

**Cape Elizabeth Town Council
Goals and Work Plan for 2012
Progress Report-December 1, 2012**

Citizen Participation and Effective Policy Development

In recent years, the Town Council and other boards and committees have implemented new guidelines for citizen participation and transparency.

In 2012, the Town will build on these measures through the following initiatives:

- Conduct training for all board and commission chairs on running effective meetings and on enhancing public participation **To be scheduled in December 2012.**
- Invite known interested parties to provide early input on policy issues
- Foster regular ongoing dialogue with community groups including the Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation, the Cape Elizabeth Business Alliance, the Cape Farm Alliance, the Cape Elizabeth Land Trust, the new arts group, the Thomas Memorial Library Foundation and the Fort Williams Charitable Foundation **Ongoing**
- Continue to collaborate with the Cape Elizabeth School Board on issues of mutual interest **Ongoing**
- Develop a plan for Town Hall meeting room space to better accommodate citizens **Report ready for town council review.**
- Review the current policy for the availability of municipal space for community groups and meetings **Committee completing work.**
- Schedule public meetings at times that are convenient for citizens to attend **Ongoing**
- Provide time for reflection on citizen input, and when possible delay voting after a public hearing until the following Town Council meeting **Ongoing**
- Post supporting documents for agenda items on the town website **Ongoing**
- Offer monthly financial updates at Town Council meetings **Ongoing**
- Appoint Council liaisons to boards and commissions **Appointed**

Municipal Services and Projects

In 2012, the Town Council will:

- Dedicate the completed Shore Road Pathway **Dedicated**
- Adopt an updated master plan for Fort Williams Park **Adopted**
- Schedule a citizen vote on a new vision and facility for the Thomas Memorial Library and Cultural Center **Scheduled**
- Adopt a revised master plan for the Riverside Memorial Cemetery **Adopted**
- Adopt policies relating to the management of the Town's open space and greenbelt **Adopted**
- Request the Planning Board to continue implementing the Comprehensive Plan by reviewing updates to the subdivision ordinance **Requested and ongoing**
- Encourage the Future Open Space Preservation Committee to complete its work by December 31, 2012 **Encouraged and completed.**
- Extend the charge to the Alternative Energy Committee through the end of 2012 **Extended**
- Consider a revised organizational structure that would place the Donald Richards Pool in the Community Services Department **Considered and approved.**
- Develop guidelines for reviewing requests for poverty tax abatements **Developed and approved**
- Collaborate with the Cape Elizabeth School Department on recycling and composting **Ongoing with food composting collaboration begun in September.**
- Review fundraising policies for municipal property projects and programs **Reviewed**
- Complete ordinance provisions on short term rental properties and roosters **Roosters completed and short term rentals completed**

**Cape Elizabeth Town Council
Draft Goals for 2011
December 13, 2010**

Strengthen Effective Communication

The Town Council will continue to enhance communication with citizens and other interested parties. The Town Council will:

- Reach out to Cape Elizabeth businesses and seek the creation of a local forum for these businesses in a manner that works for these businesses.
- Be more proactive in communicating upcoming agenda items
- Report on the results of Town Council deliberations to local media
- Enhance communication and collaboration with the Cape Elizabeth Land Trust, the Cape Elizabeth Farm Alliance, the Thomas Memorial Library Foundation, the Fort Williams Charitable Foundation, “Cool Cape” the Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation and with other independent groups who seek to improve the quality of life in Cape Elizabeth
- Meet with our representatives to Augusta to exchange knowledge and views on issues impacting Cape Elizabeth and the State of Maine.
- Increase collaboration and discussion with the Cape Elizabeth School Board
- Continue to review processes for policy development to assist with effective public input

Strengthen Budget and Financial Decision-Making and Reporting

The Town Council recognizes that the economy will not soon return to boom times. Financial decision making and priority setting will need to be done with improved information and through two way communication with citizens. The Town Council will:

- Report key financial data each month at the Town Council meeting
- Enhance the role of the Finance Committee in budgetary oversight, and in increased collaboration with the school department to encourage town wide savings. Special review of the work done on health insurance in 2009-2010 will be given
- Prepare and distribute a concise budget summary aided with graphics
- Continue benchmarking of costs and services with other communities
- Improve long range planning and decisions on capital needs with a greater use of metrics
- Review new opportunities for non-tax revenues
- Implement pilot projects at Fort Williams Park and elsewhere to test potential revenue streams
- Ensure that all service and operations areas are reviewed for optimal efficiency, utilizing internal and external resources, to include consideration of outside consultants
- Examine regionalization alternatives in the context of both good service and cost savings
- Maintain quality services and programs while limiting spending to necessary amounts

Strengthen Boards and Commissions

The Town Council appreciates the service and dedication of talented citizens serving on our boards and commissions. To enable these boards and commissions to be more effective the Town Council will:

- Request each board to provide by March 1 a work plan for 2011 listing priority work areas
- Maintain Town Council liaisons with boards to improve two way communications with the Town Council
- Seek assistance in the community to assist boards with exploration of grant opportunities
- Work with existing boards on emerging issues in lieu of forming multiple new committees
- Review each board's functions and purposes
- Recognize the contributions of board volunteers
- Continue to work with boards in strengthening opportunities for public knowledge of board activities and in enhancing public participation at board meetings

Strengthen Continuing Initiatives

The Town Council has implemented a number of initiatives over the last few years. In 2011 the Council will renew its focus on these initiatives and will:

- Implement aspects of the comprehensive plan that support citizens' desire for open space and an excellent quality of life in Cape Elizabeth
- Support a continuing investigation of energy savings initiatives utilizing the Alternative Energy Committee
- Participate in regional efforts for economic development and for energy efficiency
- Continue planning the future of library services working with the Trustees of the Thomas Memorial Library
- Continue to review municipal space use and encourage reuse of underutilized space
- Work to increase marketing of all Town entrepreneurial activities including Community Services, the Donald Richards Pool, the Portland Head Light gift shop and the Spurwink Church
- Review master plan amendments and a draft business plan for Fort Williams Park
- Implement food composting
- Develop a holistic approach to recycling at all school and municipal buildings
- Collaboratively develop activities and programs to encourage healthy lifestyles
- Implement more availability of online transactions
- Consider the report of the Open Space Management Committee

**Cape Elizabeth Town Council
2010 Work Plan/Goals
Adopted-January 11, 2010
Progress as of December 30, 2010**

1. **The Town Council, seeking to recognize the challenges faced by citizens in this economy, will:**

Highest Priorities

- a. Advocate in a coalition with other regional communities, and independently, the need for legislators and state officials to fairly address the impacts of state funding shortfalls on school funding and other programs.

The Town participated in several meetings with state officials to review the state funding formula and the impact of the stimulus. The Cape Elizabeth School Department was one of the few school systems in Maine receiving more funds from state and federal sources this year.

- b. Ensure that quality services and programs are maintained with as minimal impact as possible on the property tax rate.

The property tax rate for municipal services decreased a second straight year. No municipal services were cut. The school tax rate increased 2.8%. The overall tax rate increased 1.8%.

Priorities

- c. Limit spending to necessary amounts.

The FY 2011 municipal budget remains at substantially the same amount as in FY 2009. Citizens supported (70.7%) a school budget with a 3.4% increase in spending.

- d. Collaborate with other local governments and regional entities in advancing cost savings to effectively provide services.

The Town continues to collaborate with other communities in many areas. Recommendations contained in the draft report of the Municipal Operations Review Committee will be reviewed to determine future priorities for collaboration. The joint work in reviewing flood mapping is a new example of collaboration.

- e. Continue to work with the Cape Elizabeth School Board on cooperative efforts to maintain an effective education program for our youth.

Ongoing

- f. Prioritize in writing services and infrastructure improvements utilizing extensive citizen input.

A much more extensive review of capital needs was prepared as part of the budget process and this will be strengthened further in coming months as the schools and the municipal administration develop a combined capital improvement program.

The municipal budget document itself reflects priorities in these lean times. Citizen input was encouraged through the budget process, a MORC public forum and by placing surveys in the Cape Courier and online.

- g. Right-size our building infrastructure for current and future services.

The Town has extra space in the police station and continues to review alternatives for this space. A budget needs to be established that would allow separation of police space from surplus space.

- h. Improve financial decision making by appropriately allocating all costs for programs and services.

Ongoing and will continue to be implemented in successive annual budgets.

- i. Continue benchmarking with other communities and undertaking quarterly financial reviews by the Finance Committee.

The benchmarking report was completed and the Finance Committee met each quarter undertaking financial reviews. The Town of Falmouth is now leading the benchmarking effort.

- j. Direct staff to assist residents with access to programs such as federal fuel assistance, the Maine property tax relief program and the Thomas Jordan Trust.

Ongoing assistance is being provided.

2. **The Town Council, seeking to enhance revenues from sources other than the property tax, will:**

Highest Priorities

- a. Aggressively seek revenues from Fort Williams Park.

The Town Council approved an aggressive revenue plan for Fort Williams Park but its major component was rejected at the polls. The Town Council and the Fort Williams Advisory Commission are continuing to review revenue opportunities.

- b. Consider a pay per bag/pay per throw option for the Cape Elizabeth Recycling Center.

The Town Council reviewed the pay per bag option and a decision was made in November 2010.

Priorities

- c. Review the potential of revenue sharing from Portland Head Light including licensing the Portland Head Light image.

A review was conducted early in the year including identifying the related legal issues.

- d. Ask all boards, commissions and committees to provide a report to the Town Council identifying revenue opportunities and request the Town Manager to ask municipal departments to provide similar information.

This is ongoing and will continue as the FY 2012 budget is prepared in the coming months. It is noted that there is currently citizen resistance to increasing fees for services provided to citizens.

- e. Review the utilization of space in municipal buildings to determine if underutilized space is available to generate income.

The police department and Fort Williams Park have available space. We are also discussing with the school administration optimizing space utilization.

- f. Explore grant opportunities for open space, for alternative energy, for the Shore Road pathway and for other needs.

A grant was received for alternative energy and has been implemented. Grant applications have been submitted for the proposed Shore Road path.

- g. Collaborate with the School Board to review revenue opportunities suggested at the December public forum on the school subsidy curtailment.

The Town Council has continued to address revenue opportunities suggested at the public forum.

- 3. **The Town Council, seeking to enhance more effective citizen participation in local government, will:**

Highest Priorities

- a. Re-engineer Town policy development processes to provide for increased and earlier citizen input on key decisions.

The Town Council has amended its rules to provide for public comment at workshops and has encouraged all boards and commissions to do the same. It has also published on each agenda information regarding the opportunity for public comment on every item of business. The website continues to provide notice of upcoming decisions.

- b. Implement a communications strategy to more effectively provide information to citizens on municipal services and on local issues.

A communications strategy was approved and parts are being implemented. A few points in the strategy have budget implications which will be reviewed in the future.

Priorities

- c. Make the municipal website more navigable.

A major restructuring of the website is underway and will be launched in January.

- d. Consider use of surveys and greater use of e-mail distribution lists by the municipal government.

Consideration is being given to including funds in the next budget for a professionally administered citizen survey.

- e. Facilitate collaboration and dialogue among boards and committees.

Ongoing. The use of liaisons to the boards and commissions is also assisting with collaboration.

- 4. The Town Council will practice greater environmental stewardship and will:**

Highest Priorities

- a. Increase recycling of materials by citizens, the local government and the school department.

Citizens continue to increase our recycling rate.

- b. Adopt new ordinance provisions to preserve agricultural opportunities in Cape Elizabeth.

New ordinance provisions were adopted.

Priorities

- c. Continue implementation of the Comprehensive Plan including the review of new land use regulations.

Implementation is continuing with a current review of priorities occurring at the November Town Council meeting..

- d. Review progress on making Cape Elizabeth a “cool community” through the US Conference of Mayors Climate Protection resolution locally adopted in 2009.

Not specifically done, but efforts have been undertaken to reduce the carbon footprint.

- e. Better manage the Town’s open space and the town greenbelt through the development of an Open Space and Greenbelt Management Plan.

The committee was formed and is now meeting. An update was provided at the October 13, 2010 Town Council meeting.

- f. Collaborate with the Cape Elizabeth Land Trust and the Cape Elizabeth Farm Alliance to achieve shared goals and objectives.

The Town Council worked with the Cape Farm Alliance in adopting new ordinance provisions for agricultural uses. Work with the CFA and CELT is ongoing and will be enhanced with discussions now underway vis a vis the comprehensive plan.

- g. Provide members of all boards and commissions including the Town Council the opportunity to electronically receive meeting agendas and packets.

The opportunity is being provided and has also enabled more posting online of materials for anyone to review.

- h. Provide citizens the opportunity to conduct more online transactions with the local government including tax bill payments.

Community Services has implemented online registration and online registration for the pool and fitness center is now being developed by a vendor. Tax bill payments have not yet been made available online but will be in February 2011 when tax bills are next issued. 1322 vehicles were re-registered online last year.

5. The Town Council will collaborate with municipal staff and other parties to:

Highest Priorities

- a. Act on recommendations from the Alternative Energy, Health Insurance Review, and Municipal Operations Review committees.

All of the short-term recommendations of the Alternative Energy Committee have been acted upon. The Health Insurance Review Committee recommendations primarily focused on savings in the school department. The MORC report was received at the November Town Council meeting. Although the committee did not reach a conclusion on its recommendations, the draft recommendations will be considered.

- b. Review the Town Center Plan and update as needed.

Ongoing

Priorities

- c. Complete the restoration of the Spurwink Church.

Completed

- d. Determine the future of library space and library service needs in Cape Elizabeth.

Ongoing. Staff and the council liaison recently met with the Trustees.

- e. Improve road safety especially in the town center.

Ongoing. A crosswalk for bikers was added at CEHS.

- 6. **The Town Council will recognize staff and volunteers for their dedication to Cape Elizabeth.**

Town Council members attended the employee appreciation lunch, the fire department appreciation reception and the Portland Head Light volunteers dinner.