

The stated meeting of the Strategic Plan Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Tuesday, November 22, 2022, via webinar with Chairman Commissioner Bole presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners Chairman BOLE, Vice Chairwoman SCHREIBER, WINEGRAD, HENRY
Excused: Commissioner CARSWELL

Also Present: Township Manager MANFREDI
Township Solicitor CLARKE

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Bole made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Schreiber to approve the minutes from the Strategic Plan Committee Meeting of July 20, 2022.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Strategic Planning Milestone Review:

Ms. Julia Novak, Executive Vice President of Raftelis, said we will review some of the work that has been done to-date noting the strategic plan is designed to answer three questions:

- What do we know to be true today?
- What do we hope will be true in the future?
- What must go well to make it so?

We went through a process of developing an environmental scan setting a baseline of knowledge to inform the development of the vision, mission, values, and outcome areas that we have been building on as we develop the strategic planning framework. We have worked with staff on preliminary vision, mission, and values statements, and next, we will be defining focus areas where sessions were held to begin building strategies and identify potential metrics for each focus area.

Taken from an employee survey was content to develop a mission statement and identify organizational values resulting in the following:

Mission Statement –

“Abington Township’s hardworking team is dedicated to providing quality SERVICE to support our welcoming and safe community.”

Values -

S - sustainability

E - excellence

R – respect

V – vision

I – integrity

C – commitment

E – engagement

Commissioner Bole said this supports accountability throughout the Township in having an understanding of what is important as well as help build public conversations.

Commissioner Winegrad said he is impressed by the mission and values statements.

Draft Focus Areas:

Fiscal Sustainability –

Abington achieves fiscal sustainability through emphasis on decision-making that balances short-term needs with long-term impacts; revenue diversification; implementation of sound fiscal policies; budgeting practices and financial reporting practices; financial planning to support current and future provisions of Township services; and meeting benchmarks for financial reporting requirements established by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

Economic Growth –

Abington fosters economic growth through the pursuit of local economic diversity with a variety of business types and sizes; investment in community infrastructure including services, corridors, and the built environment; a reputation for being an easy and safe place to do business; and partnership with public, private, and governmental entities.

Sustainable Infrastructure –

Abington's focus on sustainable infrastructure serves the Township today and tomorrow through neighborhoods, transportation systems, and technology networks that allow people to connect, design, develop, and maintain modern resilient facilities; efficient resource use and mitigation of negative environmental impacts; financially responsible investment in adaptable assets and green infrastructure.

Inclusive Community –

Abington's inclusive community is built on the Township's commitment to celebrate the diversity in people, cultures, and ideas; responsive, community-focused public safety; access to a wide array of housing options, neighborhood resources, and accessible public spaces; and a welcoming atmosphere for residents, business owners, and visitors.

Vibrant Public Spaces –

Abington's vibrant public spaces support a thriving community by ensuring equitable access to geographically diverse Township facilities; state-of-the-art multi-use spaces that encourage collaboration and foster civic accessible destination for residents and visitors.

Excellent Public Services –

Abington's excellent public services are the result of its commitment to quality customer experiences and investment in the development of our valued dedicated employees and volunteers; inclusive community outreach and engagement; effective collaboration and trusted partnerships; innovation, continuous improvement, and data-driven decision-making; and a values-driven organizational culture.

Commissioner Bole said there may be some deficits in these areas, but this commits the Township to guiding resources; provides accountability between management and employees and makes a transparent and public commitment to engage with members of the public on these specific areas in which we hope they will adopt as well.

Regarding an inclusive community, he is proud that we are leading the way as it is just as substantively important as economic growth and public services. We are working towards specifics to measure our success on, build around and make hard decisions about.

Ms. Catherine Carter, representing Raftelis, added that we worked through strategies and proposed preliminary metrics, although there is still work to be done.

Commissioner Winegrad commented that he likes that the focus areas are all-encompassing, and would a strategic plan assist in applying for grants?

Ms. Novak replied yes, it will be helpful in driving towards desired outcomes.

Commissioner Bole considered whether the focus areas are bordering on too much.

Ms. Novak replied she likes that it sets the direction in many ways. The mission and values statements are huge ones to make, and as they are implemented, it will contribute to the success of the Township.

Ms. Carter added that the Township is building on something that already exists, so when it comes time to implement, we will not be starting from scratch.

Manager Manfredi questioned whether the committee feels that the six focus areas should be whittled down or do they represent the direction of where we want to go.

Commissioner Schreiber replied she feels the six areas have some of the same elements, which are equally important, so she is not sure how it could be whittled down.

Commissioner Bole agreed it is a lot, but there is benefit in creating a process by putting this plan out there and then the next strategic plan would pick up what was not fully met by this one, so we need to be honest about how successful it will be based on funding, levels of staffing, etc.

Manager Manfredi said to-date, the work that has been done is vitally important and he does not feel it is too much but wanted to make sure the committee feels the same.

Commissioner Schreiber continued that it would be better to keep all elements of the plan in just in case funding becomes available.

Commissioner Henry agreed that it is necessary that all elements as detailed be included in the plan.

Ms. Novak presented the Vision Statement for the Township:

“Abington is a vibrant and welcoming community supported by engaged and informed residents, a diverse local economy, and regional connections that make the Township an attractive destination for all to thrive.”

The focus areas must go well to achieve the vision, which is the long-term goal, and the vision statement is very community focused.

Commissioner Schreiber suggested a title for the vision statement such as “Vision for the Future.”

Commissioner Winegrad asked about the phrase “attractive destination.”

Ms. Novak replied it is about the business community with busy store fronts and creating a sense of vibrancy attracting people to Abington and its amenities along with desirable public spaces.

Ms. Carter added that in the focus area sessions with staff there was discussion around a sense of place and the things that are done to build community.

Ms. Novak said the next step will be to get feedback on the focus areas from the community and then present strategies and metrics of the proposed plan to this committee for final input.

Commissioner Bole said in summary, we have worked on the vision, mission, values and focus areas in draft format and the committee will take some time to digest it and then prepare for a future public discussion session.

Commissioner Bole asked for any public comment.

Lora Lehmann, resident, commented that “we have mission statements now and we have no sense of fulfilling it, and the residents do not want lots of other people being brought into this Township.” Also, she expressed concern about not having the documents in advance of the meeting.

Commissioner Bole replied that this meeting was specifically designed to view and react to a presentation that was made tonight.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary