

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire

Minutes of April 28, 2016

Members Present: Ed Henault, Dave Drasba, Joe Ierna, Sue Chollet, Akhil Garland, Alan Zeller, Beth Alpaugh-Cote, Mark Hatcher, Alex Walker, Matt Waitkins, James Kelly, Andrea Cadwell and Tyler Ward.

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

Master Plan Steering Committee Chair Chollet (Ms. Chollet) called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. and welcomed the members. “We have four members of the Master Plan Steering Committee so we have a quorum” she said adding “and I am a bit of stickler about starting the meeting on time.” She noted the members could approve the Minutes of their last meeting while waiting for expected subcommittee members to arrive for the kickoff meeting of the Economic Vitality Chapter of the Master Plan.

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Zeller/Alpaugh-Cote) to approve the Minutes of March 9, 2016 as written with all in favor.

Mr. Throop distributed a master contact list and asked the members to check it for accuracy.

After approval of the Minutes Ms. Chollet introduced herself as the Chairman of the Master Plan Steering Committee. She noted Ms. Alpaugh-Cote was the Vice or Co-Chairman. “We do things together” she said. Ms. Chollet thanked the members for coming and noted the Master Plan Steering Committee has been looking to update this chapter for quite some time but before doing that they conducted a visioning session for the town and rewrote the Vision Chapter. “Now we are ready to start the Economic Vitality Chapter. I am excited, this is fantastic” she said.

The kickoff began with the members introducing themselves:

Alex Walker noted she was interested in participating when her father (Mr. Kelly) mentioned it to her. She told the members she was an active member of the Agricultural Commission Committee.

Mark Hatcher told the members he had been in town for about 3 years and that he made guitars out of his home. As a home business owner he told the members he was interested in things like Broadband coming to town. He told the members he and his wife had *town shopped* New Hampshire for 5 years before moving here. He concluded by noting he realized Peterborough was their choice while standing in the Toadstool Bookstore. “This small town supports this great bookstore, this is where we need to live” he said.

Akhil Garland told the members “I grew up here, it *is* the best place to raise a family.” As past Director of the Well School and Founder of PeoplesVC he said his passion is to help revitalize Peterborough by identifying opportunities and creating jobs. “To help Peterborough reinvent itself” he said.

Mr. Kelly interjected “what about gaZING?” Mr. Garland replied “it is new, like an Uber app to get all kinds of things. You can get a piano tuned, wood stacked or your computer fixed” he said.

Sue Chollet told the members she had been on the Master Plan Steering Committee for 12 years. She noted the ever-ongoing planning facing the Committee adding “I am not sure why I like it so much but I do.”

Beth Alpaugh-Cote told the members that she was also a member of the Water Resources Advisory Committee, the Contoocook and North Branch Rivers Local Advisory Committee and she and her husband ran a small business in town. “Yes, we are interested in in the vitality of our town” she said.

“I am a carpenter and contractor in real time” said Tyler Ward adding “I love this town and as time went by I got more and more involved.” He told the members he moved from New Ipswich to Peterborough 2010 when he realized “this is where we should be.” He said he knew after graduating the Well School his son would be going to ConVal so it was time to get integrated. He told the members “the town is so welcoming, I have learned so much.” As a Selectman for the town he concluded “it is exciting to be involved and committed.”

Dave Drasba told the members he was an architect. “I live in Hancock but I have had offices in both the Guernsey Building and the Granite Block.” He noted he was currently an associate of Dan Scully (Scully Architects) in Keene. “I like the feel

of Peterborough” he said adding “it feels like the center of the Monadnock Region. It is a *as goes Peterborough so goes the area* type thing. I hope to contribute to this process.”

Alan Zeller told the members “I have been in town 13 years. We could have gone anywhere but we saw all the advantages of this town and we chose Peterborough.” He said after a few years he realized he had to get involved and subsequently became a member of Master Plan Steering Committee and the Planning Board.

Looking around the room Andrea Cadwell noted she had served on the Heritage Commission with Mr. Ward, the Water Resources Committee with Ms. Alpaugh-Cote, was currently on the Agricultural Commission with Mr. Ward and Ms. Walker “and I am a member of the New Hampshire Food Alliance. I am very interested in this committee, thank you for having me here” she said. Mr. Kelly also mentioned *Seeds of Community* with Ms. Cadwell noting she founded the farm-based collective action to increase local food security and justice.

Ed Henault told the members he moved to town 35 years ago as a Manager for Millipore. He noted he was the Chairman of the Open Space Committee, “the Chairman for life I think” he said with a smile. Mr. Henault noted he has also been involved with the Population & Housing Chapter of the Master Plan. “I like the idea of getting involved, particularly when I will learn something” he said.

James Kelly noted he was a member of the Master Plan Steering Committee as well the Economic Development Authority (EDA). “I have been here for about 6 years having moved back from 35 years in London” he said. While his main reason for moving to Peterborough was his daughter Alex he told the members is delighted to be involved with the sustainability of the community. “A favorite topic in my lifetime of work with business is to create sustainability plans with social, environmental and economic value, not just making money” he said.

Joe Ierna said he and his wife moved here last December but with his economic development experience it did not take him long to be meeting with George Sterling and Mr. Throop for some coffee and discussion on how he might help out. “I lived in Bartlett, NH so I am not a flatlander” he said adding coincidentally that when he served in the Air Force he was stationed outside of Peterborough in England. “This is your destiny” interjected Mr. Zeller with Mr. Ierna suggesting they all fly over there for a meeting.

Matt Waitkins told the members he had been a resident since 1985. “I came to help a friend build a house in Hancock. “It was a beautiful June day and I never left” he

said. A Transportation Planner for the City of Nashua, Mr. Waitkins noted he was the past Chairman of the ZBA and a Planning Board alternate. He spoke very briefly about the strong vitality of Peterborough in the mid-80s was in some ways attributed to people moving out of the cities to the country environment. “But that trend started reversing” he said adding “but there is still a demographic or a subset of those who *do* want to live in the country.” “And we are well positioned to receive them, so there is hope” interjected Mr. Throop. “There *is* hope” echoed Ms. Chollet.

Mr. Throop gave the members a brief biography, having moved to the area in 1997 to attend Antioch New England Graduate School in Keene. He noted his experience as a Planner for the City of Keene as well as working on conservation planning and easements for the Monadnock Conservancy. He concluded “and now I feel fortunate to have come to work with all of you.”

Mr. Throop mentioned three other members unable to be present. Those individuals were George Sterling (past Planning Board Chairman present Chairman of the EDA, small business owner and Vice Chairman of the Greater Downtown Chamber of Commerce), Jeanne Dietsch (former ZBA Chairman, entrepreneur, small business owner, “a real get-it-done person”) and Ivy Vann (member of the Master Plan Steering Committee, present Chairman of the Planning Board and State Representative for Peterborough). Mr. Throop concluded by noting a representative from Monadnock Community Hospital and he hoped someone from New Hampshire Ball Bearings would also participate in the subcommittee.

Subcommittee, MPSC and Staff Role:

Mr. Throop began with “we have an Economic Vitality Chapter that is out of date” adding “that is no surprise because we have gone through a recession, times change, people move in and people move out.” Ms. Chollet asked the members to review the current chapter and think about updates that make sense, that go along with the best thinking today on how to position the town for economic vitality and sustainability.

Mr. Throop reminded the members of the work and data collection as a result of the Visions Forum in April of 2014 as well as the follow-up survey last year. He added he would provide them with the results provided by the UNH Cooperative Extension, the 2003 Economic Development Chapter of the Master Plan as well as the Economic Development Strategic Plan. He held up an updated SWRPC

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Report and said “this is a large document, I printed out the 20-page Executive Summary but I am going to ask you to review this electronically.” He added “this is not so comprehensive per se. Where it is really useful is to understand from *their* perspective the goals for the region of which we are a part.”

Noting the Arts Center Assessment prepared by Duncan Webb he pointed out the concentric circles of attracting visitors from 5, 15 and 30 miles out. “When you start thinking that way it opens up possibilities we may not of thought about” he said. He also mentioned Economist Michael Shulman’s presentation on pollinator enterprises business models to grow jobs and strengthen local economies as well as Monadnock Buy Local’s campaign to promote positive economic growth by buying locally.

“So start with the background information” said Ms. Chollet adding “then look at the chapter as a start for the discussion of what to keep, what to throw out, what makes sense and what needs to be updated.” She told the members “Peter (Throop) is the resource to get you information and data.” Mr. Throop pointed out the expertise of the Master Plan Steering Committee members was also a resource to the group. Ms. Chollet agreed and added “when the material gets put together it has typically been the person in Peter’s position that does the writing. “I would imagine that is true for this group as well but it is up to you.” She went on to say “once it is complete it is presented to the Master Plan Steering Committee for a public hearing and a vote to send it to the Planning Board for approval.” Mr. Waitkins asked if there was going to be a certain number of meetings and would if they had to be noticed. Mr. Throop replied “this would be a good time decide on your schedule.” He told the members he highly recommended one day of the week for consistency “but it also makes scheduling a lot easier.” Ms. Chollet asked if Minutes would be required (basic notes by a member volunteer or on a rotating basis are sufficient) and Mr. Henault asked if all meetings would be open meetings (yes, they are).

Ms. Cadwell asked about sharing what Peterborough is doing for economic development and how it relates to agriculture. Supportive of Ms. Cadwell’s idea, Mr. Throop suggested “reminding people that this is a work in progress and not to draw conclusions prematurely from what you share.” Ms. Cadwell noted “I just think people will be interested in what the town is thinking about.” Ms. Chollet interjected “yes, it should not be a secret” with Ms. Cadwell adding “I agree, it is very exciting.”

A brief discussion about the best ways to get the public involved (open forums, surveys, focus groups) followed. Mr. Ward cautioned about NH RSA 91-A Right to Know Law as well as small group and e-mail discussion. Mr. Throop suggested the proper etiquette was to filter all questions comments or suggestions through him and he would send them out on a regular basis. He reminded the members “this is a planning group which is a bit different than a group that is quasi-judicial.” Mr. Hatcher asked “so this (group) is for making recommendations, there is no obligation on the town right?” “Right” replied Mr. Throop.

Mr. Kelly asked about the creation of a separate chapter for agriculture in Master Plan. Ms. Chollet replied “I think agriculture is really important for business in the town and our interest in it is growing. I think at this point in time, given the size of the agriculture endeavor, I would love to see it stay in the Economic Vitality Chapter.” Ms. Cadwell interjected “I agree, why be separate? It is all contributing to economic vitality. It is a part of that whole picture and should not be a separate entity. That would leave it in a vulnerable position.” Mr. Hatcher suggested the potential of creating a working group within the subcommittee. Mr. Kelly replied “I think we could do that” with Ms. Chollet reiterating “it is up to you.”

Mr. Throop reviewed the expectations of the planning process for the members. “This is not a forever committee” he said. Mr. Hatcher suggested 8 to 12 months with Ms. Chollet noting “that seems reasonable.” Mr. Throop suggested they set a time for their next meeting and focus on the scope of how far they want to go. “This is a fairly comprehensive update” he said adding “you need to estimate the steps needed and frequency of meeting to get it done. It can ebb and flow a bit, you may find you do not have to meet every month while other updates are being processed.” Mr. Watkins added “right, we need a beginning and an end.” Mr. Kelly asked Mr. Throop if he would be attending their meetings with Mr. Throop replying “some of them, as you need me.”

“Let’s set a date” said Mr. Kelly. After a brief discussion the members decided to meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 5:45 p.m. making the next meeting May 10, 2016 at 5:45 p.m. Mr. Waitkins suggested they set a time limit for meeting length and the members agreed one and a half hours would be sufficient.

Mr. Henault clarified the homework by noting “we should go through the materials and try to determine some sort of big picture. Define what victory is going to look like, then decide what to do because you can flail around in the dark for a long time without guidelines.”

Mr. Throop agreed adding an agenda would be prepared for each meeting. Mr. Ierna asked about the extent of the Chamber of Commerce's involvement with Mr. Throop reminding him the Vice Chairman of the Chamber was on the subcommittee. Ms. Cadwell inquired about young people looking for jobs as well as businesses trying to fill positions with younger people. The members identified the lack of a representative for this demographic on the subcommittee and ConVal's Mary Lou O'Neil was suggested as the right person to contact.

Ms. Chollet interjected a great idea for a focus group would be interviewing young people about the reasons they leave *or* stay in town. Mr. Throop noted "one key goal in the Vision Chapter is working on that issue as well as how to attract younger people and families to the area." Mr. Henault also suggested a representative from one of the local colleges "it would be nice to get that input" he said. Mr. Waitkins suggested they get that type of input from focus groups and meeting so the committee size stays manageable.

Ms. Chollet concluded "thank you all for coming, you are off to a good start." Mr. Ierna suggested Mr. Throop create and distribute a brief biography of each member so that they would know each other's expertise and knowledge. Looking around the room he said "I think that would be helpful."

In closing Mr. Throop distributed a Table of regional issues compiled by the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Report for Southwest Regional Planning Commission. "It shows aspects and elements of economic vitality. I found the detail interesting" he said.

Next Meeting:

EVSC May 24, 2016 at 5:45 p.m. MPSC June 29, 2016

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant