

# MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

## TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, NH

Minutes of September 30, 2015

**Members Present:** Alan Zeller, Teresa Cadorette, Beth Alpaugh-Cote, Tyler Ward, Sue Chollet, Ivy Vann and James Kelly

**Also Attending:** Jeanne Dietsch Chairman of the EDA Broadband Subcommittee and George Sterling, EDA Chairman

**Staff Present:** Peter Throop, Director, and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development

Master Plan Steering Committee Co-Chair Chollet (Ms. Chollet) called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m. and thanked the members for their effort to be present.

### **EDA Strategic Planning and Economic Vitality Chapter Update:**

Mr. Throop noted EDA Chairman George Sterling and EDA Broad Band Subcommittee Chairman Jeanne Dietsch were present to update the committee on their work.

Ms. Dietsch began with a Powerpoint presentation entitled *Internet Connectivity: Now & Future*. “This is our work to date” she said.

Beginning with a brief review of the EDA’s Mission Statement and scope of authority Ms. Dietsch reviewed the goals of becoming a global player in compatible industry sectors. She talked about attracting, retaining and growing a highly skilled and talented workforce and enjoying an integrated, locally-based and vibrant economy. Noting cloud-based applications, video teleconferencing, animations and videos, 3D printing and design, biomedical development and real-time collaboration she said “innovative industries require ever more data transfer. The throughput of most broadband services (now) limit our economic growth.” She noted the need for fiber-optic or other enhanced broadband service. Ms. Dietsch went on to say “we have met with four broadband providers and drafted a survey.” She noted the importance of identifying the number of home-based professionals. “How many are there? How big are they?” she asked adding “we are requiring street addresses but if they want high-speed broadband we have to know where you are.” She then reviewed the goals of the presentation which included

reviewing how residents and business owners can help improve both personal and regional economic futures, a study on internet connectivity, how people can participate, *getting* people to participate and answering any questions from the Committee.

Ms. Dietsch reviewed several slides that reviewed the commercialization of the Internet, global product and services that drive our local economy, again pointing out the need for reliable internet services and bandwidth (at reasonable costs) for businesses, telecommuters and home professional in the region.

Ms. Dietsch then reviewed the goals of the study in detail. This included better understanding of global opportunities, mapping broadband needs and priorities, and building inter-town collaboration for growth “while retain our community identities” she said.

Mr. Throop noted the data collected in the survey would help build a case statement and create the best strategy to bring in advanced broadband opportunities. “It will also give us direction in funding (possible municipal?) and partnerships all in an effort to grow a global village economy.”

Ms. Dietsch reviewed how to participate in the survey and how residents and businesses can help. “Make sure that someone from every residence completes a survey” she said adding “and make sure your employees complete one from your business location as well as encouraging all the town and service/social organizations to promote the study.” She also noted the incentive of the potential to win \$100.00 for participating in the survey (one winner).

Ms. Dietsch noted that after the survey the subcommittee recommended hiring an Economic Development Director (two-year contract) with centralized processes to catalyze growth. “We are developing a hiring justification for the Budget Committee now” she said. She concluded by reviewing how the Master Plan Steering Committee could assist the subcommittee by spreading the word. Mr. Throop noted the survey was designed for those living *and* working in town and that the postcard promoting the on-line survey would be mailed to every resident in Peterborough, West Peterborough and Sharon, reiterating the advantages of collaboration to solutions “especially in the rural areas.”

Ms. Chollet asked “all of this is online?” with Ms. Dietsch replying “yes” adding “as well as posted at the public buildings and the postcard.” Dr. Cadorette interjected “what about green construction and being LEED certified?” Ms. Dietsch replied “anything we can do in that respect would be helpful” with Ms. Vann added “I think it is the popular sense at the moment that being LEED

certified in terms of actual green construction is less helpful than anticipated.” Mr. Throop also agreed noting “it is very expensive. The techniques and verification of techniques are very expensive.” Ms. Vann concluded “I have real reservations as to how some of the Gold, Silver and Platinum certification levels (levels that correspond to the number of credits accrued in five green design categories) were achieved.”

With regards to the town having been at the forefront of municipal energy conservation Mr. Ward told the members the town’s Assistant Administrator Nicole MacStay is scheduled to present a report on energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions reducing initiatives on October 6<sup>th</sup> and invited the members to attend.

Ms. Chollet thanked Ms. Dietsch for presenting. Ms. Dietsch encouraged the members to write letters to the local newspaper and well as considering attending the Community Conversation Series “Villages in a Global Economy” on October 13<sup>th</sup> in Bass Hall at the Monadnock Center for History & Culture. Dr. Cadorette added “there will be a viewpoint article on the speakers in the paper next week.”

Economic Development Authority Chairman George Sterling gave a brief review of the economic picture in Peterborough. “For me” he said “it was the For Sale sign going up in front of EMS that triggered the committee to invite Michael Bergeron, business Development Manager for the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED). He went on to tell the members that Mr. Bergeron told them they don’t know where Peterborough is anymore, they have no information on what we are doing, what we are interested in or how to help us. “It was an eye opener” he said.

Mr. Sterling distributed a flyer created by the committee listing all the directives the group has been working on including maps, fiber optics, rural broad band, ERZ Peterborough, hiring an economic development coordinator, marketing, community engagement and a new website ([www.peterboroughworks.com](http://www.peterboroughworks.com)). “That site is up and running” he said and explained “and people started showing up at meetings. The School District got involved and developed and curriculum and a class for the website which includes technology management, photography, videography, attending meetings, Blogs and writing articles.” He told the members “we discovered what our Internet was and learned there is fiber optic, only to be surprised to find it was not lit.” He told the members they had met with New Hampshire Ball Bearing (NHBB) staff who have ground-level employment opportunities (in the \$13.00 to \$18.00 dollar/hour range) but cannot offer affordable housing in town. Ms. Vann asked what a \$13.00 dollar and hour job could sustain for rent with Mr. Sterling replying “about \$550.00 a month.” He told

the members the younger work force wants a walkable environment with educational facilities nearby “so it is a Catch 22” he said. He looked around the room and asked “did you know Peterborough used to have a Community College? It was founded in 1955 by David Parks and Walter Peterson and had a good 30-year run.” He continued “we used to have two hotels too.”

Mr. Sterling told the members he’d had a conversation with XX from Franklin Peirce University who advised him to “focus on what you have, there is no sense in chasing what is lost, we have to look forward to the next steps and a new horizon.” He went on to note that contrary to what Ms. Dietsch had said the Economic Development Director position was likely to be longer than two years. “You fill up and close, fill up and close” he said “this position need to be ongoing.”

Mr. Sterling concluded by noting “we have discovered an awful lot. We have accomplished an awful lot, I look forward to the next steps and new horizons.” Ms. Chollet thanked him Mr. Sterling for coming in. “Good food for thought” she said.

### **Minutes:**

A motion was made/seconded (Alpaugh-Cote/Zeller) to approve the Minutes of August 26, 2015 as written with (all but abstainers Ward and Vann) in favor.

### **Vision Chapter Discussion:**

Ms. Chollet began with noting “we have gone through a tremendous amount of work to get to where we are today” adding “my impression is we pretty much ready for public input and that is our next discussion.” Ms. Vann interjected “I think this is really terrific and ready to go, I agree.” I agree as well” said Mr. Kelly. Under *Priorities* Dr. Cadorette pointed out the bulleted item *develop and implement strategies that will help retain, attract and grow businesses in Peterborough* and noted “that sounds more like an action plan versus a strategy” adding “I am not sure it should be there.” Ms. Vann replied “I am not sure it shouldn’t.” A brief discussion followed with Dr. Cadorette suggesting the language was important “but it should be in the Economic Vitality Chapter.” Mr. Throop interjected that the implementation of these strategies “was high public priority.” Ms. Chollet added “it would be perfect for the Economic Vitality Chapter.” Ms. Vann suggested the language appear in both chapters. “It is not *wrong* to have them in both and there are a lot of reasons to have them in both” she said. Ms. Chollet asked if anyone else had any major concerns to discuss. Ms. Alpaugh-Cote noted a few typographical errors to be corrected.

A motion was made/seconded (Vann/Alpaugh-Cote) to accept the Vision Chapter as written and present it to the Planning Board with all in favor.

Mr. Ward complimented the members on a job well done. "Can I just say *wow*" he said. Ms. Chollet acknowledged good team work and Mr. Throop's input and effort as well.

The members then discussed how to get the word out with suggestions including the local newspaper (public notice, letter to the editor, article about the chapter), newspaper, sending a postcard to town residents, posts in public buildings, posted on the website, advertising on the local access news channel and sending a blast e-mail. Mr. Throop suggested getting on the agenda of every town Board and Committee for a brief informational presentation beginning with the Board of Selectmen on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

When Mr. Throop asked about the specifics of the public hearing the members agreed the regular meeting scheduled for October (October 28, 2015 at 5:45 p.m.) would be sufficient. The members did discuss *where* to hold the meeting (regular venue? Community Center? Bass Hall?) with XX volunteering to follow up on availabilities.

### **Reports from Other Committees:**

Ms. Vann reviewed a preliminary review of an 8-unit cottage court on Vine Street. "It has been pretty well accepted by the neighbors" she said. Ms. Vann specifically noted the location was the area of the parking lot of the former St. Peter's Church. "The church has been decommissioned, the rectory has been sold and the rumor is the church building will be removed" she said.

Ms. Vann also briefly reviewed the approval of the redevelopment of the current Mr. Mike's Convenience Store and Gas Station. "We won some and we lost some" she said adding "but wither way it is going to be a huge improvement from the original proposal."

In conclusion Ms. Vann briefly reviewed the *Raising New Hampshire* conference. Mr. Zeller interjected "it so exceeded my expectations, I cannot tell you."

### **Next Meeting:**

October 28, 2015

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant