

**PLANNING BOARD
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire**

Minutes of August 12, 2013

Members Present: Rick Clark, Alan Zeller, Audrey Cass, Tom Weeks, Joel Harrington, Jerry Galus and Ivy Vann.

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

Chair Harrington called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. by introducing the Members and Staff. He went on to say “let’s get started by telling you how the night will go” adding “there are two chapters for the Master Plan to be reviewed and discussed.” Chair Harrington told the audience once that was completed they would move into a Workshop (as there were no cases) and Ms. Vann would conduct a short exercise with member and the audience participation. He concluded by noting a discussion with two property owners in the Commerce Park and the Business/Industrial Districts to explore allowing additional permitted uses in both. “Once we complete that we will review our work plan and I have one other business item as well” he said.

Master Plan Chapters

Chair Harrington noted they would discuss one chapter at a time and asked if there was representation from the Master Plan Steering Committee. Three members of the audience (Mose Olenik, Sue Chollet and James Kelly) were present from the MPSC (Master Plan Steering Committee) as well as Planning Board members Ivy Vann and Alan Zeller, both of whom serve on the MPSC as well. (Mr. Zeller as the Chairman and Ms. Vann as a representative for the Planning Board).

Ms. Olenik began by stating “both chapters are fairly straight forward. I hope your read them. We are here to answer any of your questions but are hoping you will find them fine the way they are.” Chair Harrington asked if the Municipal Facilities Chapter was a new one and asked “what spurred this chapter?”

A brief history of the chapter was given by Ms. Chollet. She noted the chapter was started several years ago but was never presented to or accepted by the Planning Board. “It is not a part of the Master Plan?” asked Ms. Vann with Ms. Chollet replying “right.” Ms. Chollet went on to note the Board of Selectmen’s charge to investigate alternatives for adequate facilities for Police, Fire and Highway Departments. “They asked us to start work on that several years ago” she said.

Mr. Weeks asked about the feasibility of using land in the area of Water Street (the entrance to the Waste Water Treatment Plant) with a reference to an earlier discussion about the potential to connect to Vose Farm Road to create a second entrance for the facility and whatever else may be built there as well as a second means of egress in an emergency.

Ms. Vann noted she had several thoughts. “I don’t think we need to get into the not into nitty-gritty of where things need to be but clearly we need to focus on what to do in the future” she said

adding “we might want to see locations but we do not need to agonize over it.” Ms. Vann then asked if the Town House had been considered for inclusion in the plan with Ms. Chollet replying it had not. Ms. Vann replied “so my sense is that we have an assessment of what we have on the ground now and will make a path forward.”

Craig Hicks introduced himself and pointed out recommendation “C” that described needs for the Police and Fire Stations. He also noted the current Public Works building was a product of the 1950s. “My point is that as a taxpayer, no more money, not one penny should be going into those buildings” he said adding “it is throwing good money after bad; the Fire Station needs to be demolished.” Mr. Hicks concluded by suggesting “someone talk about this with the Board of Selectmen. If this recommendation is followed, quite a chunk of money will go into the existing Fire Station.” Chair Harrington pointed out the chapter was in anticipation of a Public Safety Complex being built. Ms. Chollet agreed and reviewed some of the excessive needs that both the Police and Fire Departments are experiencing right now (lack of space, lack of storage, flooding, etc.). She explained “there are critical things that need to happen to continue to carry out their jobs. They need to be funded until a new facility is built. We need to do what we can for firefighter to keep them functioning at an optimal standard.”

Chair Harrington moved on to the Population & Housing Chapter. Mr. Kelly pointed out what he described as “the most important part is what has happened to our population in the last 20 years.” He noted the 0-19 year age bracket was down 8% and the 20-44 year age bracket was down 18% “This is an important population change that we need to acknowledge” he said adding “we need to look at the impacts to our schools and perhaps employment. We need to be conscious about it and address it.”

A brief discussion regarding affordable and subsidized housing and demographics on who lives where followed. Ms. Von Mertens noted that one of chapter recommendations may not be entirely consistent with hoe it was being implemented. There was discussion about the replacement of Open space ordinance with an Innovative Subdivision Design Ordinance which would require the use of innovative design and the preservation of open space and facilitate the use of sustainable development practices. Mr. Throop noted the recommendations in a Master Plan are intended to be used as a guide where the statute requires a town have a plan. Chair Harrington the goals and objectives of the draft Innovative Subdivision Design Ordinance and the Master Plan to protect sensitive open space, working farms forests, wildlife, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and steep slopes.

Mr. Hicks noted his confusion over the two ordinances. “You are not talking about the same thing” he said, A brief discussion and review followed. Mr. Hicks concluded by noting “I understand you wanting to preserve the size etcetera but you need to figure out it is beneficial to do so.” Mr. Hicks gave a brief example of his loss of lots at Robbe Farm Road. Chair Harrington replied “I don’t own the gas station, I just pump the gas.” He looked at Mr. Hicks and said “respectfully you have to come to these meetings; we have talked about this on several occasions.” Chair Harrington also noted the language change of *encourage* to *require* “to reflect the current process of where we are.”

With no other public thoughts or comments on this chapter Chair Harrington closed the hearing at 7:30 p.m. and opened up discussion from the Board. Ms. Vann raised her hand and said “I move

we accept the Municipal Facilities Chapter to the Master Plan with no changes and propose we accept the Population & Housing Chapter to the Master Plan with the change of language in Goal #1 from *encourage* to *require*. The motion was seconded by Mr. Galus and all were in favor.

Workshop on Commerce Park and Business/Industrial District

Chair Harrington gave the members and audience a brief history of the Commerce Park and how the most recent request to add the permitted use of Retail was defeated at Town Meeting in 2011. He noted Mr. Hicks had come back to the Board in February to revisit the issue and to discuss additional permitted uses in the Commerce Park. Chair Harrington reported that he had promised a workshop for the interested parties after Town Meeting “and this is that meeting” he said. He noted Mr. Hicks (Commerce Park District) and Peter Brown (Business/Industrial District) were in the audience.

To begin the workshop on these two Districts (located across the street from each other in North Peterborough) Ms. Vann conducted an exercise that involved both the Board and the audience. She handed out pens and post-it notes to everyone. A map of the Districts was projected on the screen with instruction from Ms. Vann to write a one word response on the post-it as she introduced three prompts. She asked the group to look at the physical map and announced the first prompt was Characteristics of the Landscape. She drew the parameters of Water Street to the town line and encouraged the group to “think about what you know is down there.” Someone from the audience asked if she was looking for a word association for the visuals? and Ms. Vann replied “yes.” She allowed about 3 minutes per category. The other two prompts were Built Environment and Gateway.

Once completed the post-it notes were grouped for similarity. These one-word post-its included the following:

Characteristics of the Landscape

Highway
River
Fields
Bikeway
Greenery
Not a lot of commercial development
No housing
Wildlife habitat

Ms. Vann noted “the biggest clump was water.” “Think about that” she said.

Built Environment

EMS
Industrial
Buildings
Schools
Lagoons
Offices

Highway
Parking lots
Recycle

Gateway
Signage
Gardens
Stores
Greenery by the road
No parking lots

Ms. Vann explained the exercise points out what already exists and what might make good sense. “Think about it without a concentration on what you can and cannot do with it right now” she said. Chair Harrington added “and please don’t think of the individuals that own the parcels, think about the area itself and decisions about the proper uses for the districts, what could and should happen.”

A general discussion of the Commerce Park and Business/Industrial Districts followed. Mr. Hicks noted Vision Statements of the Master Plan stated “Peterborough benefits from being the center that provides service and facilities to the surrounding region.” “Is that still true?” he asked as he went on to quote “the community desires businesses that allow residents to do a majority of their shopping locally.” Mr. Hicks looked around and asked “does the town still want to be the economic center of the region?” adding “because we are not the economic center for the average person doing their weekly shopping. That is not happening locally.” Mr. Hicks asked the Board “how do we determine where the town wants to go and secondly if it is not Commerce Park, allow me to do something with it.” Mr. Hicks specifically noted they consider a residential use. He noted the economic changes of the past few years and told the members “the idea of attracting a large out of town retailer is obsolete” noting the numerous empty buildings currently in town. Mr. Hicks concluded by noting “I came tonight to find out what the process is going to be and determine what to do with my property” adding “I am open, it is 125 acres and I would like to do something with it.” He noted that when the district was created it was intended to have town water and sewer extended on to the land. He noted the potential of EDA (Economic Development Authority) involvement or the creation of a TIF District (Tax Increment Finance) “but none of that has occurred” he said.

Ms. Vann noted the exercise and suggested the group “think about what we want” as well as noting the two-lane highway and the question of accessibility. “The access question has to be right up there with the water question” she said.

Mr. Hicks pointed out the geographic center of Peterborough as being due north in the area of the Monadnock Tennis Club. “The future of potential development is going to be north of that” he said. “Understand where the future growth for Peterborough is going to be, that is why I am handing you this piece of property.”

Mr. Hicks then reviewed the ratio of residential to commercial properties had been 60/40 “but now it is 80/20 and I would suggest it is less than that.” The discussion that followed included the

relocation of businesses out of town, the accessibility issues, and the burden of the lost business tax dollars falling on the backs of the property owners. Mr. Hicks cited several examples of business that would have liked to come to Peterborough but ended up settling in Jaffrey. "It is not global, some of it is our fault and I suggest we think about that" he said.

Joe Byk introduced himself and briefly countered the effects of the ratio Mr. Hicks had raised. He briefly explained the ratio and noted that increasing the ratio so that the net tax burden would decrease "is a myth" he said. Mr. Byk explained the gross aggregate assessment of the town tax and inflation of the school budget. "Don't believe me, ask Nancie (Vaihinger) or Pam (Brenner)" he said.

Dick Estes introduced himself and said "development at the north end of town would be a huge mistake." He noted the open corridor and the idea of creating additional traffic on Route 202 "is a bad idea. We are trying to reduce our footprint and work and shop locally. We need to invigorate the downtown."

Peter Brown introduced himself and identified the Business/Industrial District for the audience. He noted the buildings he purchased on Vose Farm Road (the former Brookstone and NEBS buildings) have been redesigned and leased out to businesses over the past few years. "My only issue with zoning are changes in 2006 and 2008 when three permitted uses were taken out of the Industrial District" he said. Mr. Brown went on to note the uses of Office, Research & Development and Professional Services. A brief discussion as to why those particular uses were removed followed with Chair Harrington noting "we need a history as to why those uses were removed." Mr. Brown agreed saying "I would like to know why it happened."

Chair Harrington noted that an update of the Economic Vitality Chapter of the Master Plan was due and while the Chamber of Commerce and the EDA had offered to review it "they don't want to drive it." Sharon Monahan introduced herself and suggested combining the uses of the two districts. With a smile Mr. Brown interjected "let's vote!"

A brief discussion about definition of terms in the districts and the dimensional requirements followed. Mr. Brown volunteered to be involved with this chapter update. Mr. Hicks concluded "I want to be able to do something with my property. There is no retail so let me go back to residential." Tyler Ward asked what the district was zoned before it became Commerce Park with Mr. Hicks replying "Rural." Chair Harrington suggested "let's rally those troops and get Craig and Peter engaged in the process" and reiterated "we need some history here."

Francie Von Mertens introduced herself and spoke briefly on the make-up of the people who wrote the Economic Vitality Chapter in 1994/95. "It was a real mix of people, not the EDA and not the Chamber, a real mix of folks." Mr. Brown interjected "it is really important we do that again."

Review of the 2013/2014 Work Plan

Mr. Throop briefly reviewed the draft Work Program. The members briefly reviewed the process with Mr. Weeks noting "once the ballot is posted the amendments are in effect."

Chair Harrington noted the plan to keep Ms. Ogilvie on to the completion of the Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Zone. Chair Harrington noted Ms. Ogilvie would be paid “but it is minimal, she is doing this out of the goodness of her heart.” The members were excited to hear this news and Chair Harrington asked for a motion for the record. A motion was made/seconded (Weeks/Zeller) to engage the services of Ms. Ogilvie for the Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Zone draft with all in favor.

Once Mr. Throop had reviewed item 5 on the work list a brief discussion of what may or may not take some time followed. Examples included changing the criteria to a specific year and size for the Demolition Committee, elderly housing (“that is going to take some time” said Mr. Weeks) and setbacks. Chair Harrington suggested Home Occupations, Nonconforming Buildings and Work Force Housing be the topic for the September 16th Workshop.

Meeting Minutes

A motion was made/seconded (Van/Clark) to approve the Minutes of July 1, 2013 and July 29, 2013 as written with all in favor

Other Business

Chair Harrington noted his other business was securing Ms. Ogilvie in the position mentioned above.

Mr. Clark asked about the Commerce Park with Mr. Weeks noting the Board should not discuss matters not noticed and without the public present.

Before adjourning Mr. Ward interjected he saw the “Updates from Members Serving on Other Boards Committees” on the Agenda and reported the Heritage Commission had secured a taker for the cottage structure on the Scott Farrar property between the current facility and the farmhouse/ barn. With a smile Chair Harrington replied “well that is usually for *us* (Planning Board members) but that is great news, thank you.”

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant