Vision Statement

The State guidelines require a vision statement but vision statements are inherently problematic. A vision statement purports to represent the views of at least a majority of the residents of the town. Giving credence to this is the fact that the plan must be approved by a vote of the citizens of the town.

The reality is much more nuanced. For guidance the comprehensive planning committee has the results of a survey sent out to all households in town and public comments and input. Despite repeated requests for public participation and comments there has been little response. The town survey was returned by a small number of individuals leaving in question the opinions of the majority of town residents. I was told the existing 2005 comprehensive plan was approved in a town meeting with only 8 votes. While this fulfilled legal requirements it hardly qualifies as an endorsement by a majority of residents.

The previous comprehensive plan never anticipated or mentioned wind energy or solar power. We cannot know what events or changes in the future this plan will not anticipate. It is the height of hubris to think either this plan or vision statement can comprehensively plan for the next decade or more.

This vision statement is based on the public response and input we have received. In general residents want to hold down taxes and preserve the rural character and natural resources of the town. They also want improvements to infrastructure and economic development that does not significantly impact the scenic and natural resources of the town. The committee recognizes that often there are inherent conflicts between these goals. The overriding vision of this comprehensive plan is to promote policies and ordinances to balance these needs and conflicts to benefit the residents of Clifton to the greatest degree possible.