

Social Service PILOT and Comparative Impact Study Committee
Conference Room 2 7:30 PM Memorial Building Framingham, Ma
Minutes

November 29, 2005

Note: If a word or sentence is blue and underlined click for the link.

Attendance: Bob Berman, Dawn Harkness, Cynthia Laurora., Laurie Lee, Jim Palmer,
Wes Ritchie, Nick Sanchez: Steve Orr, John Speranza absent: Yaakov Cohn

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM

Review of past minutes:

Dawn Harkness amendments to 8/2/05 meeting

The clerk said she had no problem with the changes to these minutes.

Dawn moved to amend the 8/2 minutes to include the amendments she has introduced

Laurie second

Vote: 9 in favor 0 opposed 0 abstain pass

Changes to 10/25/05 meeting

The clerk thanked Dawn for the first section of corrections and apologized for missing those statements. She wanted to be sure the other people quoted in that section also approved.

The second set of changes were more complicated. Laurie discussed the methodology she has developed in writing the minutes. She paraphrases people and has developed a style for every member. If any member feels what they say has not been fully or correctly represented, she is happy to make changes. However, Laurie was reluctant to make changes asked by one member to what another member said if that member was satisfied, especially as in this case, where she thinks she caught the full meaning and the paraphrasing is consistent with past minutes.

Dawn made those changes, specifically to Cynthia, because she thought there was a key point about Kurt's role on the committee. Her feeling was that groups that were not ideologically balanced were producing biased questionnaires. Dawn felt that while she was lamenting Kurt not being on the committee, Cynthia said that she didn't feel there was any problem with Kurt not being on the committee, because they were able to get through the documents. Dawn felt that the group meetings did not work through issues and ended up producing biased slanted work.

Dawn thought the paraphrasing ignored Cynthia's point that the Public Safety group worked quickly, but one needs to look at the result. She minimized Kurt's role because work got done quicker. The idea of being balanced is that it takes time.

The paraphrasing missed Wes's points too.

Laurie thought she caught Cynthia's statements:

Cynthia noted that Kurt wasn't able to come to many meetings, including work groups, and that the 9 people who were working on the committees were moving along quickly and making good results.

Discussion ensued about verbatim minutes, versus paraphrasing, and minutes that are just motions and votes.

Mr. Sanchez commented that the clerk has done such a tremendous job, more than usually required; his point of view is to extend his support for giving the clerk leeway. It is not for any one of us to dictate to the clerk how she should do the minutes. As the clerk pointed out, if someone wants to be quoted verbatim that is fine. But requiring the clerk that other people be quoted verbatim is imposing our views on her.

Jim said he has no problem with paraphrasing but don't misinterpret. He is not saying that is happening but sometimes you have to be specific. We have to make sure that what the person says is put in there.

Motion to accept the minutes of 10/25 as written by the clerk.

Second

Motion by Dawn Harkness to amend the minutes as submitted by Dawn Harkness to the committee.

Second

Motion by Nick Sanchez that these minutes should be changed if anyone requests they be quoted verbatim but not under any other circumstance, and that the clerk has leeway to do as she thinks.

Second

Wes was satisfied with how Laurie writes minutes. He supports Dawn's corrections and thinks Laurie has done a great job paraphrasing him

Bob spoke to Nick's motion: if someone hears/sees an error in the minutes he should be able to bring it up.

Dawn said that for the most part Laurie does a good job but any time a member feels it is an important enough issue to write out verbatim notes it should be considered, especially if we are going to go beyond motion and vote. She thought it is important for people to take responsibility for what they say.

Cynthia said that she has no trouble with the verbatim transcript of what she said but Laurie's description fully represented what she said and includes the spirit of what she said. .But everyone should have a right to question the minutes.

Nick's amended, that every individual has a right in these particular minutes, to request that they be quoted verbatim, otherwise the interpretation given by the clerk should be accepted.

Discussion continued with some suggestions to the above amendment and the duty of the committee to provide accurate record of the meetings.

Cynthia said she did not mind being quoted verbatim.

Nick withdrew his motion and amendment

Vote on Dawn's motion: 7 in favor 1 opposed 1 abstain pass

Vote to accept the minutes as amended: 7 in favor 0 opposed 2 abstain pass

11/8/05 meeting postponed, Dawn just got the tapes

11/15/05 meeting postponed

Laurie said that she dug herself into a 28 page hole and wanted to discuss changing the style of minutes with the committee. She would like to make the minutes drastically reduced to motions and votes and only reports from the work groups.

Nick supported any preference of the clerk.

Bob was mixed. He understands the work involved with these minutes. However, we have set precedent as to what people can expect to have in terms of minutes to follow our meetings. We have advertised that and people are used accustomed to it. He thought the give and take would be missed.

Nick thought there is a compromise. He thought Laurie has been put through the grinder with the minutes and he has offered to change his vote and support Dawn's motion that the meeting be televised. He thought we were asking too much of the clerk to not only write the minutes but to go back and re-listen to the tapes and make changes.

Dawn pointed out the clerk has set the standard herself. She would be very happy if we videotaped the meetings and the clerk can be relieved of the responsibility.

Bob agreed. He wondered if we had to change the nights of our meetings.

Dawn spoke to that. She has done a lot of video work with Comcast and anyone can request video equipment and we can tape it. It doesn't have to be live. Government access can then put it on the website.

Nick moved that we reconsider the issue of videotaping the meetings.

Dawn seconds

Jim wants to be sure the lack of equipment will not interfere with us meeting.

Vote: 6 in favor 2 opposed 1 abstain pass

Dawn volunteered to do the necessary legwork.

Bob moved that the committee ask Dawn to take steps to determine what the committee needs to do to get the meetings videotaped.

Vote: 7 in favor 2 opposed 0 abstain pass

Discussion of Report to Town Meeting

Bob's draft report was reviewed.

Laurie asked if we could remove the comment about the path being contentious. She did not think that needed to be in there.

Dawn thought it was absolutely necessary. This committee has been difficult and people have questions about why it is taking as long as it is. She thought the Moderator thought the description of our charge is obvious and she does not think that is true. Dawn said that

we need to acknowledge that this has not been easy and that there has been a lot of conflict.

Wes asked if it could be written differently.

Laurie said that she did not think it was information town meeting needed in a report. They need facts and to see what we have done.

Cynthia agreed with Laurie.

Bob said that in the previous report he emphasized that we were politically diverse. He sees it more in the line with that type of comment. It is out there that it has been contentious.

John asked if he could incorporate the diversity.

Jim liked the statement and thinks it is true.

There was some clarification about meetings set up for next week with the police chief and town counsel. Including a timeline was also discussed but the group was reminded that we gave that last time. We should have some results and a better picture by April, if not a preliminary report.

Wes moved that we accept this draft as is with needed changes if anything changes

Dawn seconds

Cynthia made an amendment to exclude the statement about being contentious; she did not think it was appropriate.

John agreed saying it sounded too harsh.

Bob said that town meeting knows exactly what is going on in here and that it is extremely contentious and there has been a lot of in fighting, and this is a soft way of putting in there.

Dawn thought that it belongs in there particularly since a member of the group was quoted as saying that everybody was happy that the charges from last week were all dismissed .She said that is absurd. Not everybody is happy.

Laurie asked for point of order to have the chair stop the attacks and yelling.

Bob said this was just about a comment made.

Dawn continued that it should be the official line of this committee that honesty is best, not spin. If anything comes out of this report it should be honest. The honest truth is it has been a contentious path.

Nick called point of order because the statement is discussing motives of other people. Saying someone is putting a spin is a discussion about motives. Motives cannot be included. One can say I disagree, this is inappropriate, etc. but to say something has a spin is to say there is a motive.

Dawn asked to withdraw the comment that somebody put a spin. She would rather say a member of the committee lied to the press that everybody was happy about the dismissal. She said that is a fact.

The chair said we need to move on.

Cynthia moved to amend the report to read that “We have continued to move forward towards our goal of providing the town with an in-depth report... eliminating It has been a somewhat contentious path.

Steve seconded.

Jim thought the motion is totally out of order. We asked the chair to prepare a report and he did. By a slip of the tongue you put in the statement. Let’s tell it like it is. They need to know what is going on.

Wes offered a friendly amendment to Cynthia to put in instead “As one big happy family”

Vote on amendment 4 in favor 4 opposed 1 abstain

Nick called a point of order. He quoted from Robert’s Rules: “The moment the chair hears such words as fraud, liar or lied, the chair must act immediately and decisively to correct the matter and prevent its repetition.”

Bob thanked him and said he did move us on.

Vote on Report: 6 in favor 2 oppose 1 abstain

The chair discussed feedback from the police and fire chief. The chair and clerk will meet with the police chiefs to hear his thoughts about the questionnaire and will report back to the committee.

Education will bring the new questionnaire next week

Nick Sanchez asked if the work group will be including expenditures that are not in the school budget but that the town pays for: health care, grounds, building etc.

Bob wondered how that is relevant to SSA’s.

Nick answered that we are trying to capture the impact on the schools and we should include all costs to the town because there are some significant expenditures to the town that do not appear on the school budget but end up affecting the per student costs.

There was some confusion about how this relates to our study and it was decided to bring it up at the next meeting.

Property and Income Report

Mr. Sanchez introduced the map of social service addresses in Framingham that the work group has been working on. The map does not include all the sites: it only includes only about 127 sites: some of the sites are too close to separate and some are at the same address. In addition many properties are confidential and unknown. Laurie passed out the list of what has not been included in the map at this point.

What is not included in MAP		# not counted
Wayside	1 Frederick Abbott Way	1
475 Franklin Street # 102,3,4,5,7,8	Jewish Family Services	6
15-17 Second Street (43 condos)	SMOC	43
18 unknown address	Advocates Unknown owner	18
2 unknown address	Advocates	2
43Homes/Condo's apartments	Advocates	43
45-51 South Street	SMOC	2
Total number not counted		115

Bob invited the audience to “scooch around” to see the map.

Nick continued that the map can be viewed from many perspectives and interpretations but we are not going into any interpretations, we are just offering information.

John asked if this map should not be made public.

Laurie added she did not think they are at that step yet. The reason the P&I group did this map was step 1 to begin identifying where agencies are so the P&I group can begin looking at the questions in the action plan: adjacent, nearby, neighborhoods.

Nick agreed that people in the community should be aware of what they have access to and that some might feel this is very helpful and can be proud of what we have.

Laurie continued that the mapping was just one step in seeing what they have to do to answer the questions. It is just a piece of data at his point.

Ms Harkness commented that this falls into the category of the P&I group going off on a tangent that has nothing to do with what the P&I group is supposed to be doing. It is a very interesting map but it is not anywhere on the action plan. She continued that it is an interesting piece of data but not what the committee requested. The committee requested an analysis. Once the addresses are established, find the neighborhoods and find adjacent and getting the property values for the shelters and the houses nearby. That is what we are waiting for.

Bob said that he sees this as the first step in doing that. He has no problem with this. It is a fairly logical first step to get to that point.

Jim had no problem with the mapping but was confused why it is not complete. Laurie said it is a prototype.

Jim thought that something presented as incomplete doesn't give a full view. So he considers this truly step 1 on the map. We still need step 2 of the map.

Laurie said that she passed the list around because what is not included are many unknown addresses. There were also three cases that addresses were the same for many sites. She asked the group for advice on how that should be taken into account: different color dot, larger dot, circles with numbers of sites etc.

Jim thought it would be significant to show the large numbers of sites at each address. Jim also asked if down the line we could get the information about the use of these sites.

Laurie commented that we can't. We have been asked not to do that and we agreed to comply.

Dawn agreed with that. She asked if there were any values for those properties yet.

Mr. Wolf from the audience asked if he could take a picture.

Dawn said that these are working papers and that it hasn't been voted on or approved. It is incomplete.

Bob said if it has been presented it is public record and we should absolutely make it clear that it is a first draft, it is incomplete, it is going to be significantly changed to be accurate.

Dawn added that it is not information the committee requested; it is another piece of information coming from a committee that is producing its own work based on its own agenda.

The P&I group moved on to passing out the next set of data they have gathered: the income studies done for the comparative communities and Framingham. They presented the cumulative growth rates from 1990-2000 that was calculated from the census.

The group discussed the map and public information again. The chair explained that there is a difference between public information and information approved by the group and accepted into our final report. This is just information to consider at this point.

Dawn moved that the committee not accept this as evidence of anything at this point. She commented that we don't let the minutes get published without approval. No one has had a chance to look at the map and compare it to the data. She moved that at this point this not be accepted as a document coming from the larger committee.

Nick asked for a point of order. He said the group is in the middle of making a report and he would appreciate a chance to finish and then have motions brought forward.

The chair agreed.

Dawn asked for this to be resolved before Mr. Wolf takes a picture and possibly puts the information on his website. She doesn't want anything from the committee on the site if it is not fully accurate.

Bob explained that this is a public meeting and there is a right to take pictures, get hold of any documents.

Dawn asked if we could do something. Wes commented that he would agree with Dawn but pointed out that the map doesn't say on it that it is connected to the PILOT committee.

John said that this document, the map and the list is concrete evidence that these dots exist in Framingham. Not falsifications.

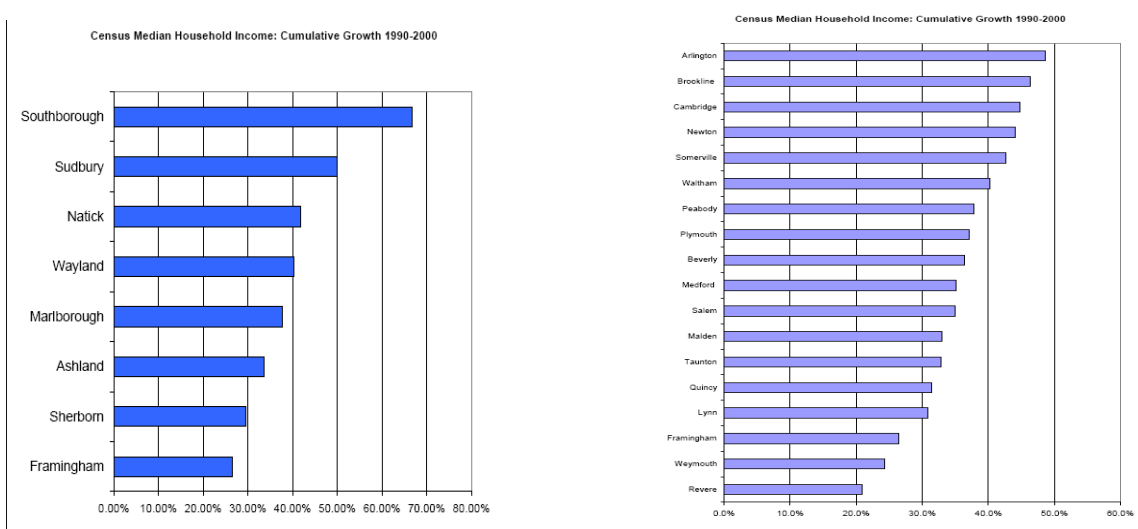
Bob said that we have not had yet given the agencies a chance to verify the information. It is certainly public information but it is a leap to say that because it is public info it is guaranteed to be true.

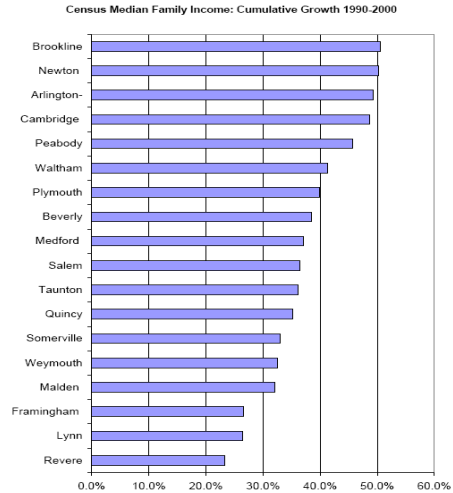
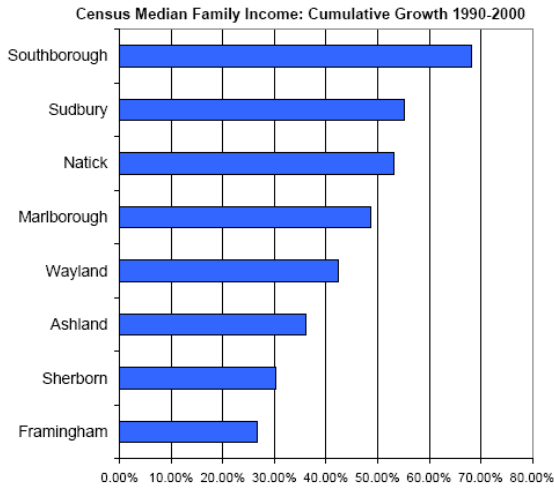
Laurie commented that the idea for the map is not something special to them. Even Advocates website has maps. She showed an example.

Jim had no problem about anyone taking a complete report from us and publishing. But to pick and choose it is not an accurate demonstration of what goes on. The map is a little piece of a report. He said that if he showed only the North side of town and left out the South side, it would also be incomplete. He wants to see a map of all of Framingham. Then anyone can do what they want with the complete report. He said this is not answering the question we asked. It is only part of that answer. He didn't think it was public record until we accept it.

Bob disagreed. He said if it is something passed out to the committee it is public information.

Laurie explained that household income includes families and all singles and any other people living in the communities. Family income is strictly income of families. They explained that they were using the census median values and that is why they are looking at the decade of 1990-2000.





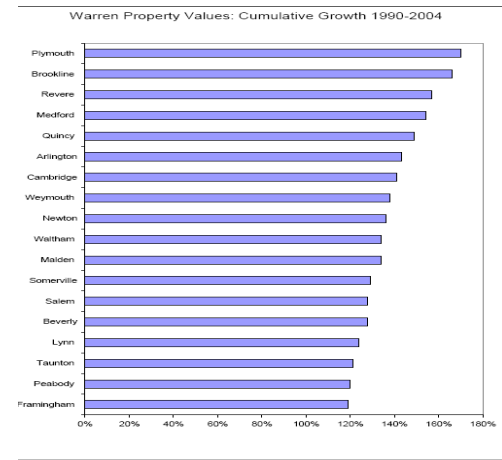
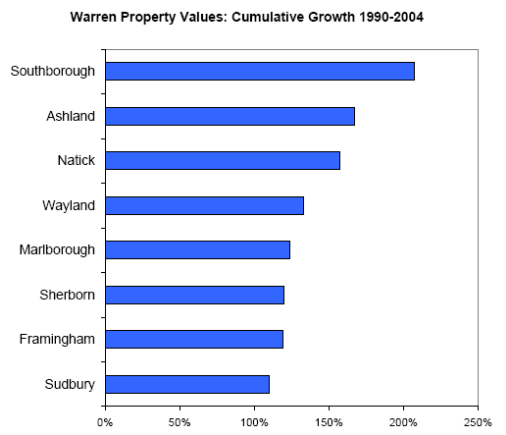
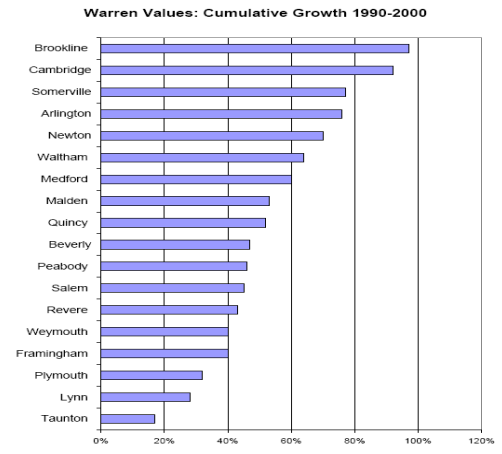
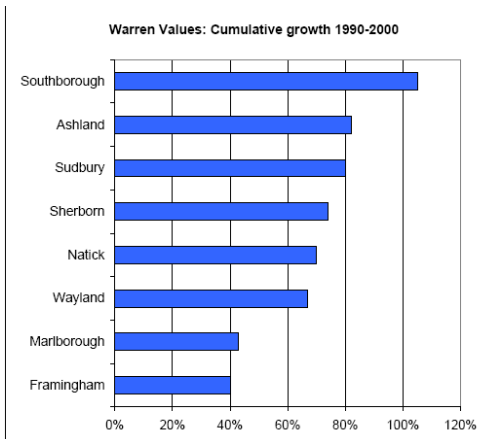
Nick emphasized that they were not drawing conclusions. This is simply data from the census. We looked at what had happened over the decade of the 1990's to Framingham and the comparative communities. This is the cumulative growth of income for the entire decade.

Nick again emphasized that one can say what appears from the census data but not really come to conclusions i.e that Framingham's income growth has not been very good.

He said that they also have calculated the cumulative growth of median property values using the Warren Group's information. They have the information for the decade 1990-2000 and also for the 1990-2004 period since the Warren group provide complete information for that time frame.

Laurie told the group that all of this information, i.e. the census and the Warren data, is available to everyone, free of charge.

There was discussion about there being a lot of information and no explanation. Laurie re-iterated that they are not attempting to explain anything. They are just providing data at this point.



We asked what good all of this does and how does it fit into the big picture of what the property and income group is doing.

Is there an explanation for this?

Nick said he can try to show some ways it can fit. It fits into the picture in how you interpret all the information together. For example one can look at the income information and say that Framingham has done poorly in income growth and that might justify the number of agencies that we have. A different interpretation is that if you have a lot of social service agencies, that in itself will bring down the income of the community.

Nick emphasized that at this stage we are unable to draw either conclusion. But it does fit in terms of telling a story of the possible impact of social service agencies and it can come either way.

Laurie added that the action plan is asking the following questions for property values and similar ones for income, and they are presented some of the information needed to answer them:

a) **Property Values**

- 1) What are the changes in real estate values in Framingham compared to other towns in our region?
- 2) How have property values changed in Framingham over time (10 years or more) relative to growth of Social Service Agencies? Is there a relationship?

Jim asked where the Warren numbers come from.

Laurie said they come from deeds of properties that have sold.

Jim summed up that every piece of property sold during the year will be included in this information

Nick agreed but pointed out that it is residential, not commercial.

Jim thought that was a problem and that we also need the commercial. He also asked for the other communities values.

Dawn said that it is hard to tell because we are in the preliminary stages, but Framingham's population has remained remarkably consistent. We are built out. Other communities like Ashland and Sherborn have larger tracts and they can build McMansion's and that can raise the property values, because of all the previously un built upon lots. Is that taken into consideration?

Laurie said that nothing has been taken into consideration and nothing has been concluded. This is strictly numbers. We are not even close to trying to explain anything.

Dawn commented that is why when the action plan was discussed we brought up these very issues and we decided that we could not do a controlled study. What we need to do is the value of the houses near the shelters. That is information that we need while this information muddies the waters. It doesn't study or address the question of the impact of social services.

Wes had some concerns. He thought the data was cool but that this is step 3 and 4 of the action plan and looking outward. He asked if the P&I group was looking inward to number 2, the second thing in the action plan before looking at number 3?

Was it not in the report , why are we doing this first?

Laurie said that the first two questions are very difficult to answer. They took the first step towards answering those questions by making the map.

What is before the group, data for questions 3 and 4, was easy to do. That is why it is here. Even though it took a lot of time, it was something that was simple to do. The other questions (2, 3) are difficult and the P&I group is still outlining a strategy to answer them. This will include buying time on the Warren Group site, or paying for them to do some studies, but that means the group has to be very sure of the questions they will be asking . When we were laying out the map John gave us some valuable information about the properties surrounding the agencies and how much information we can get from

them. So we are still focusing on what sites we will be studying and what data we need to be gathering. It is a hard problem

Nick concurred that John brought some interesting points to the work group and helping them to understand some of the problems we are encountering. We are still grappling with some of the issues and ultimately we will need to have approval to have the Warren group provide us specific information.

Our understanding was that we were looking for information about housing values across the community and then at varying levels such as precinct, neighborhood, near by, adjacent. The reason we started with this information is that the data was free.

Bob moved that the P&I group bring in details of the cost for using the Warren Group to provide the needed information for the committee to vote and approve the expenditure.

Jim seconded

Nick mentioned that they are waiting for the Warren Group to respond to them.

Nick said that when they came up with the information presented, and he was quite surprised, they also tried to find other sources of data that are governmental. He found assessors valuations for homes and the census information. We do not want to confuse the issue but would like to bring that data forward too.

Bob's concern was that he would like to see business data as well. He would like the group to look at the non residential growth.

Nick said that one of the governmental sources has that but the Warren group did not have that.

He asked the group what else they would like to hear and see? He understands about seeing it closer. That will come.

Wes was concerned how social services will fit in .He asked the committee if they want to follow this path of going from the larger picture in or do they want the group to look at the smaller view and out. If we hit a road block the group will have a large block of useless data. He wants to save the group work

Nick responded that from the point of view of the communities, they also have social service agencies, thus we can compare at the community level. SO he did not think the argument is irrelevant. In addition, we cannot do the detailed study, the Warren group will have to. He did not see where a road block will come from.

Vote on Bob's motion: 8 in favor 1 opposed 0 in favor pass

Jim had a problem about the map. We have a map of the area where there are social services but we do not have a map of the entire geographical region of Framingham.

Dawn said that map is all of Framingham.

Jim said that the assumption(he doesn't think it is true) is that if one looks at the other side of route 9 and some sections of the southside the property values have only increased X amount. If one assumes that then one has to assume property values in the core region have pulled the entire rest of the town down.

Nick suggested the group look at the Warren values for 1990-2004

Bob stated that he had no problem with information being distributed, although there is overload. He has not heard the P&I committee making any conclusions or interpretations of the data. All we are doing right now is getting a huge data dump (Too big)

Jim asked what the P&I groups goal is?

Nick said the goal is simply to report the data that has been requested from the Action Plan. And, that we have a complex issue, especially when you consider Sherborn and Sudbury. Since it was state that we are not supposed to go after controls, all we are going to do is present the data. Then the broader committee can see if we can come up with some explanations as to what is going on.

Dawn said that we have this list that we worked on very hard, that has all the taxed and non taxed properties. We already have the addresses. There are many places where you can actually find sale prices of these house and tell us what the increase of those houses are. For the same decade Dawn thought this data here is meaningless. The other data is the data we have been asking for, for months and it is still not getting done. She really wants to see that the next time from this committee, you guys can do it or not. Not this irrelevant information.

Bob said that he does not see what we have been given today to be outside of the action plan. He is not sure it will lead to concrete answers, but it was certainly covered in what has been discussed in the Plan. His curiosity is in how this will all develop and he is also interested in seeing the other numbers. His understanding is that there is every intention of bringing those to us as soon as they can.

Wes said that if you look at the Action Plan this stuff is number 3 and 4 and it is that because it is built on numebr2, which we don't have.

Bob did not believe the action plan was done in any order.

Wes said that if you read it that way it is a build. This could be important data but we don't know if it is going to be yet because we haven't done number 2.

Bob could not see any problem with jumping ahead. Certainly the other data is among the most important we will get but there is no problem having this and keeping it in a folder until we get to a point. We have already discussed it more than we need to.

We asked if this is the most efficient way of doing things.

Bob saw no problem with this.

Jim spoke to the defense of the working group. They answered one thing: what are the changes in values in Framingham compared to other towns. The whole rest of the section deals with social service agencies: is there a relationship between this information and the change in growth of social service agencies That is what has been asked for. We have one item.

Laurie spoke to this. She said that sometimes you can't answer questions in direct line. It just isn't that easy. For example how do these issues relate to the growth of social service agencies? Laurie said she has tried to look up past history of social services in Framingham, but she could not find specific information. She asked why did the group include that question in the survey to social service agencies? Because we need that information to answer that question. If anyone here can find that information for the group, please do. She could not.

Jim said that he said that academic studies have hypothesis and if they can't fit the data into the hypothesis it is set aside. A lot of this data will not fit into our hypothesis. Let's establish our hypothesis. The data has to be available. Let's figure out how 517 Winter Street will change the values of neighbors. He said he didn't know how to do that but we had to.

Cynthia spoke to the issue of property value growth. Generally values go up over time. But how would a similar property grow if it were in another town or location. Relative to social service agencies we can look at Waltham and see how we compare with them. We need to look at values inside and outside of Framingham to see if there are any correlations.

Wes asked Laurie a question: His concern is we will get the information and get information from SSA and lay them together and then the P&I group will have the overwhelming task of figuring out how those fit.

Nick did not think that could be fully done with the tools at our disposal. We do not have random samples and thus we do not have statistical measures. So all we can do is put things side by side.

Wes added and draw your own conclusions. Wes did not think that is acceptable. He thinks we have to acknowledge that we can't do it and rather than gather random pieces of data laying them together, he is not worried about any conclusions people draw, but that if we cannot provide the answer to how these are related we shouldn't be doing this part.

Nick said that he tried very hard to get random samples and controls. We were told no and so this is all we can do. And the data can have different interpretations.

Wes said that you admit we can't do this without controls.
Nick said we cannot without random samples.

Wes asked if he preferred we do this as incomplete data and conclusions instead of giving a complete final report.

Bob said that he did not think Nick was saying that. He hears Nick saying that here is the data we can get right now. We will come up with other data as well, We as a bigger committee will have to do a lot of work to figure out how they fit together.

Nick agreed.

Laurie also agreed and said that if this data doesn't fit in at the end of the study, it is her time and Nick's time that is wasted. She sees no problem.

Bob asked for additional comments.

Jim said that some very significant things happen in every town that affects income and property value. What happened when the Wayland (unintelligible) closed. People got distressed. What happened when Stapes moved in or Bose expanded? When you draw comparisons you are not drawing equal comparisons to other cities and towns. How does population fit in? We need to compare apples to apples.

Laurie said that she didn't see in the Action Plan to bring in population but the group would be happy to do that.

Nick said that he wanted a lot of additional information to be included but we were told to just stick to this. Now we are told we can't make a comparison because we need more information. We cannot perform a miracle.

**Steve motion to adjourn
second**

Laurie asked a few calendar questions

Vote to adjourn 7 in favor 1 opposed 0 abstain

**Laurie Lee
Clerk**