**Meeting Minutes - Destination Groton Committee (DGC) Meeting**

**Meeting Date:** June 18, 2025

**Attendees:**

* **Committee Members:** Greg Sheldon, Jeff Gordon, Brian Bolton, Heather Puksta
* **Sub-Committee member:** Karen Tucker-Barisano

**Meeting Summary:** The committee convened to refine the Vision Plan materials in response to recent feedback from the Planning Board including reactions to media coverage and public sentiment. The main objective was to reflect that the plan as an open-ended visioning tool rather than a finalized development proposal. This included developing new messaging, adjusting visual materials, and planning the next stages of public engagement. The committee also reviewed specific content and formatting decisions for a two-page summary document, the larger Vision Plan narrative, and presentation materials intended for boards and public forums later in the summer and fall.

**Key Takeaways**

1. **Reframing the Vision Plan Narrative**

* The committee reiterated the need to frame it as a **conversation starter** rooted in public planning principles and retail/economic data.
* Emphasis was placed on the plan being:
  + A flexible framework, **not a blueprint**
  + **Non-zoning**, **non-binding**, and not part of any development agreement
  + Meant to **spark dialogue** across all of Groton’s centers—not just Town Center

1. **Response to Planning Board Feedback and Press Coverage**

* The committee acknowledged the *Groton Herald* article and Planning Board concerns about over-concentration of development.
* There was agreement that the presentation and public documents must:
  + Show a **balanced distribution of opportunity** town-wide
  + Address misconceptions about the number of proposed buildings and scale
  + Clarify that **Floor Covering Stores**, etc., were examples from the leakage report—not actual recommendations

1. **Two-Page Vision Snapshot – Content and Structure**

* The team developed a **two-page public-facing summary** that includes:
  + High-level background
  + Vision principles
  + Clarification of what this is / is not
  + Three-part framework: “What we heard,” “What we saw,” “What we imagine”
* Visuals will include:
  + SketchUp rendering
  + Groton map showing “nodes of opportunity”
  + Quote or endorsement-type pullout

1. **Edits to the Presentation Deck**

* The committee reviewed changes to the slide deck, including:
  + Addition of a “How Did We Get Here?” process slide
  + Removal of overly technical or “developer-facing” language
  + Emphasis on **walkability, public safety**, and **small-scale revitalization**
* It was agreed that a new version of the deck and snapshot would be completed before upcoming Select Board meetings.

1. **Vision Plan Narrative Document**

* The long-form narrative will:
  + Build on the slide deck structure
  + Include context for public funding and stakeholder input
  + Reference the leakage studies without relying too heavily on economic jargon
  + Include a section addressing **concerns, misinterpretations**, and what the committee has **heard and changed** as a result

1. **Public Engagement Strategy**

* The committee intends to:
  + Begin early outreach with small group discussions (business owners, property owners, residents) in July
  + Host 1–3 larger public forums in **September**
  + Consider an **interactive video version** of the plan and/or a “vision walk” tour
* Messaging to stress continuity with the **Master Plan**, alignment with **state-funded planning**, and emphasis on **incremental, community-led change**

**Action Items**

* Finalize two-page public summary document (Vision Snapshot)
* Complete updated version of presentation slide deck with revised language and visuals
* Share materials with the Select Board and Planning Board for feedback by end of June
* Begin outline of long-form Vision Plan narrative document
* Draft responses to common questions/concerns to include in narrative appendix
* Plan and schedule Town Committees, stakeholder meetings throughout July
* Begin outreach to GHMC, Lawrence Academy, and local businesses for support or co-hosting opportunities
* Develop communications calendar for July–October, including newsletter mentions, website updates, and forum invitations
* Explore production of short narrated video or animated walk-through using SketchUp visuals