

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire

Minutes of June 29, 2016

Members Present: Sue Chollet, Beth Alpaugh-Cote and James Kelly

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

Guests: Bob Holt

Master Plan Steering Committee Chair Chollet (Ms. Chollet) called the meeting to order at 5:47 p.m. and welcomed the members.

Minutes:

Without a quorum Ms. Chollet noted “we cannot do the Minutes.”

Economic Vitality Initiatives:

Economic Vitality Chapter Subcommittee: Mr. Kelly began with an update. “The major headline to start is that we have a great team for this group” he said as he thanked Mr. Throop for putting it together. Mr. Throop acknowledged the qualities of the group and said while he did a lot of outreach “others came to me and said they would like to be a part of it.” He noted that he would like to recruit a representative from advanced manufacturing (NHBB, Microspec Corporation, Teleflex), “that is missing right now” he said. Mr. Kelly offered to try to connect with someone at the NHBB and reiterated “it is a good combination of people.”

Mr. Kelly went on to tell the members “workforce recruitment is the number one issue” adding “how to get people here and then house them.” A brief discussion of the barriers or constraints to growth, recruitment and retention followed.

Mr. Throop told the members about a meeting he had attend with Town Administration (Rodney Bartlett and Nicole MacStay) and Jack Dugan of Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the discussion

they'd had about developing a regional economic development group. "It is not all about recruiting new businesses" he said.

Mr. Kelly briefly reviewed the assignments and the report-outs from the Economic Vitality Subcommittee of the Master Plan Steering Committee at a meeting they had last night. He explained they had been given the homework of reviewing both the Vision Chapter as well as well the 2003 Economic Vitality Chapter. He noted from the draft Economic Vitality Chapter they were asked to choose the five most important points. At the meeting they ranked the points in order of importance, creating an overall sense of priority. From the 2003 Economic Vitality Chapter they were asked to identify the sections they thought would be important to include in the new chapter and those that should be omitted for the update. "One of those things is to bring new people in to town, not just business" he said. Mr. Kelly went on to tell the members "and we are looking forward, not back as we begin to work on the outline for the new chapter" adding "we have moved meetings to every two weeks and we hope to have it done next time we meet." He concluded "the quality of discussion from that group was exceptional." Ms. Chollet interjected "it is a hot committee." She then told the members she had caught just a bit of a program on New Hampshire Public Radio that featured a guest who said clearly that states who did well during the recession had *already* invested in their communities. "They survived the best" she said.

Mr. Kelly reviewed an interview with local business man and community leader Jim Grant "and the one thing that stunned me is his description of the incredible financial support he found here when he was starting out. That is not available now, collaborative financial and other support is not available for new people" he said. Ms. Chollet redirected the discussion noting "we are not here to discuss economics. That is the subcommittee's job."

EDA Coordinator Position: Mr. Throop noted a meeting the EDA strategic planning committee had with Carmen Lorentz, Director of the Division of Economic Development for the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED). "She felt we would be better served spending municipal funds *not* on one person or firm" he said adding "that we would be better off identifying specific projects and then finding the best consultant or coordinator for *that* project." He went on to note the amount of time that would be necessary to bring an individual or firm up to speed. "You end up at the end of the year with not a lot to show for it" he said. He also reiterated the importance of retaining businesses we have and helping them to grow (not recruiting new businesses) as a

key component. He told the members he thought it would be very useful to “take a step back to look at the implication of how we were going to spend the money.”

Mr. Throop told the members he had been approached by people *with someone in mind* for the position a few times “which means they are most likely locals, whether they have the required skills remains to be seen” he said adding “the UNH Cooperative Extension recently hired a county coordinator for Sullivan county and he is hoping to learn from their experience.” He also told the members the Town was hiring a part time Administrative Assistant who will also be doing some of the initial business database update work and act as a support person for the contractor.

Mr. Kelly noted the work done by the Strategic Planning Subcommittee of the Master Plan Steering Committee. Ms. Chollet noted the Economic Vitality Subcommittee crew. “They are so strong and would be helpful to the town in moving forward in defining the projects as well as how the town should use the money.” Ms. Alpaugh-Cote agreed adding “their research on the chapter in essence had pinpointed the issue needed to be worked on.”

Noting collaboration with the Economic Development Authority Mr. Kelly noted a recent meeting that featured Louise Jordon, President of Nashua Community College (NCC) who spoke about a satellite campus in town. “There were at least twenty people in the room. It was fantastic, I totally support this addition to the town” he said. Mr. Throop explained that the College was working on grant funding to buy a building, which they are required to do when they open a facility. “That is a big commitment” he said.

Housing Outreach Initiatives:

Open Space Residential Development Ordinance Rewrite: Mr. Throop explained the group was on a bit of hiatus with one member experiencing a family loss. He briefly reviewed the outreach that had been done with realtors, builders, engineers and land owners (particularly including some that were quite vocal about the SRDS Amendment in 2013) noting “we will be going back to these people as we go along to continue to get their input.”

MTAG Planning Grant: Ms. Chollet mentioned the Municipal Technical Assistance Program for Housing Options (MTAG) awarded by Plan NH that she, Ms. Ivy Vann and Carol Ogilvie were working on. “This is for the purpose of writing changes to the zoning that would support new village projects” she said adding “with the idea of increasing our varying housing stock.” She concluded by noting the final report was due in January and noted “you will be hearing about

opportunities to come and hear a lot of community input. It definitely will follow the new Vision Chapter and will tie in well with the Economic Vitality Chapter. I am very excited about it.”

Master Plan Steering Committee Work Plan:

To start Mr. Throop noted after the retirement of former Master Plan Steering Committee member Mose Olenik a search had been on to fill her seat. He introduced Planning Board member Bob Holt who was present and interested.

Mr. Holt gave a brief biography (married a local, working remotely as a software engineer, degree in Economics and loves the area). When asked how he got interested in being involved with the town he replied it began as a response to letters written to the local paper by a former Selectman. “It was after Town Meeting in 2015” he said adding “and one thing led to another.” He went on to say “I will be involved with the MTAG Planning Grant as well. We love Peterborough so its economic vitality and long term Master Plan are important to us.”

Noting they had both been on the Committee a long time Ms. Chollet, Ms. Alpaugh-Cote and Mr. Kelly also gave brief biographies. Ms. Alpaugh-Cote noted “maintaining the Master Plan is a job that has never been finished. It has become quite a creature but it has been fun.” Ms. Chollet added “for me the one thing really substantial is the opportunity for the public input for what we do.” Mr. Kelly noted he was proud to be a member of this and other committees in town. He concluded “this third chapter in my life is making a change in this community from the bottom up *not* the top down.”

Mr. Throop told the members they could send their recommendation to appoint Mr. Holt to the Board of Selectmen. “Their next meeting is July 19th” he said. The members unanimously agreed to do so.

Moving on to specifics Mr. Throop asked the members to think about the pressing items, issues and priorities facing the town. The members briefly reviewed ongoing participation in the Economic Vitality Chapter, updating the Housing Chapter (with the collaboration of the MTAG Planning Group) and revisiting the Municipal Facilities Chapter of the Master Plan. Mr. Throop mentioned the Web Arts Report and its suggestion to improving the Upper Hall’s audio and visual perspectives for a better performance space as an economic driver. He also noted the intended renovations for the Town Hall including ADA accessible entrances and an elevator. “There are mounds of projects” he said adding “lots of facility related things that tie into the Municipal Facilities Chapter. Some of which could be done through this Committee and some by helping to make decision on what to do.” He

also noted there are companies that do that for municipalities. “They come in and look at the facilities (Fire, Police and Highway), assess the conditions they are in, do projections of the population and tie it together with a recommendation understanding we cannot just throw in huge amounts, rather in staged improvements.” Ms. Chollet suggested they look into hiring someone. Mr. Throop noted some money to look at programmatic requests that are consistent with a town this size may create a big question for the Budget Committee and CIP if brought to the table. Ms. Chollet added “and one facility is just one piece of the puzzle. It is a mistake to look at just one piece.” “I agree” replied Mr. Throop. When Mr. Kelly asked for clarification on the Municipal Facilities Complex (he was not on the Committee at that time) Ms. Chollet gave him a brief update of the meetings, public hearings, workshops and site visits they’d had.

Ms. Alpaugh-Cote asked about the Main Street Bridge and retaining wall reconstruction project and the potential disruption it will cause. After a brief discussion about that project’s construction schedule Ms. Chollet concluded “it is a nightmare.”

To wrap up, the members reviewed their priorities for the next six months which included housing initiatives, sheparding the Economic Vitality Chapter of the Master Plan and coordination of the various types of outreach activities that will be happening. “Understanding each of the segments, their opportunities, challenges and immediate needs. Let’s get a good handle on that first” said Ms. Chollet adding “and how those efforts can feed into other chapters.” She concluded by citing the Housing Chapter as an example. “We talk about different types of housing but with nothing to look at it is all theoretical, it means nothing, there is nothing to get excited about.” Mr. Throop suggested researching actual designs, “some of the form-based aspects of it” he said with Ms. Chollet replying “yes.”

Housing Outreach Initiatives Update:

Mr. Throop noted the importance of better understanding housing economics and what it takes to get affordability. He mentioned tiny houses and micro unit conversions. “We still have no understanding if converting a building into micro units is the key. Is it the innovations and interior finish work that supports it?” The members briefly discussed the economics of that style of living with its multi-purpose furniture functionality and no wasted space as well as what price point is affordable. “We need to understand those economics” said Mr. Throop. Ms. Chollet interjected “so we should have a builder on the subcommittee.” Mr. Throop reviewed a project on Vine Street with eight moderate-sized cottages on very small footprints. “Some say too small” he said and he reiterated as the

question “what is the size to have it affordable? We need to understand this.” Ms. Chollet said she expected the data and research work from the Housing Chapter Subcommittee as well as the work being done for the New Village Node project would be of great assistance in answering that question. She then asked “are we ready to advertise for the housing chapter?” Mr. Throop replied “I may sound like a bit of a broken record but I am overwhelmed right now with these subcommittees.” He noted both the Economic Vitality Subcommittee as well as the EDA Subcommittees were building their bases, identifying what they need to do to make them move forward and that he would be able to pull back a bit “but that will be just in time to rev up for the RFQ for the Economic Development Coordinator position as well as all of my daily stuff which chews up time like nobody’s business” he said.

Ms. Alpaugh-Cote suggested they wait until September to advertise for the Housing Chapter Subcommittee. “Vacations will be over, kids will be back in school then” she said adding “and it will give Peter a chance to catch his breath.”

She also noted small shotgun houses (built by Rural Studio in Hale County, Alabama starting at \$20,000) she had been researching for one of her properties and told the members she would share that information with them.

In closing Ms. Chollet asked Mr. Throop to send an email about attendance at the July meeting asking for an RSVP to see if they would have a quorum.

Next Meeting:

July 27, 2016 at 5:45 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant