14	14	39	133	
	Percent	17.29%	32.33%	10.53%	10.53%	29.32%	100.00%	
Aquifer Management		20	28	13	10	57	128	
	Percent	15.63%	21.88%	10.16%	7.81%	44.53%	100.00%	
Steep slopes erosion control		15	31	21	12	51	130	
	Percent	11.54%	23.85%	16.15%	9.23%	39.23%	100.00%	
Night skies (from light pollution)		27	36	16	10	37	126	
	Percent	21.43%	28.57%	12.70%	7.94%	29.37%	100.00%	
			L				1	

Total # of suveys = 134 Total # responders = 135

8. To what extent do you agree that the follow	ving are pro	blems in Gro	ton?			T		
	······································	Strongly	Somewhat	Somewhat	Strongly	Don't		
		Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Know	Total	
Litter		22	45	37	19	8	131	
	Percent	16.79%	34.35%	28.24%	14.50%	6.11%	100.00%	
Crime	<del> </del>	7	28	38	23	32	128	
	Percent	5.47%	21.88%	29.69%	17.97%	25.00%	100.00%	
Junk vehicles, boats and equipment in view of roads and neighbors		45	40	26	17	4	132	
	Percent	34.09%	30.30%	19.70%	12.88%	3.03%	100,00%	***************************************
Property value reduction due to commercial operations on adjacent properties.		22	28	26	22	34	132	
	Percent	16.67%	21.21%	19.70%	16.67%	25.76%	100.00%	

Total # of suveys = 134 Total # responders = 135

9. To what extent are you satisfied with the fo	llowing?	T	T	1		T		
		Very	Somewhat	Somewhat	Very	Don't		
		Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Know	Total	***************************************
Progress towards introduction of innovative, alternative and renewable energy sources.		46	43	4	21	11	125	
	Percent	36,80%	34.40%	3.20%	16.80%	8.80%	100.00%	
Agricultural/Timber Management) with allowance of exceptions for commercial properties.		24	46	16	13	27	126	
	Percent	19.05%	36.51%	12.70%	10.32%	21.43%	100.00%	
Residential development density (currently 2 acre minimum lot size		54	47	11	7	5	124	
	Percent	43.55%	37.90%	8.87%	5.65%	4.03%	100.00%	
Preservation of agricultural lands		23	44	8	3	38	116	
	Percent	19.83%	37,93%	6.90%	2.59%	32.76%	100.00%	
Preservation of historical buildings and town's heritage		37	55	10	6	14	122	MARKET HAVE AND
	Percent	30.33%	45.08%	8.20%	4.92%	11.48%	100.00%	
Use of natural resources e.g. forests, gravel, by commercial operations		15	37	20	13	37	122	
	Percent	12.30%	30.33%	16.39%	10.66%	30.33%	100.00%	
Protection of rivers and streams through setback guidelines		21	43	16	8	31	119	
	Percent	17.65%	36.13%	13.45%	6.72%	26.05%	100.00%	
Everett Hobart Memorial Park		45	37	7	1	31	121	
	Percent	37.19%	30.58%	5.79%	0.83%	25.62%	100.00%	

Total # of suveys = 134 Total # responders = 135

10. How would you like to see the town use in	come from th	e Wind Far	m? Prioritiz	te the following.	1 being the most i	important an	d 7 being		T
least important.				,			a , being		
Priorities		1	2	3	1	5	6	7	Totals
Save for future		15	19	27	30	10	11	3	115
Sure 10. Taking	Percent	13.04%	16.52%	23.48%	26.09%	8.70%	9.57%	2.61%	100.00%
Repair roads		45	39	21	6	7	0	1	119
	Percent	37.82%	32.77%	17.65%	5.04%	5.88%	0.00%	0.84%	100.00%
Improve transfer station		7	12	20	23	29	13	4	108
	Percent	6.48%	11.11%	18.52%	21.30%	26.85%	12.04%	3.70%	100.00%
Reduce tax burden		50	17	14	11	12	8	6	118
	Percent	42.37%	14.41%	11.86%	9.32%	10.17%	6.78%	5.08%	100.00%
Create library, separate from Town House		6	3	7	13	19	29	25	102
	Percent	5.88%	2.94%	6.86%	12.75%	18.63%	28.43%	24.51%	100,00%
Purchase large tract(s) of land for recreation/conservation		13	13	12	15	13	24	14	104
	Percent	12.50%	12.50%	11.54%	14.42%	12.50%	23.08%	13.46%	100.00%
Other	Please Specif	fy: All sug	ggestions inclu	uded in #20				***************************************	
11. Are you in favor of regulating building on	steep slopes t	to prevent e	rosion?	Yes	No	Total			
				108	27	135			
			Percent	80.00%	20.00%	100.00%			
								***************************************	ļ
12. Would you like to see Transfer Station ser	vices expand	ed to include	e mandatory	recycling?	Yes	No	Total		
			<b>_</b>	Donosta	78	51	129		
				Percent	60.47%	39.53%	100.00%	****	

Total # of suveys = 134 Total # responders = 135

13. Would you like to see Transfer Station a	ecept constr	uction debris?		Yes	No	Total			
	1		Percent	80	46	126			
	***************************************			63.49%	36.51%	100.00%		***************************************	1
								***************************************	
14. Should we designate scenic roads in tow	n?			Yes	No	Total			<del> </del>
				75	60	135			1
			Percent	55.56%	44.44%	100.00%			
15. In order of importance please number th	ie following p	goals that you	consider mos	t important to t	i he future developi	nent of Grot	on.		
1 being most important and 5 being least im	portant:							Waldhaladd carbooleles about a bearing	
Prioritie	S	1	2	3	4	5	Total	***************************************	
Maintaining quality municipal facilities and se	rvices	16	11	33	55	8	123	***************************************	*****************
	Percent	13.01%	8.94%	26.83%	44.72%	6.50%	100.00%		
Protecting our natural resources and environment	ent	37	25	36	14	9	121		
	Percent	30.58%	20.66%	29.75%	11.57%	7.44%	100.00%	***************************************	
Maintaining our rural, small-town character		32	57	22	6	6	123	·	
	Percent	26.02%	46.34%	17.89%	4.88%	4.88%	100.00%		
Encouraging new businesses/employment oppo	l ortunities	5	8	6	19	78	116	****	
	Percent	4,31%	6.90%	5.17%	16.38%	67.24%	100.00%		
Keeping taxes to a minimum		47	20	23	22	10	122		
T	Percent	38.52%	16.39%	18.85%	18.03%	8.20%	100.00%		

Town of Groton Planning Board 754 North Groton Road Groton, NH 03241 11/28/2014

According to an article in the Sunday Union Leader dated 16 Nov, 2014 – "On Nov 5, EDP filed plans with the Federal Aviation Administration for 29 wind turbines standing 499 feet in height. The turbines would be scattered among Alexandria, Canaan, Dorchester, Groton and Orange." These new turbines will be over 100 feet taller than the existing Groton wind turbines.

You have the opportunity to give the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee feedback by responding to this mailing. Please indicate below your sentiment regarding additional industrial wind turbines located in Groton.

Please cho	ose ON	LY one and	respon	d no later	than <i>Dec</i>	rember 15, 2	014.
I support	addition	nal industria	l wind tr	arbines in	Groton:		
I oppose a	addition	al industrial	wind tu	rbines in	Groton:		
			A. S.				

All ballets were serially numbered to ensure polling integrity. To guarantee voter anonymity the ballots were randomly inserted in all envelope.

Color Code	Form #	Support	Oppose		
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Blue	1				
Blue	2				
Blue	3	1			
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Color Code	Form #	Support	Oppose	:		
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Are you in favor of the adoption of this Amendment to the existing town zoning ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board? The purpose of this Amendment is to ensure that the Town of Groton has rules in place that will protect the town. The Amendment will not stop alternative energy companies from building additional wind farms, rather it will ensure that the concerns of the people of Groton are considered and protect the town financially.

The State will consider people's concerns regarding large wind project applications if Groton has this Amendment in place.

□ yes □ no

The Planning Board approved this Amendment.

Guided by responses from surveys sent to Town residents and following public hearing, the Planning Board finalized a Large Wind Energy Systems Ordinance (LWES) and placed the zoning amendment on the ballot for the legislative Body to consider.

On the  $10^{th}$  of March 2015, the measure passed with a vote of: Yes -104 to No -42.