



North Stonington

Town Government Structure Committee

Study and Recommendations

March 6, 2017

MISSION

Conduct studies and provide recommendations for alternate forms of government structure and/or management that would benefit our town.

The committee's initial work: review the town's current government structure and methods for handling diverse responsibilities.

FINDINGS

Many aspects are operating effectively. Others need change and improvements.

RESEARCH

- ✓ **North Stonington government organization chart and associated roles and responsibilities**
- ✓ **Government structures in neighboring towns, CT towns of the same size and towns in other parts of the country**
- ✓ **CT State Statutes that affect requirements for municipal committees, boards, jobs and government structures**
- ✓ **Several manuals, studies and job descriptions related to town governance (listed in the Appendix to this report)**

RESEARCH

- ✓ **Meeting with President Jeff Bridges and two other members of the CT Town & City Management Association (CTCMA)**
- ✓ **Second meeting with Joyce Stille, past President of CTCMA and Administrative Officer of Bolton, CT, a town of size and profile similar to North Stonington**
- ✓ **Committee Reviews of the 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development, POCD Action Plan and three associated plans**

THE COMMITTEE'S FOCUS

Optimize what is working

Build upon what we have to improve efficiency and effectiveness

Find new approaches to deliver on the Vision and Strategic Plan provided in the 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development

Gather information from town employees and the appointed and elected townspeople in our government

Summary of North Stonington Town Government Survey

In January the committee developed a survey to gather information from the members of our town departments, boards and committees.

The 10 questions were designed to identify areas that were running effectively and those that needed change.

At the end of January, the 79 employees and board/committee members for whom we had email addresses received a link to the survey online. Paper copies were made available to highway department staff.

Of 91 possible responders, the survey was completed by 38 participants, a 41.8% return.

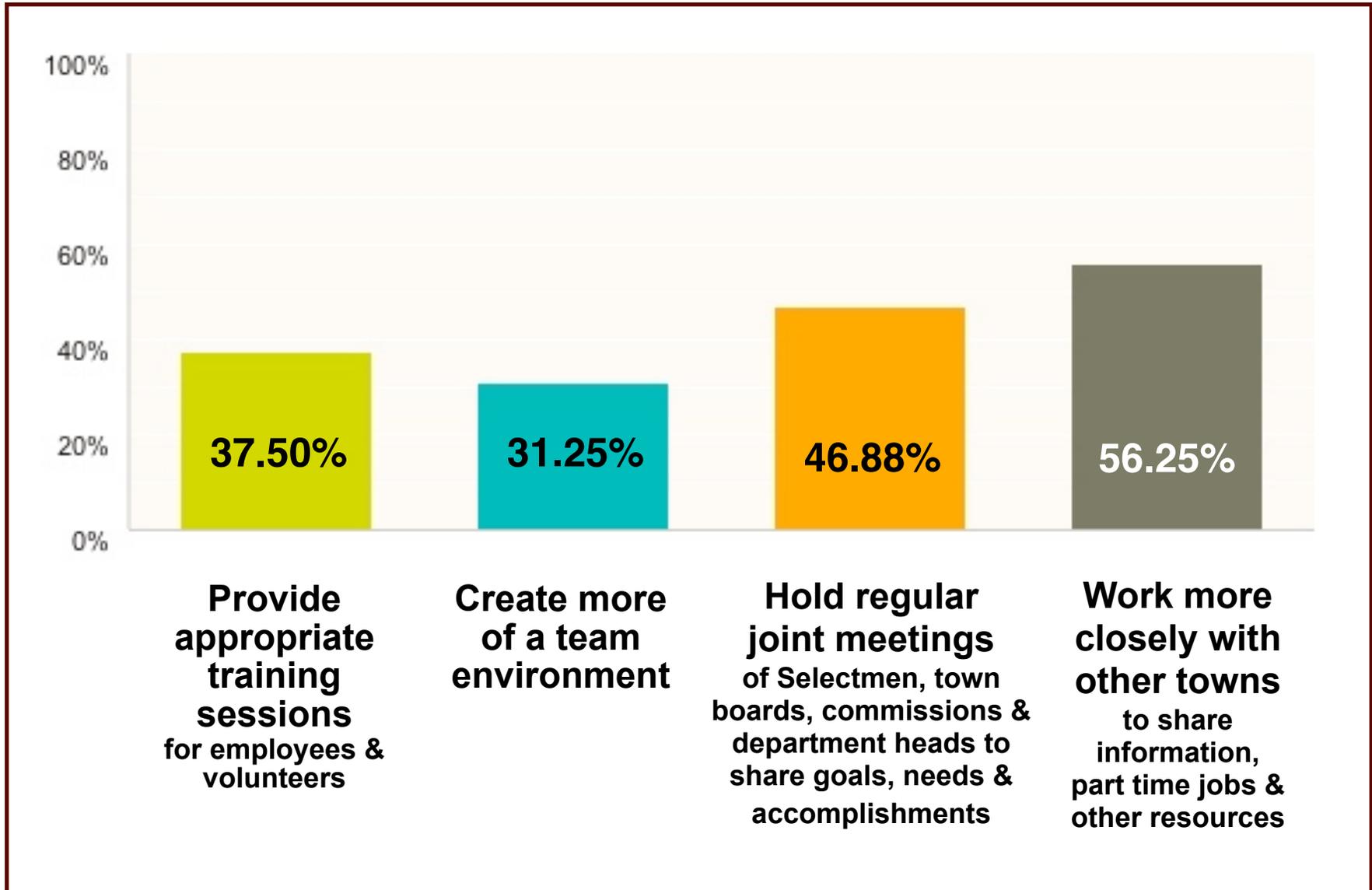
This level of return meets the standard 30-40% response rate expected on average for an internal survey of this type.

The majority of input was thoughtful and positive in nature. Members of our government provided valuable input about what is working well and what can be improved.

A copy of the survey, including all comments, is in the Appendix of our printed report.

Q1

The North Stonington Town Government is a traditional small town form of government. If you could change/add something to enhance its governing effectiveness, what would it be?

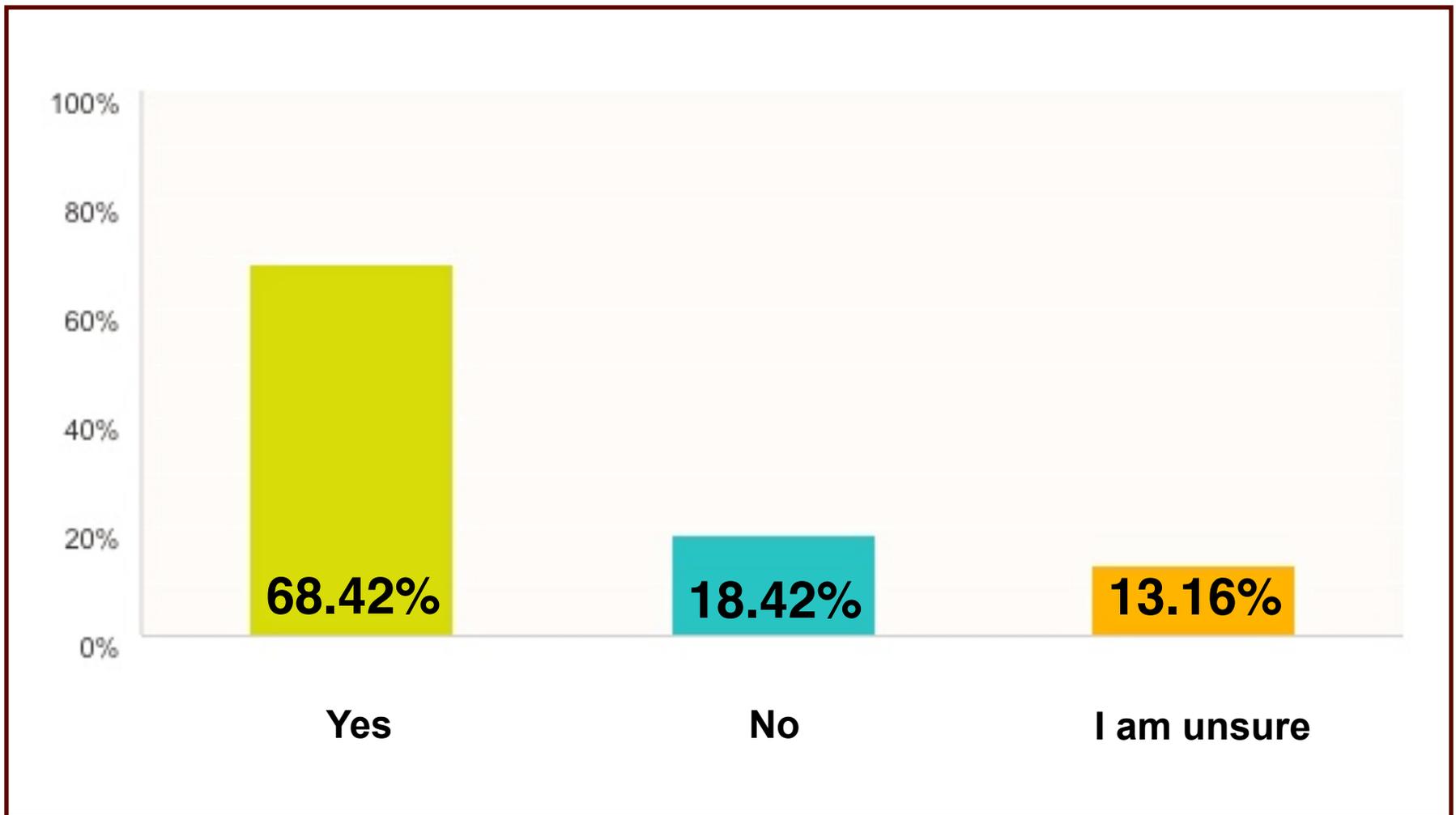


Q2 In your view, what areas involving town government need more focus and support?

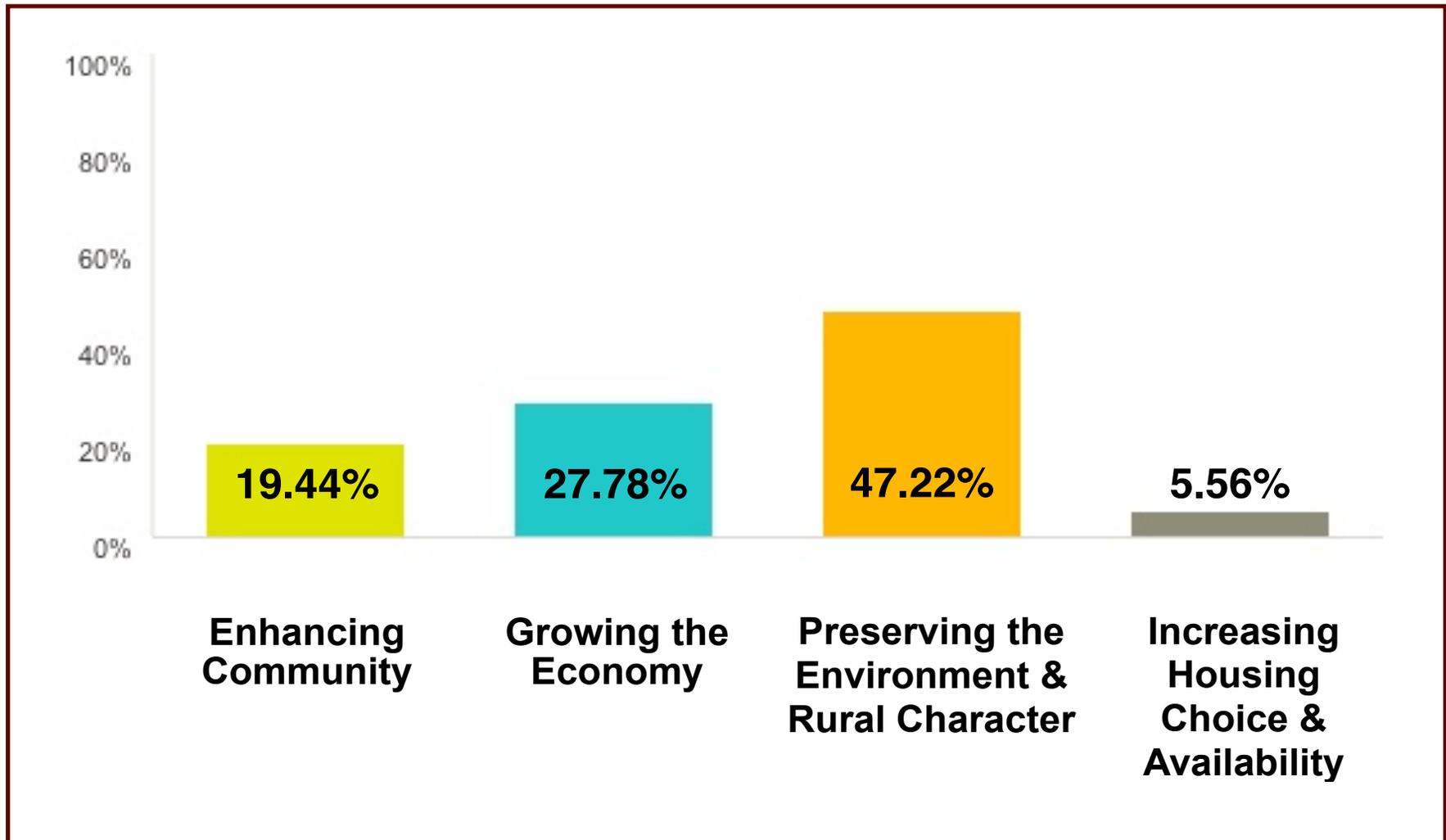
This was an open-ended question.

- ❖ Over a third of the responses stressed the need for economic development.**
- ❖ Communication and coordination among committees and boards were also areas of concern.**

Q3 Are you familiar with the Town's 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development?

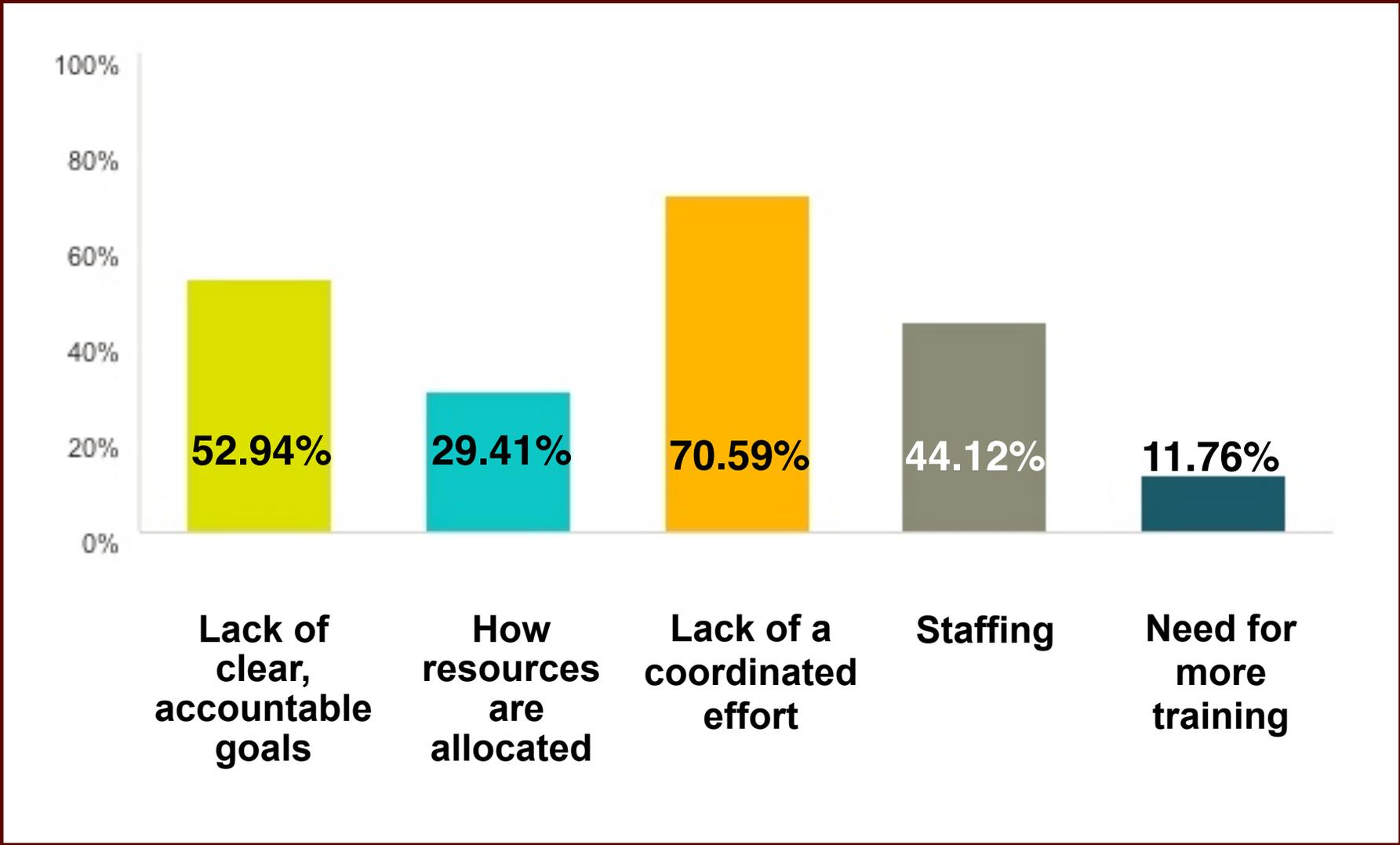


Q4 The 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development identifies the following four categories of goals. Check any of the categories where you think the town has made progress in the last 3 years?



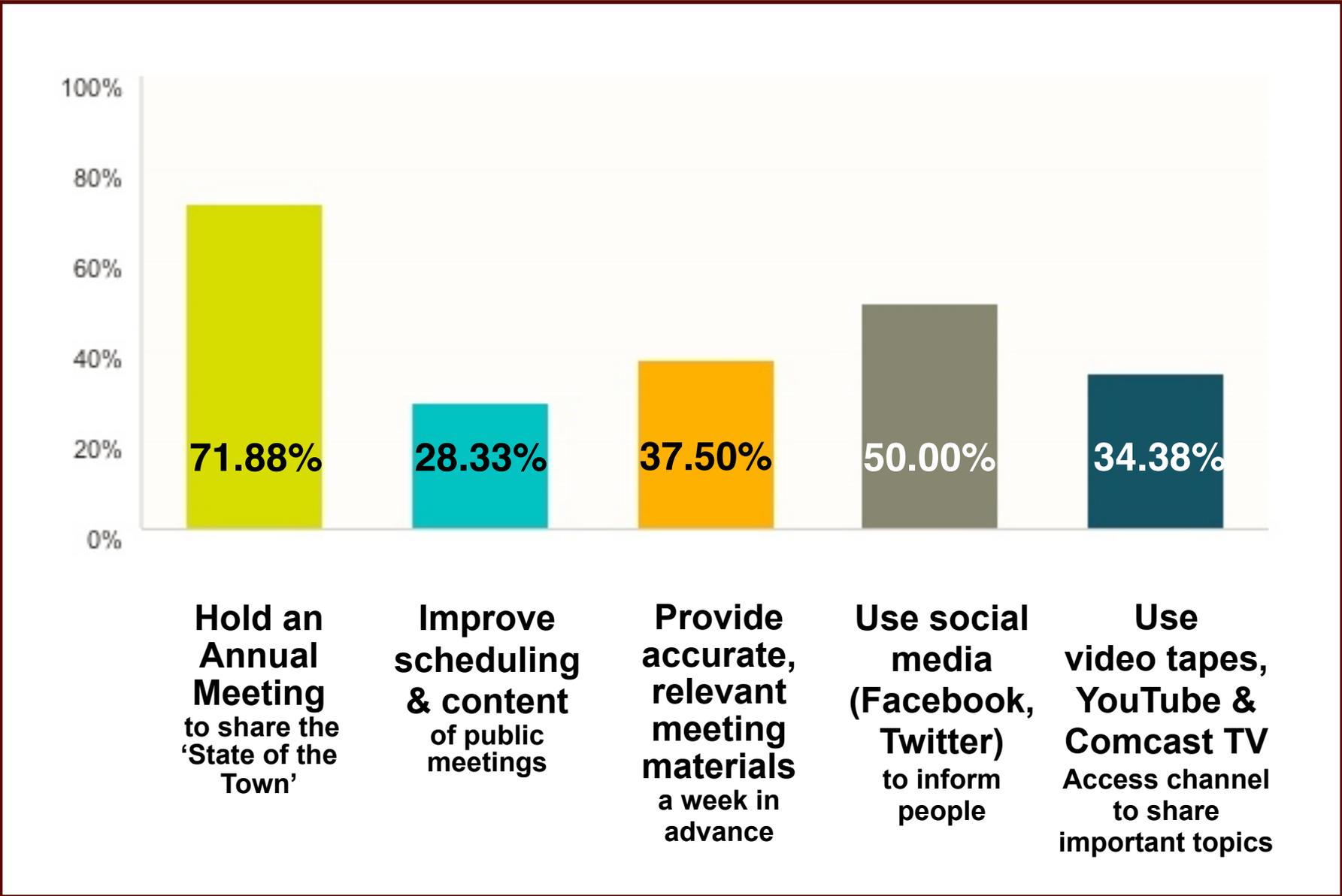
Q5

Which of the following items impedes our town's progress in preparing for the future?

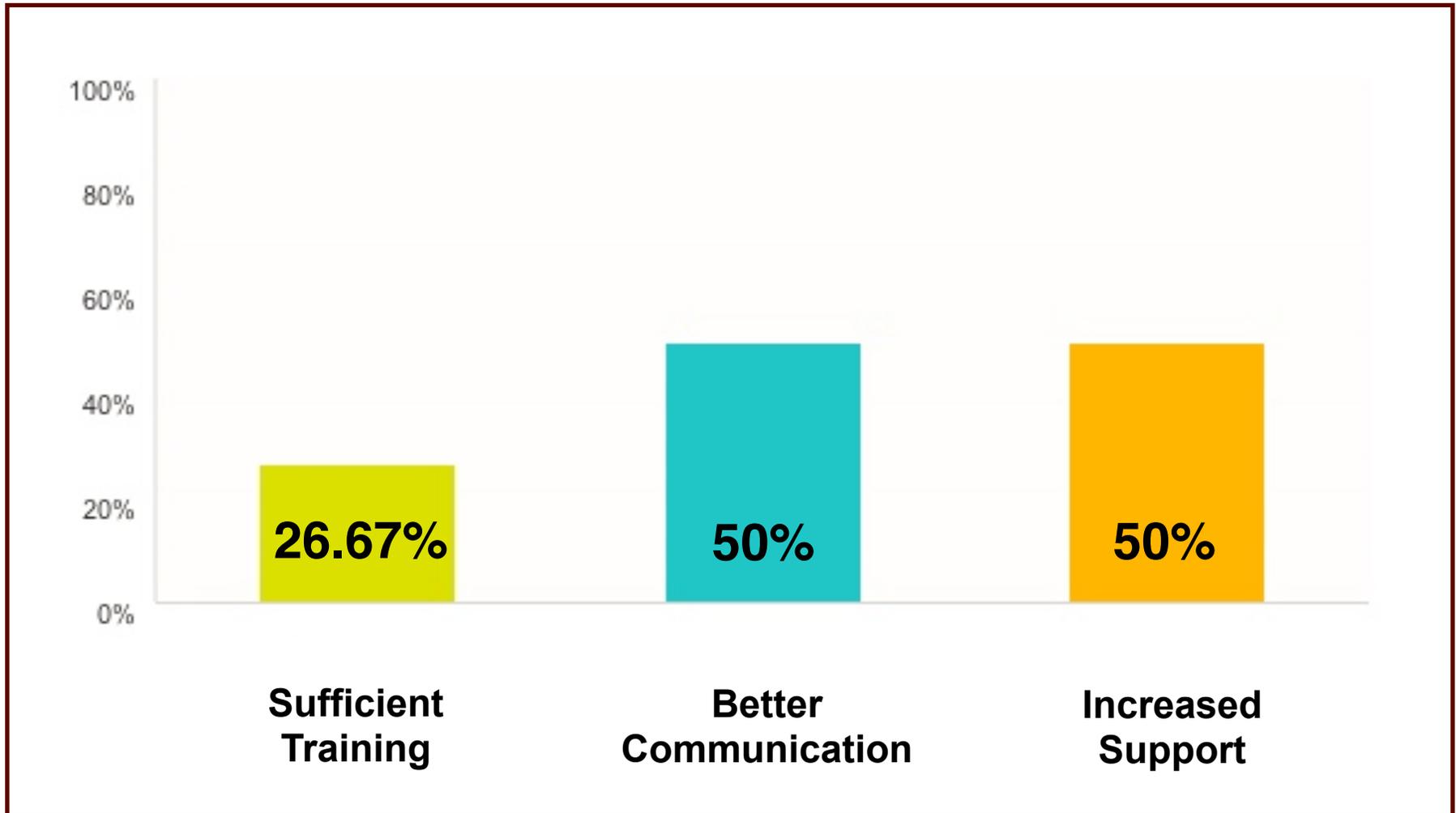


Q6

In what ways could our town government improve communication with residents and businesses?



Q7 Choose any of the following items that could enhance the work you do for the town.

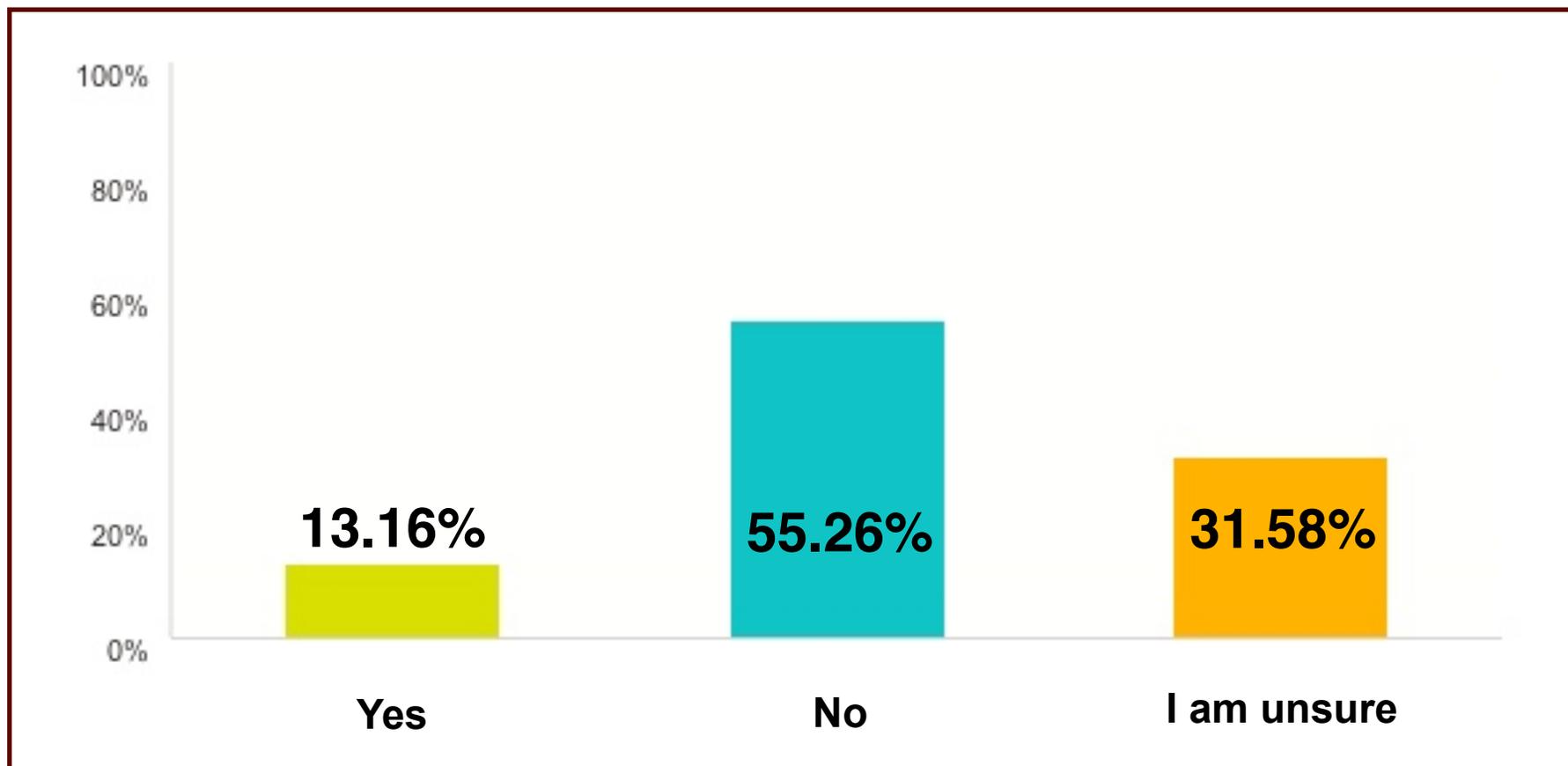


Q8 Are there any town responsibilities that are not adequately covered by the existing staff?

This was an open-ended question.

- ❖ There was little direct correlation among the few responses received.**
- ❖ The desire for economic development was noted in five answers.**
- ❖ A few suggested a need for more communication.**
- ❖ Others reported that town responsibilities were handled adequately.**

Q9 Are you satisfied with the town's progress in increasing economic development?



Q10 If you could change one thing about how our town government currently works, what would it be?

This was an open-ended question.

- ❖ **1/3 of the responses expressed a need for a well-defined management structure and/or dedicated expertise and continuity.**
- ❖ **15% suggested better coordination and cooperation among town boards and committees.**

Results of Town Government Survey

The majority of input was thoughtful and positive in nature.

The changes frequently mentioned in the 157 comments were consistent with bar graph results.

- ✓ **Economic development is a priority, progress is slow**
- ✓ **More coordination, communication & support is desirable**
- ✓ **More attention is needed for affordable housing**
- ✓ **Leadership & management is not well-defined**
- ✓ **Organizational changes are needed**
- ✓ **The 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development needs to be utilized**

Main Question

Is the present government structure of North Stonington adequate in meeting the Town's current and future needs?

Answer

Current needs such as education, public safety and public works are recognized to be adequately provided by the Town government in a fiscally responsible manner.

Future needs of the Town are recognized to be at a deficit by the lack of cohesive action on intermediate and long term plans.

Question

**How can government management improve
to meet both current and future needs?**

Answer

The two major elements of the management of the Town are **administration** and **planning**.

Both require equal weighting, thereby providing **capability, coordination** and **communication** toward realizing common goals to benefit North Stonington.

The responsibilities of these two major elements are to be configured so as to serve not only the efficient day-to-day operations of the Town, but to move forward the Town's strategic mission outlined in the **Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)**.

CAPABILITY

Enhance management of resources & support

Optimize job responsibilities

Delete operational impairments

Focus on efficiencies and process

COORDINATION

Develop team mentality

Interlock effort & delete overlaps

Ensure well-defined management of objectives

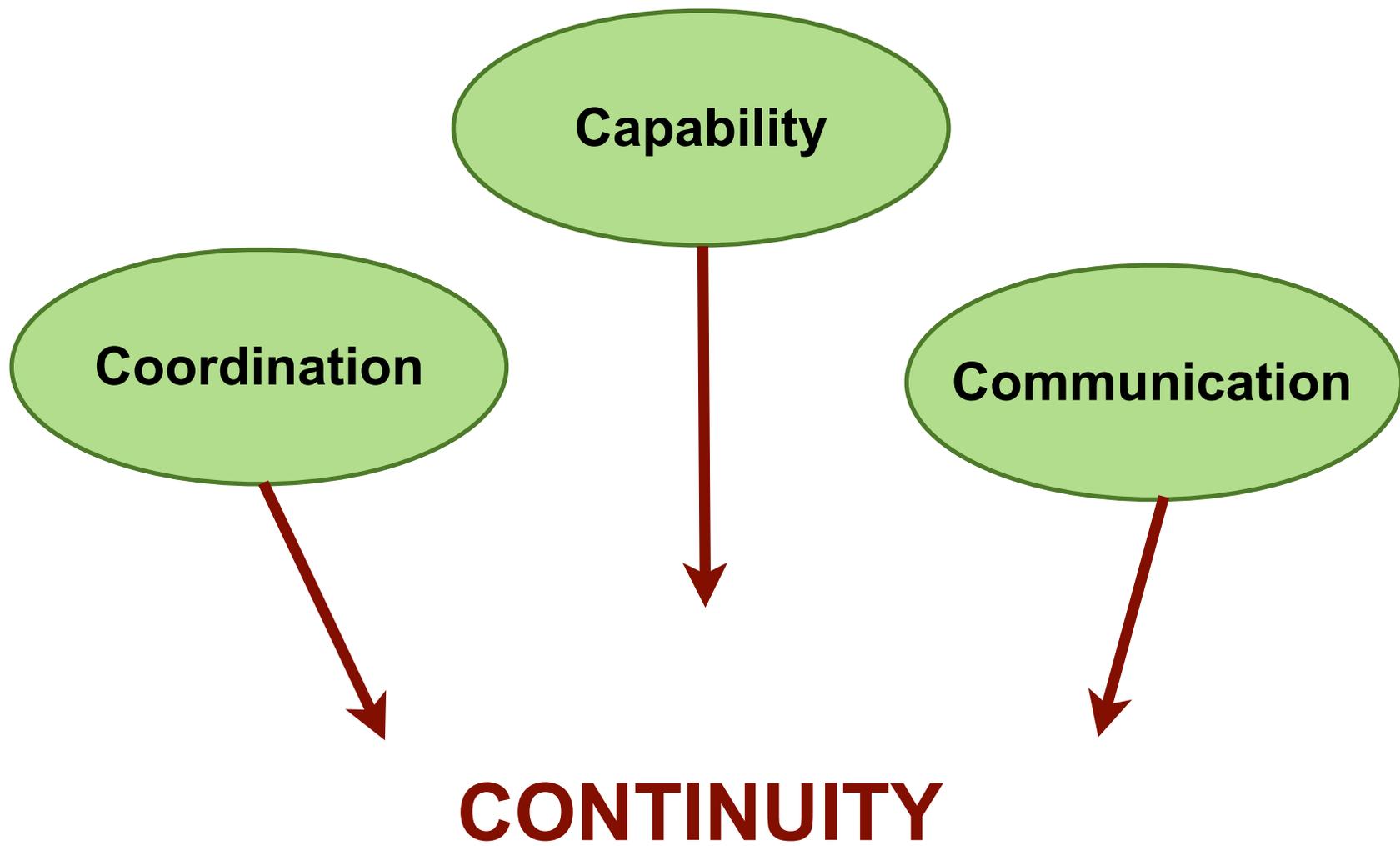
COMMUNICATION

Deliver clear message

Offer accessibility

Share information

Provide opportunity for feedback to define critical input to managing objectives.



Recommendation

To optimize what the Town's governing body can accomplish, it is recommended that administration have a designated

Administration and Finance Officer

and that planning have a designated

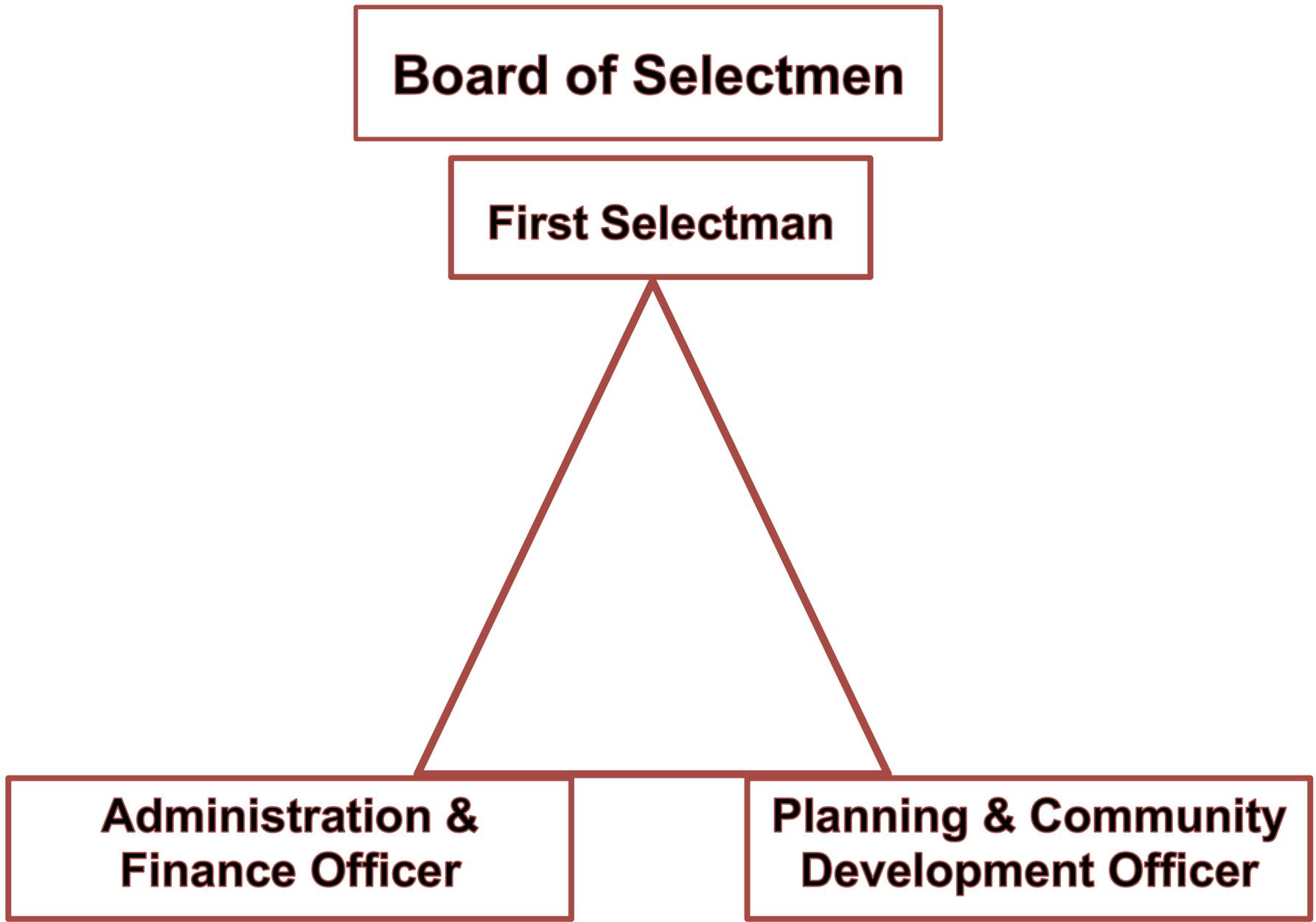
Planning and Community Development Officer.

Board of Selectmen

First Selectman

**Administration &
Finance Officer**

**Planning & Community
Development Officer**



Administration and Finance Officer

- **Manages the day-to-day operations of the town**
- **Works with the Board of Selectmen and the Planning and Community Development Officer to support development and execution of the Plan of Conservation and Development**
- **Develops Duties and Responsibilities for town departments and positions**
- **Supervises, coordinates and evaluates the activities of those departments, commissions, boards and offices reporting to him/her**

Administration and Finance Officer

- **Prepares an annual budget for First Selectman/BOS**
- **Advises and recommends to the First Selectman/BOS those needs, policies, programs and actions deemed necessary**
- **Serves on the Capital Projects and POCD Action Plan Committees.**

Under the general direction of the First Selectman

**Works in an equal capacity with
the Planning and Community Development Officer
in support of planning and communication**

Planning and Community Development Officer

- **Works with Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission and the Administration and Finance Officer to develop and execute the **Plan of Conservation and Development****
- **Plans, organizes, and evaluates economic development**
- **Oversees the daily operations of the various land use boards and committees in a supervisory role**

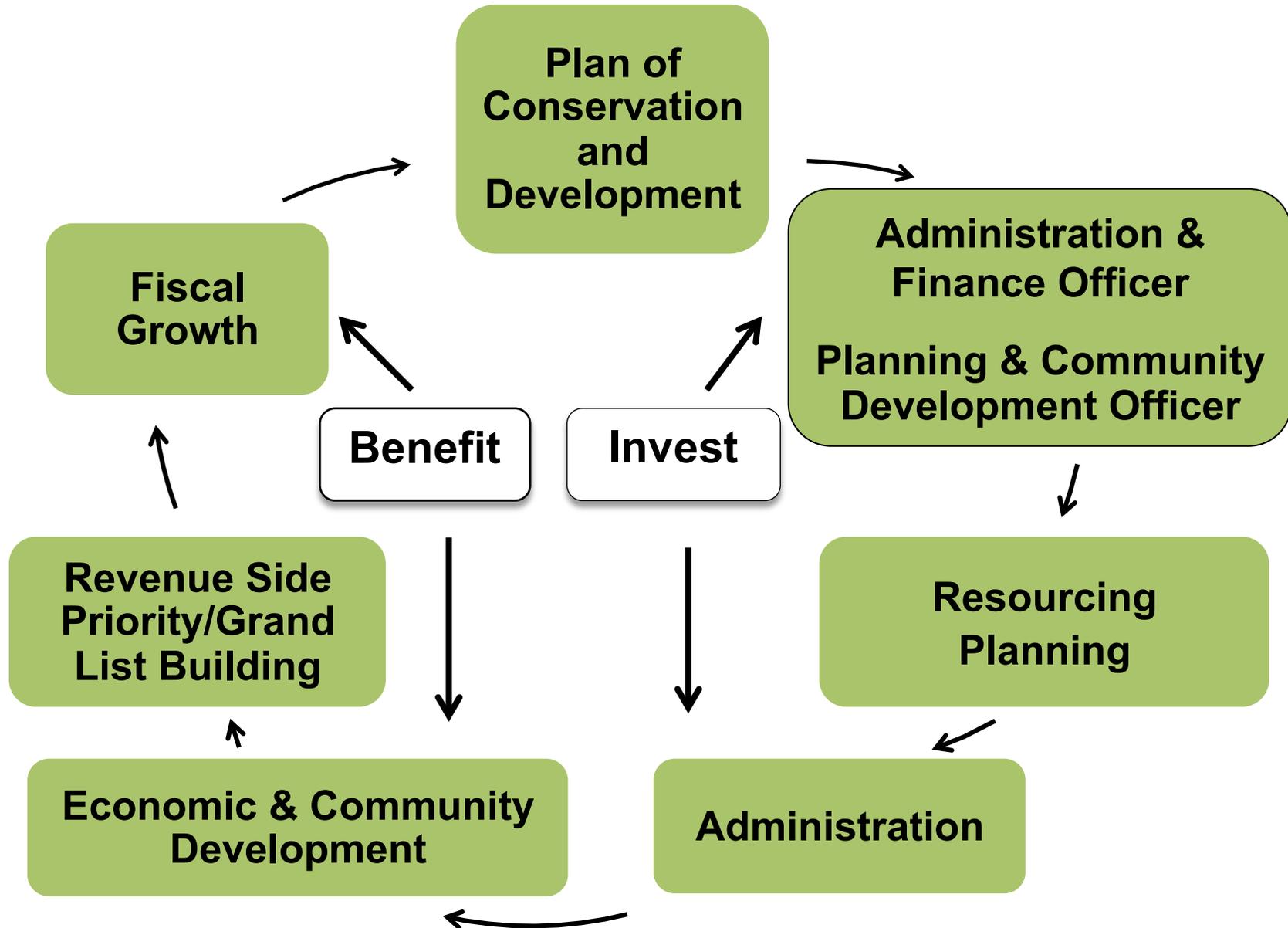
Planning and Community Development Officer

- **Reviews zoning applications and plans to assure compliance with regulations**
- **Lends leadership to the Plan of Conservation and Development Action Plan Committee**

Under the general direction of the First Selectman

**Works in an equal capacity with
The Administration and Finance Officer
in support of communication and planning**

Investing For the Future



In Summary . . .

We found the one constant in the towns we met with is the effective utilization of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

We found that continuity of governance is critical for projects to meet fruition.

Management of communication between departments, boards and commissions is key to successful outcomes of the town's plans.

This work was comprised of research, meetings with other towns, and the TGSC survey. All this information is available in the Appendix section of the report.

**Paul Simonds, Chair
Anne Nelson
Dan Spring**

**Dan Smith
Nita Kincaid
William Ricker**

Appendix

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PRESENTERS

Bridges, Jeff. Town Manager, Town of Wethersfield, CT: Presenter
Elsesser, John, Town Manager, Coventry, CT. Presenter
Stille, Joyce. Past President of Connecticut City and Town Managers Association,
Administrative Officer Town of Bolton, CT: Presenter and Consultation

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Connecticut Council of Small Towns, Connecticut Municipal Leaders Manual
Connecticut State Statutes, Chapter 91 Selectmen
Connecticut State Statutes, Chapter 96 Town Manager
Connecticut State Statues, Chapter 98 Municipal Powers

Connecticut Town and City Managers Association. Professional Local Management for CT
Municipalities: Resources Available for Charter Revision Committees.
http://www.cttcma.govoffice3.com/index.asp?Type=B_LOC&SEC=%7BF077863F-9D25-433E-87C6-A61EF754C6C4%7D

Bland, Ryan A. Iowa State University, Digital Repository, Retrospective Theses and Dissertation:
The role of city administrator and small town planning: a qualitative study of Iowa's small
Town Managers, 2007 <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/14803/>

ICMA, International City/County Management Association "Life, Well Run" Video presentation
Campaign designed to raise awareness of the contributions professional local government
Managers make to build communities and inspire a new generation to join the profession.

Michigan Civil Service Commission, Job Specification: Economic/Community Development Manager
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/EconomicCommunityDevelopmentManager_12548_7.pdf

Oefinger, Mark R. Office of Town Manager, Groton, CT, Description of Duties and Responsibilities

SE CT Planning Departments 2015-16 Salary Information as reported to SCCOG, November 2015

UNC School of Government/NC Rural Economic Development Center, December 2008
Small Town Community Economic Development: Economic Outcomes, Recruitment and Case
Studies. http://www.iog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi/pdfs/stbi_final.pdf

Town of Bolton, Revised Charter, July 2009

Town of Truro, The Role of Assistant Town Administrator.

2013 North Stonington Plan of Conservation and Development
2013 North Stonington Plan of Conservation and Development Action Plan

North Stonington Town Government Survey
January 2017

All Comments Received

Q1 The North Stonington Town Government is a traditional small town form of government. If you could change/add something to enhance its governing effectiveness, what would it be?

1. Town roads need more attention especially in the summer cutting back and mowing and we need a BLIGHT ordinance
2. Sharing more regular information about the POCD and annual goals for the town with everyone involved in the government would help to create a very positive environment.
3. Adding skills to our current staff or bringing in added staff should be considered.
4. Seems to me to be working OK. My experience tells me that when individuals think they need more training, it is provided.
5. Address nepotism. Lose the "good old boys" network of doing business with the town . It truly is all in who you know here.
6. Change form of government to town manager to increase efficiency.
7. Town needs to become more aggressive in attracting business to reduce the burden on tax payers.
8. Reorganization of town government for more accountability and efficiency. Roles not clearly defined, seeking additional funding to enhance and support programs such as affordable housing and recreation, etc. Entertain adding positions when able or at least visioning what the future structure of government might contain, short and long range planning and implementation.
9. more oversight of waste by independent committees
10. Appreciate the employees you have.
11. I never had any training when I started volunteering on a commission - and it was regulatory. Joint meetings can only enhance communication just like the tri-board meetings are doing.
12. Most all training comes at a State Level for most of the jobs, we have a team environment in place already, everyone works well together.
13. Lots of great ideas here. Think the training / joint mtgs etc. would be really beneficial to get people on same page and would be particularly useful for newer volunteers/employees.

Q2 In your view, what areas involving town government need more focus and support?

1. School system, Firehouse, Highway Dept.
2. Economic development in this town should be a main focus to bring in much needed tax dollars. Creating a business friendly atmosphere.
3. Work together don't put yourself on a pedestal
4. We need to attract more new volunteers to participate in boards & committees, including having high school students (perhaps) on appropriate town committees.

North Stonington Town Government Survey (cont'd)

26. Leadership and vision to carry us into what will be more difficult times. Sustainability & Agriculture should be high priorities. Revenue from untapped sources that meet our Plan of Conservation and Development goals including engaging more agricultural pursuits, greenhouses on a large scale, perhaps a wind farm. Putting in place what the next generation will be needing to live better lives. Keeping the environment sacred by initiating programs in schools and perhaps Wheeler could become an environmental/agricultural school, That is the future. Partnering with businesses of this nature that would set up in town such as a facility for building wind mills which would require technical, computer and labor skills. Win-win for all. We need the town to move forward on projects that will benefit the town and maintaining the rural character. The Ghee factory and Jovial Foods fit well into our town's plan.
27. Economic development.
28. Investigating the divide between those who want to take on large debt to facilitate town projects and those who do not.
29. Construction of the Town's budget - what's on , what's off, what's supports long-term development of the town vs the short-term items
30. Enforcement of regulations
31. Board of Finance needs more FOCUS
32. How can we move forward without two major components: time and money. First Selectmen have all they can do to keep the town running, not progressing. Without money/revenue our vision cannot be realized. Get sewer and water into the 1-95 corridor to attract businesses and improve speed with which P&Z moves to give prospects a short turn- around window as they search for locations.
33. The First Selectman needs an Assistant of sorts to take care of "paper work" so he can focus on the everyday drama and not be overwhelmed with both.

Questions 3 and 4 had no comment fields.

Q5 Which of the following items impede our town's progress in preparing for the future?

1. Bringing boards and committee together periodically to share successes and problems might identify opportunities for working together on some common goals.
2. There is a lack of desire to drive progress. We seem paralyzed or fearful of change. We must change or we get let behind.
3. Who says it's being impeded?
4. The housing committee should send out a bulletin focusing on first time home buyers and how to get assistance. Those who have lost there homes during the recession may also be able to buy after a certain time frame. If we want to keep young families here then helping them or having their family make them aware of options for buying should be available. With the State being in such poor shape how can we afford anything. I feel teacher contracts allow too many sick days. Do we really need a superintendent of schools? Can't we share one with another town? The States fiscal mess impedes our future.

North Stonington Town Government Survey (cont'd)

5. A good example of lack of "coordinated effort"--- the town washing their hands of any of the Affordable Housing Committee's choices and undertakings--"we're staying out of that", etc. , leaving the residents of the town essentially with no resource or recourse.
6. the board of finance should not try to run the town through the pocketbook! they should set the budget dollars and let the departments create their budget with funds allocated, ex. BOF should not tell highway to cut say struck purchase or equipment costs, give each dept a figure and let them work with it , they know their own dept needs better than BOF
7. Often, committee members lack sufficient education/background to serve effectively on their committee.
8. Planning and Zoning Commission's reluctance to approve an Incentive Housing Zone in the zoning regulations to incentivize housing diversity as stated in the POCD. Economic development and affordable housing need to work together and support each other.
9. ???
10. Current form of government could be more effective if well-defined responsibilities and examining future options for improvement to move the town forward using the Plan of Conservation & Development as our guide.
11. Not everyone agrees what is "progress".
12. A Town Planner can't do everything by themselves. I understand the Commission & Board members are volunteer but they need to make an effort to & not just rely on staff to do everything. I've seen many meetings where Boards & Commission's come unprepared & the intent of the meeting was to go over information they should have looked at prior to the meeting.
13. See #2 above. Need staffing to do the job (Ec Dev director, P&Z director). If you don't have a dog catcher you can't catch dogs! Have BOS tell the public what their goals are for the year. Heck, why not tell all boards & commissions to give their 2 major goals for the year. #4 above only allows one choice.

Q6 In what ways could our town government improve communication with residents and businesses? (Annual Meeting; schedule & content of public meetings; accurate, relevant meeting materials a week in advance ; use of social media; use of video tapes, YouTube, Comcast TV)

1. A 'State of the Town' meeting could be very well-done, if it was really treated like a event: celebrating good news/progress, recognizing committees that had made meaningful contributions and gathering ideas from townspeople.
2. Seems to me like you already do the first three quite well. I can see no difference between the last two and they're not for me anyhow. People that want to find out - do! The Sun and Day do pretty well! The North Stonington Quarterly does VERY well. Rec Bulletin is OK for its use.
3. Besides social media the newspaper should have town news.
4. Hold a semi-annual meeting on the state of the town. More emailings to residents.
5. Use economic coordinator to attend functions that would be likely to attract business.
6. Would need to provide staff to communicate in these ways.

North Stonington Town Government Survey (cont'd)

7. During power outages, have a NS radio channel to inform people of the situation and pass along critical info as it pertains to NS community.
8. Many seniors do not get out during the winter months and TV access would be ideal for this population and others who may be disabled as well.
9. Broadcast meetings on Comcast
10. I believe the Town does a good job communicating on the website of upcoming meetings. The Town can't do it all. The resident's & businesses have an obligation to keep updated on happenings going on in the Town. If people are interested they will make it a point to find out what's going on in Town. Most resident's aren't even interested in coming out to vote.
11. How many times do you hear attendees say, "Why didn't you give us this (budget) in advance so we could study it?" Younger folks use social media so I suppose that's an important vehicle. Trump is doing it with a strong following. I don't know anyone who watches the TV Access channel.
12. The Town's people have the Quarterly and the Web Page for information, they have to be more pro active and read, we can't spoon feed everyone

Q7 Choose any of the following items that could enhance the work you do for the town. (training, communication, support)

1. I feel support and communication are OK, but I am not aware of much in the way of training opportunities for committee members.
2. Of course! Always! (checked response) But what I get is probably more than I would in most other towns.
3. A lot of older residents are on the boards and commissions. These residents know the town well. I wish there was a way to get younger residents involved so they can carry on and gain knowledge from the current members.
4. Act on committee recommendations, don't just table them.
5. Ok now.
6. Not needed
7. If a call comes in for a certain department, then that call should be directed to that department & not tried to be handled by some other department.
8. Support comes from the BOS as well as the public. Who holds boards and commissions accountable? Can volunteers be held accountable? If people don't attend x number of meetings, get rid of them. Give public some incentive for participating, not criticism for the hours they put in. How do "We value our Volunteers"?

North Stonington Town Government Survey (cont'd)

5. Town government should work with zoning to get more business in town
6. Better communication and cooperation between the Schools (Administration / BOE) and town government.
7. An absolute need is to bring in solid businesses, Whole Foods or CVS for example.
8. I have no way of knowing. If I had to pick one - probably the Highway Department.
9. The town needs to cover the whole town not just the perimeter of the North Stonington village. Boom Bridge needs to be completed The quarterly needs to give more info about up coming projects and meetings like the Rt 49 Bridge and updated on Boom Bridge. Even schedules of upcoming sports activities or school meetings. The web sites are confusing and not everyone has a computer or looks for activities.
10. Growth
11. The Boombridge Road bridge !! How can 8 years go by and both selectman do NOTHING , other than spew a lot of rhetoric ?? Inexcusable ! The maintenance of roads , mowing, etc. ! We desperately need a BLIGHT ORDINANCE !! Every other town has one---why don't we
12. Education & training.
13. Development to create a broader tax base. Communication between the boards and commissions. Affordable housing for young people and the elderly.
14. I think everyone thinks their own com. or board is the most important in town! its not we all need to work together but that won't happen as long as certain factions are trying to run the town from their seats and certain factions in town are trying to tear it apart
15. economic development
16. Government does not act on committee recommendations.
17. I think that we need to meet with the owners of vacant land and determine what they would like to see done with it, what type of development do they see for the land. The town can zone the land but they can not control what is done with it. It just may be that the owners have a better idea. We should listen.
18. Current Board of Selectmen lack of cooperation . The system is okay; the persons are the problem
19. I like the way our town functions and the way a difference can be made in a small town. I would say the board of finance probably has too much responsibility as it relates to oversight and jurisdiction over the budget. I would suggest having someone internal be responsible for construction and maintenance of the budget and having board of finance as kind of a check and balance. I would also like to see more information on professional qualifications of elected officials as they run for or are appointed to office.
20. Economic development, Business friendly.
21. Fulfilling the goal of providing more housing choice as expressed in our COPD.
22. ???
23. The town website could be improved to allow for things like live streaming of town meetings.
24. Development of Rts. 2 and 184 corridors. Does not need to be excessive but there were opportunities in the past which were dismissed too easily and we remain where we are today. Those areas are not part of the "rural character" of the town.
25. Not sure

North Stonington Town Government Survey (cont'd)

Q8 Are there any town responsibilities that are not adequately covered by the existing staff?

1. NO
2. The budget process needs to be examined & improved.
3. Committees working well together
4. Economic growth. Lets not wait for it to come us, lets go out and get it!
5. None that I can think of. Everything appears to be working very well considering we are a town of only 4,000 and not growing.
6. There are trees and branches in other parts of town that need to come down, that are not the responsibility of Eversource. You can see on the side of the road how many have broken off or fallen and residents have had to move them or cut them up. Power still goes out on these roads where small limbs fall on the wires without necessarily bringing down the wires. Also cut down small trees in addition to the brush done in the Summer. These trees about 6 inches more or less will eventually grow and be more costly. Clean the leaves and dirt that block access to the culverts on the back and side roads, not just in the developments. Water backing up onto the roads causes pot holes and eventually road repair.
7. Too numerous to list --almost laughable at times in Town Hall.
8. Not sure.
9. No I don't think so.
10. I think that the BOS needs more support from the boards not the other way around
11. Economic development
12. How can anyone answer this question. What are the defined town responsibilities?
13. No
14. Communications are good from town volunteers but town hall could do better. I am not certain the First Selectman has the support he could use to keep him organized especially from a technological standpoint, i.e. secretarial support, keeping an electronic calendar, scanning of documents to organized files.
15. Economic development.
16. Someone in charge of communication as in question 6.
17. ???
18. No, the town staff, including the First Selectman, have been very friendly, helpful, approachable, and collaborative.
19. no
20. No
21. Economic development.
22. Maybe a Town Manager, utilize the people you have in Town Hall to help out other departments. No one is flat out here 24/7. I don't mean daily, but on an as need basis or emergency situation. Treat existing staff better.

North Stonington Town Government Survey (cont'd)

23. Of course. Two major ones: Economic Development and Planning & Zoning. How can these be relegated to part time employees? How can an affordable housing facility be moved forward without P&Z support. How can sewer system be started without moving the "study" forward. Where is that study? Why is it not a daily task to complete? Why? Are these to wait 40 years like the school before positive movement? Why is the fire station sitting waiting for yet another revision?
24. Town manager perhaps?

Q9 Are you satisfied with the town's progress in increasing economic development?

1. Welcome businesses keep an open mind listen listen listen
2. We are on the right path, but the loss of the EDC coordinator slowed us down. The new job advertised, if filled with the right person, could make a big difference to progress. Many members of the government should be involved in this process, using the POCD action plan.
3. Need more of business to come in to the town
4. Actively solicit business to come to our town. Our farms and open land is amazing don't touch it. Use the rough/less desirable spaces along out two I-95 exits.
5. Some economic development is starting to appear. It would have happened probably even without the plan of Conservation and Development. Some of the new housing may increase the tax base almost as much as some of the economic growth. I think the town should get involved with the State department of transportation to improve the Rt 2 and Rt 95 access, entrance and exit. A clover leaf type of exit might improve safety as well as economic commercial growth. Growth is difficult with the States restrictions and limitations and taxes. Maybe growth will improve when the State fiscal climate improves. Economic development is difficult in our area when RI has offered tax breaks and relief to businesses. Westerly has public utilities also. I don't feel North Stonington will have enough potential growth to warrant putting the tax burden of public utilities on the tax payers for a long time.
6. Higher presence for the EDC More pro-active promotion of the town by the Town Planner to attract business and commerce
7. We almost have more abandoned business buildings than actual businesses . And the businesses we have do not meet enough of our needs. We need to aggressively recruit businesses to this area.
8. Town marketing campaign " NoSto" a great place to live,work & play
9. There may be projects "in the works", but I think people are unaware and communication of what's happening would boost people's confidence in the town government. We need something to happen soon so that people will feel confident and not look for other places to live.
10. Need a competent business development group.
11. we are doing better but more needs to be done. a lack of water and sewers are a major problem to bring major developments to the town
12. Agressive economic development to aid in reducing residential tax burden
13. Needs to be aggressive and aggressively attract business.
14. Staffing the Economic Development coordinator position

North Stonington Town Government Survey (cont'd)

15. Just too slow.
16. The addition of a pharmacy would be the highest recommendation. Also, the business area leading into town (rte. 2 between the rotary and the fire station) could be aesthetically improved to possibly provide an incentive to other small businesses to locate in the vacant and/or run-down buildings and lots.
17. Any progress we make seems to be in fits and starts. That area nearest the Rt. 2 rotary represents a lost opportunity
18. This takes leadership and vision. Electing or appointing or hiring someone to actively pursue Economic Development is crucial to our town. NS has more opportunity than they realize, that would meet the standards set by POCD but movement has been inadequate. Pursuing grants to either create new opportunities or enhance what we have now, but mostly engaging those businesses that will assist in our revenue and add jobs as well. This appears to be a weak area in the town that needs immediate attention.
19. Hire a consultant.
20. What progress can be made without a person dedicated to the town and hired full time to draw business? How can they do that without the what I mentioned above: infrastructure. Develop a brochure of what town resources we DO have and get it out in marketing circles: 2 exits on I-95, midway between Boston/Pov/NY, recreational activities in the area, employees within an X radius, etc.
21. There has been some progress, which is appreciated and hard won. Wonder if we have enough resources/staffing committed to economic development.

Q10 If you could change one thing about how our town government currently works, what would it be?

1. Better retirement plan with medical coverage.
2. Limit the amount that is done through the town garage. Sub contract out the work that needs to be done with a "Clerk of the Works" that would oversee projects.
3. Term limits stop thinking you are better than the residents of the town you are not !!! Lets get rid of the good old boy mentality
4. More experimentation with new ideas and methods for doing things. Focus on making the day-to-day more efficient. Possibly change some town hall hours. Try new ways to reach more of the public, etc., etc.
5. Easing zoning restrictions for businesses to enter the town and help economic development
6. Get our First Selectman help dealing with BoF and day-to-day operations
7. Does the First Selectman think he needs help? If so - that's it. His office works very well but maybe it (the office staff) needs more help. Only they know, because they certainly give the appearance of having all things under control. P.S. Item #4 allows only one choice. I would also have picked Preserving the Environment.

North Stonington Town Government Survey (cont'd)

8. The town needs foresight in the future of town land needs. If we have done that prior to the firehouse needing to spend all that time and money on clearing that area we might have been able to have that project completed before now. Couldnt we have bought a flat piece of land , during the recession and even now land large parcels of land are relatively cheap. We need to plan where we might need a school in the future. Traffic on rt 2 is not going to decrease especially if the Tribe continues to grow to lure people to that area to spend money and gamble. Do we really want to keep the schools on Rt 2. If we don't plan ahead then in 25 years when we face another school project the residents at that time may want to take the Hewitt property. There also may not be any larger parcels then either. So I would keep the Wintechog parcel and keep our eyes open for another parcel that we could secure for future town needs.
9. More coordination between Town planner EDC and P&Z
10. No more "selectman " (a town manager /mayor would be better)--- and there DEFINITELY needs to be a term limit!! This is why we are where we are --- way behind !!
11. More interaction between all boards & committees
12. The boards all need to get along and show respect for each other even when they don't agree to work for the best interests of the town.
13. I actually like westerly R.I. form town council, town manager director of finance etc. and no i have never lived in R.I.
14. Make the job of first selectman more efficient and realistic
15. Change form of government to a town manager. Get rid of selectmen.
16. increase the speed of completing projects. an example is the construction of the fire house. its been a long time from when the town approved the project and the start
17. Consider handicap accessible facilities for Town offices- eliminate use of 2nd floor of old town hall
18. The process by which we approve budgets should be simpler. We should not allow miscommunication or politics to stand in the way of simply implementing our budgets. It also may make sense for shorter term limits on board of finance and slightly longer term limits on board of selectman. Maybe 3 year term limits for each.
19. Getting a professional administrator (town manager?) to help with town functions as above who remains constant from election to election and thereby provides continuity of focus.
20. ???
21. As noted above, live streaming of meetings would allow for increased communication and information to citizens who may not be able to attend on a regular basis or at the time scheduled.
22. Planning and Zoning and Econ. Development Comm. should be working together constantly and PZC needs to be vigorous about doing everything possible to promote economic development in the corridors of Rts. 2 and 184
23. Nothing

North Stonington Town Government Survey (cont'd)

- 24.** Keep the politics out of it. Hire a town manager/administrator to oversee the towns operations. Elected officials do not always know the inner workings of town government and then there is a learning curve and then they may be gone. Continuity is crucial to continue to move forward. Having worked in 3 towns in Connecticut and having been involved in CT governmental agencies for many years, you see the towns that are working. Every town in CT has struggled with this economy but long term planning and saving for those rainy days are essential. I would rather hire a professional to run our town so the politics don't get in the way of our progress and delays, so that all are ducks are in order to pursue grants, invite new businesses into town. In SE CT, the Town of Groton is one of the best run towns. Much larger than NS of course but the basic principles are there. Re-structuring the town government/job descriptions, etc will assist with capacity, efficiency and common goals.
- 25.** Issue a monthly status report of all major events happening in NS. Things would include firehouse, school project, budget process etc.
- 26.** First Selectman should not THREATEN to close the dump on Saturdays to force citizens into voting for a bloated budget.
- 27.** need for more surveys from public on how they want their money spent. Example-trimming grass on roadside or more hours open at transfer station. Do we really need unions? Could outsourcing be cheaper for some tasks?
- 28.** More communication with staff.
- 29.** Can't be one thing. To move the recommendations our citizens envisioned in writing the POCD we must have full time staffing of critical areas to get the job done. That takes a commitment of money. BOF want to hold the line. I understand that, but then be prepared to accept the status quo and we'll have this discussion again in 2025.
- 30.** A Charter to spell things out!
- 31.** Hiring a Town Administrator to help First Selectmen with day to day matters
- 32.** Respect the work done by committees and act on their recommendations, not simply table them
- 33.** Better communication

First Selectman – Town of North Stonington

The First Selectman shall be the chief elected official and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Town. The First Selectman shall be a full voting and participating member of the Board of Selectmen and shall preside at the meetings of said Board.

The First Selectman shall have all of the powers, duties and responsibilities as hereby outlined in Connecticut General Statutes and Town ordinances. He/she shall have such other powers, duties and responsibilities as are conferred by the Board of Selectmen which are not inconsistent with the Connecticut General Statutes.

The First Selectman shall:

- Work with the Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission, Administration and Finance Officer (AFO) and Planning and Community Development Officer (PCDO) to develop and execute the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Develop/execute an action plan with short/long term goals as outlined in the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Develop and initiate policy proposals and actions for consideration by the Board of Selectman and town boards and commissions.
- Implement programs, resolutions, ordinances etc. by the legislative body (Town Meeting).
- Serve as an “Ex-Officio” member without vote, of town boards, commissions and committees as allowed per CT state statute.
- Coordinate with state officials, as necessary.
- Work with the Administration and Finance Officer (AFO) and the Planning and Community Development Officer (PCDO) to develop a positive working environment.
- Provide direction and support to the Administration and Finance Officer (AFO) and the Planning and Community Development Officer (PCDO).
- Coordinate, review and submit an annual budget recommendation to the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance.
- Present a “State of the Town” report during the Annual Town Meeting.
- Identify and oversee grant opportunities and projects.
- Report on activities of town government to the Board of Selectman, the town meeting and to the various town committees and boards.
- Participate in the negotiations of all major town agreements and contracts.
- Serve on the Capital Projects and POCD Action Plan Committees.
- Perform ceremonial functions of the office.

Administration and Finance Officer (AFO)

The Administration and Finance Officer (AFO) shall be chosen and appointed by the Board of Selectman (BOS) based on qualifications and experience. The AFO will be responsible to the BOS for the proper administration of the affairs of the town (excluding those under direction of the Planning and Community Development Officer (PCDO)).

Supervision Received: Under the general direction of the Board of Selectmen (BOS)

Supervision Exercised: Supervises, coordinates and evaluates the activities of those departments, commissions, boards, and offices reporting to him/her.

Administration and Finance Officer (AFO) Duties:

- Works with the Board of Selectman and Planning and Community Development Officer (PCDO) to develop and execute the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of departments reporting to him/her and take actions necessary to achieve optimum performance levels.
- Develop Duties and Responsibilities for each town department and positions.
- Promote career development coursework for all departments to improve efficiency and communication.
- Appoint, transfer, promote and compensate employees under his/her jurisdiction in accordance with the state of Connecticut Statutes, Bargaining Unit Contracts and General Laws. Provide support during negotiation of collective bargaining agreements for labor units under his/her jurisdiction.
- Advise and recommend to the First Selectman/BOS those needs, policies, programs and actions he/she deems necessary.
- Maintain complete records of the office and make reports to the First Selectman/BOS as required.
- Maintain accountability for all town assets (equipment/land etc) excluding BOE.
- Maintain a purchasing function for the procurement of all supplies, materials, and equipment (Excluding BOE).
- Prepare an annual budget for First Selectman/BOS review.
- Serve on the Capital Projects and POCD Action Plan committees.

Planning and Community Development Officer (PCDO)

The Planning and Community Development Officer (PCDO) shall be chosen and appointed by the Board of Selectman (BOS) based on qualifications and experience. The PCDO will be responsible to the BOS for the proper administration of the affairs of the town (excluding those under direction of the Administration and Finance Officer (AFO)).

Supervision Received: Under the general direction of the Board of Selectmen (BOS).

Supervision Exercised: Supervises and coordinates the activities of those departments, commissions, boards, and offices reporting to him/her.

Planning and Community Development Officer (PCDO) Duties:

- Work with the Board of Selectman, Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission and Administration and Finance Officer (AFO) to develop and execute the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Plan, organize, coordinate and evaluate economic development activities within the town, communicate, coordinate and encourage development strategies that enhance the long term economic vision per the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Oversee the daily operations of the various land use boards and committees in a supervisory role.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of departments reporting to him/her and take actions necessary to achieve optimum performance levels.
- Collect a variety of statistical data and prepare reports and maps on topics such as census information, land use, tax base data, and occupancy rates.
- Provide assistance and information to members of the general public, property owners and developers in a timely manner.
- Promote career development coursework for all departments to improve efficiency and communication.
- Review zoning applications and plans to assure compliance with regulations.
- Enforce zoning and subdivision regulations. Follow up on zoning conflicts.
- Attend meetings with Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Economic Development Commission as needed.
- Establish and maintain appropriate working relationships with State and Federal officials agencies, public offices and the general public.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of departments reporting to him/her and take actions necessary to achieve optimum performance levels.
- Lends leadership to the POCD Action Plan committee.

