

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire

Minutes of August 26, 2015

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

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

Master Plan Steering Committee Co-Chair Cote (Ms. Cote) called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. and welcomed the members.

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Alpaugh-Cote/Zeller) to approve the Minutes of June 24, 2015 as written with all in favor.

Co-Chairs Chollet and Alpaugh-Cote complimented the minute taker for the record. Ms. Cote the handed the meeting over to Mr. Throop.

Vision Draft Discussion:

Mr. Throop began with “this is a review and discussion of the first Vision Draft with the goal of generating clear feedback (good and bad) leading to the second draft.” He noted the draft was a culmination and integration of all the comments from the April 2014 forum, the follow-up survey and all the meetings “with a goal of being as compact, clear and succinct as possible.” He went on to say “I welcome your feedback, I want to make sure we get it right, reflecting a synthesis of where the town is today and where it wants to be in the future.” He noted a series of questions he had provided on the back of their agenda that asked *what may be missing? Has a clear picture been painted? Is there adequate guidance to move to the next level of detail? How well does the Chapter reflect the community input from the April Forum and the follow-up survey?*

Initial Impression:

The members all had a very good first impression noting the layout and the bulleted items. The members briefly discussed its similarity to the 1995 version.

Purpose:

Mr. Throop noted the statement seeks to paint a picture of where the town wants to go in the future. Mr. Kelly interjected “I really like the mention of diverse, quality jobs was in the beginning and not in the back.” The members briefly discussed the order of the town’s attributes with Mr. Throop once again noting the forum and follow-up survey. “Coming out of a recession it is clear that jobs were on people’s minds” he said adding so we positioned it without diminishing the other assets, it is a balancing act.”

Referring to the discussion questions Mr. Throop asked the members if there was anything they felt was missing. Mr. Zeller interjected “I have to keep reminding myself that this is a *vision* statement because some of the statements are not true.” Ms. Alpaugh-Cote asked if direct quotes were used in the statement with Mr. Throop replying “no, not really, more so themes. We can play with the language.” He added the statements from the forum and comments from the audience were crunched down and turned into survey questions “so in essence *we* created quotes that reflect direct input. We have some license in the wording as long as it is in the spirit of the input we collected.”

The Vision:

Again Mr. Throop asked if the member felt anything was missing. Ms. Chollet replied “we may be missing the whole thing about communication and what we mean by it.” Mr. Zeller added “and we should add something about civil discourse.” Another member noted there was a reference to civil discourse in the Guiding Principles. Ms. Alpaugh-Cote identified the language change of “a great town to raise a family” to “a great town in which to raise a family.”

Mr. Throop asked the members “does it provide a clear picture of where the town is headed?” Ms. Chollet replied “we have provided the context of how we make decisions as well as a guideline for developers.” Mr. Throop also noted the Housing Chapter of the Master Plan, the argument that Peterborough does not have entry-level housing rentals “and what is available is expensive and substandard.” He gave a brief review of the Economic Development Authority’s (EDA) attention to that issue. Peterborough does not have to provide all the housing” he said. Mr. Kelly noted the importance of broad band telecommunications as a heavy factor in people’s decisions on moving to town.

Mr. Throop then led the members through the document beginning with the ***Purpose Statement***. Ms. Chollet noted that Ms. Cadorette had previously mentioned the idea of community consensus or getting a synthesis of the

community. “Not exactly what one particular person or another said but what the people said *generally*.” She looked around and asked “is there another word for synthesis?” One member replied “not consensus” with Ms. Chollet agreeing “people jump on that” she said.

The members went on to discuss their intent of a community consensus or a synthesis of the community consensus without actually using the word. While half the members present felt strongly about the way the paragraph read Mr. Zeller and Mr. Kelly did not. “I find no fault with the sentence at all “said Mr. Zeller with Mr. Kelly adding “I am not alarmed by the word consensus.”

Guiding Principles:

Mr. Throop noted this section reflected the principles community leaders need to develop plans, make decisions and set the policies that would moves the community toward their vision.

The members had a brief discussion on and rearrangement of the order of the bulleted items. They also removed several words they thought to be redundant. Ms. Chollet suggested making the principles strong and clear by starting the sentences with a verb (an action word). Those principles included balanced growth with enhanced character, community strengths and assets, opportunities to strengthen the town’s vitality (aesthetics and uniqueness) and identifying the challenges to reach full potential with creating innovative strategies to transform these challenges in to opportunities.

Mr. Throop noted the guiding principles are listed to assist the reader in interpreting and applying the vision statement as future chapters of the Master Plan were updated and policy, funding and land use decisions were made. He told the members “I found this section of the Chapter the most difficult to write because it requires the most synthesis” as he asked for feedback on the language. A brief discussion and minor wordsmithing followed. Ms. Chollet recommended *balanced* be changed, noting her focus on action words. “Pick out the verbs we are trying to accomplish and start out strong” she said. The members also discussed various other bullets listed under the guiding principles in an effort to make them clear. A few typographical and grammatical errors were identified as well. When discussing capitalizing on opportunities to strengthen vitality, the members identified the sometimes overlooked populations of seniors and home-based business endeavors. The members discussed the meaning of *advanced manufacturing* (a term connected to technological work or new technologies to innovate manufacturing). Mr. Throop interjected “and there is quite a bit in the area along with the skills and experience that go along with it. Mr. Zeller agreed noting “New Hampshire Ball

Bearing and MicroSpec have product all over the planet.” Mr. Throop noted how the maker space initiative “ties right to it.” Mr. Kelly noted the potential for advanced education (satellite campuses) or a post-graduate training center in town. Mr. Throop suggested that potential was better fitted for the *Priorities* Section. Mr. Kelly replied “as long as it is in there I don’t care where it goes.”

Priorities:

Mr. Throop began with “the trick is to avoid getting too specific or digging down into the realm of the Master Plan chapters.” He noted the six priorities that included the identifying of imminent threats to the town’s natural resources, open space and character, ensuring regulatory structure, and incentives to protect and enhance the community’s character, developing and implementing strategies that assist in attracting, growing and retaining businesses, develop an understanding of how changes in demographics influence housing needs, evaluating long-term infrastructure needs and taking an active role in bringing enhanced broad band to the community.

Mr. Throop spoke briefly about the importance of developing strategies while being mindful of the financial burdens that may result. The members briefly discussed the order of the priorities moving the attraction, growth and retainment of business up in priority. Mr. Throop noted strategic plans for housing may change, “given the current generation of changing hands.” By this he meant a trend of long-time family homes being sold as the owners downsize or pass away as their heirs live elsewhere. “Things could change” he said. Mr. Kelly reiterated the importance of education and business growth. Ms. Chollet asked about moving broadband up “or are we already working on it?” she asked. Mr. Throop briefly explained the efforts of the EDA in that arena.

A brief discussion about the public hearing process followed. Mr. Throop recommended that Master Plan Steering Committee do a final review of the document prior to sending it to the Planning Board. “Take as much public comment as possible and see if changes are needed. That needs to happen *here* not at the Planning Board” he said adding “unless you engage people in discourse about this stuff they do not own it.

Conclusion:

Mr. Throop noted the Vision Chapter is a meaningful foundation for future Master Plan chapter updates. He noted the community-wide responses from the April Forum and the follow-up survey validated many of the conclusions of past vision statements but also incorporated new ideas reflective of social trends and economic

changes. He asked “so does this work for you?” the members all agreed it did. Mr. Throop noted he would like to give those members not in attendance a chance to give their input and once that was completed he would update the draft. With a smile Mr. Zeller concluded that having reviewed the 1995 version of the Master Plan “the more things change, the more they stay the same.”

Next Meeting:

September 30, 2015

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant