



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

5 February 2019

TO: Town of Rye

FROM: Plan New Hampshire
21 Daniel Street 2nd floor c/o GPI Portsmouth NH 03801

RE: Rye Community Design Charrette
May 31 and June 1, 2019

Why Plan NH is coming to Rye:

In December of 2018, the Town of Rye (the "Town") submitted an application to be considered for a Plan NH Community Design Charrette. The Plan NH Charrette Committee accepted the application.

The Town is seeking assistance to

- evaluate "its Town Center for its best uses in meeting the needs of its citizens" and to
- "help it formulate a comprehensive and cohesive plan for the Rye Town Center."
- formulate a plan to "greatly enhance the health, vitality and cohesiveness of the area and a sense of community among Rye's citizens."

The Town is looking for

- "an unbiased bird's eye view of potential options to maximize current assets and guide future investments", including sequential steps
- safety improvements for pedestrians and other users of the Town Center.

In addition, they would like assistance in

- identifying "ways to attract younger families to town, while providing needed services to seniors" as well as "ways to bring the community closer together as a whole."
- identifying "opportunities to improve Rye Recreational participation and/or ways to lift the community spirit."

- finding “ways to add new and perhaps affordable housing in Rye center, increasing the vitality of that area.”
- planning town building and land use, including, as mentioned in the Master Plan, “pocket parks and gardens in the town center.”
- identifying “ways to bring the business community and local residents together in a central area during the off-season months, helping to strengthen the community bond”
- uncovering “ways to bring the community together more, either with a multi-purpose building, zoning changes that would add retail opportunities in the center, or special events that bring the town citizens together.”
- identifying “options for increased walkability/cycling to/from the town center.”

A *charrette* is a brainstorming session. For Plan NH, the focus is on the *built environment* and its effect on the community, usually around a downtown or other significant neighborhood.

For each Plan NH charrette, a Plan NH member *volunteers* to be the leader, and pulls together a team of other volunteers according to the project. These volunteers are all professionals within their industry – architects, landscape architects, planners, contractors, historic preservationists, engineers of all types, and more. They donate their time because they believe in the process, in the importance of community, and see this as a way to “give back” to the Granite State.

Plan NH Charrette overview (times approximate):

At 10:30 AM on Friday, May 31, 2019, Plan NH team members will gather in Rye. The Team Leaders is North Sturtevant, of JSA Architects in Portsmouth. Robin LeBlanc, Executive Director of Plan NH, will work with the Town regarding production and logistics. The final Team Roster (approximately 12 - 15) will be provided to the Town at that time.

At 10:45, the team will introduce themselves to each other and community leaders. From then until about 12:30, there will be a walking tour of downtown Rye (which may be augmented with a driving tour of the areas immediately surrounding the downtown), led by two or three community members who are knowledgeable about the Town, its center, and the challenges the Town faces.

From 12:30 – 1:30, over lunch provided by the Town, the Plan NH Team will begin to discuss what they are learning, what they still need to know.

From 1:30 – 3:00, the team will meet with key community and business leaders. During this time, the Team will gather information pertinent to the Town Center that the general public may not necessarily know about. This may be more technical in nature, for example, or include rules and regulations that will be important to the recommendations.

There will be two public listening sessions, the first from 3:30 – 5:00, the second from 6:30 – 8:00 PM. Each will be conducted in a small group discussion format, with Plan NH Team

members acting as facilitators and scribes. The small group format gives every citizen an opportunity to speak and be heard.

At the end of each session, there is time allotted for general discussion.

Between the listening sessions, the Team will have dinner/supper, provided by the Town.

On Saturday morning:

- the Team will reconvene between 8 and 8:30 AM (breakfast and lunch provided by the Town) to review what has been seen and heard, and begin to formulate recommendations.
- at 3:00, there will be a public presentation of what the Plan NH Team recommends. This will probably be in a Power Point format, and will be available to the Town early the following week.
- A final report (which should not contain any new information, but will represent a more thorough and polished presentation of the concepts covered in the charrette) will be provided in PDF format to the Town of Rye 8-12 weeks after the charrette.

Expectations:

1. All marketing, outreach and raising awareness of the charrette shall be undertaken by the Town. All citizens shall be included, especially those who do not usually show up, and those who tend to be naysayers.
Plan NH is happy to assist in language and other development of the materials.
2. Town to provide space for
 - a. meeting with key town leaders in a large group format, preferably a large circle
 - b. listening sessions in small groups (at ends of long tables, or around round tables, or simply in circles of chairs).
3. Town to provide easels, flip charts, historic photos, maps (as specified by the Leader, but usually tax maps, topo maps, aerials).
4. Town to provide lunch and supper on Friday, breakfast and lunch on Saturday, with plenty of water at all times and snacks.
5. Town to provide lodging for up to three people (final number provided week of May 20)

Plan NH will provide recommendations based upon the information available at the time of the charrette, and upon the expert knowledge of the professionals involved. These recommendations are broad, and will not contain working drawings or *specific* plans of action. The citizens of Rye may accept the recommendations and use some or all as *foundations* for future planning and action. They are to be seen as guidelines, not mandates.

If applicable, any cost estimates are to be taken as guidelines only. Estimates are derived from prices during the time of the charrette, and from a general understanding of the particular project. *Real* costs will depend on actual, detailed plans by an appropriate professional with all the information needed.

The Town will pay Plan NH the full charrette fee of \$6,000.00 on or before May 31, 2019.

Approved:

Plan NH

Name: Robin H. LeBlanc

Title: Executive Director

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Town of Rye

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

DRAFT