

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire

Minutes of March 9, 2016

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

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 5:45 p.m. and welcomed the members.

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Alpaugh-Cote/Zeller) to approve the Minutes of January 27, 2016 as written with all in favor.

Economic Vitality Master Plan Chapter Update:

As Mr. Throop distributed copies of the final adopted version of the Vision Chapter of the Master Plan signed by the Planning Board he noted the need to develop a charge for the subcommittee for the Economic Vitality Chapter update.

Ms. Chollet added “the subcommittee needs a charter so they are clear as to what we want them to do.” She went on to recall that Mr. Kelly and Mr. Zeller had volunteered to be members of the subcommittee and thanked them for their effort. Mr. Throop reported he’d had one response to the advertisement in the newspaper and that he would follow up. The members briefly discussed other potential members (including Jeanne Dietsch, Barbara Miller, George Sterling, and other members of the EDA). When Mr. Ward interjected concern with Ms. Dietsch’s commitments and busy schedule Mr. Kelly replied “I’d ask her.” Mr. Throop noted Ms. Dietsch’s contribution to the Mission Statement of the Vision Chapter and Ms. Chollet noted her skill and analytic ability. Mr. Zeller interjected “the busiest people get the most stuff done.”

Mr. Kelly told the members he had reviewed the 2003 Economic Vitality Chapter and has come up with a summary list of what the updated chapter may contain. “What to do different” he said. Mr. Throop made copies of the outline and distributed it to the members. Mr. Kelly reiterated his belief that the town needed to be more innovative in creating opportunities itself “and not just hunting for businesses to come in.”

Ms. Chollet cautioned the members not to get too far ahead of the subcommittee's responsibilities. "It is important to look at everything but not be too prescriptive" she said. Mr. Kelly replied "fine, I just think we should say something about who we are seeking to come in." He also suggested they involve the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Chollet asked "are you suggesting Sean Ryan?" with Mr. Kelly replying "someone from the Chamber" adding "and others who are active in the economic development of our town." A brief discussion about the availability of Akhil Garland ("he is swamped too" interjected Mr. Ward) and maker-space member Mark Hatcher followed with Ms. Alpaugh-Cote noting "they are busy but even if they could come in at the beginning and share their wisdom it would be of great value."

Mr. Throop mentioned a gentleman by the name of Joe Ierna who had expressed interest in being involved. "He recently moved to town" he said adding "he was the Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce for the Greater Hartford (CT) area and has experience in economic development."

"Great" replied Ms. Chollet and asked "any other thoughts? Any other members from the EDA?" Mr. Ward noted "Jeanne would be great" with Ms. Chollet replying "yes, even if she could just do a few meetings."

A brief discussion about the start time of the subcommittee followed, Mr. Throop noted dates he would be out of town and the identified the potential of meeting the week of April 11th for a kick-off meeting.

Mr. Throop noted the subcommittee could start with a review of the current chapter and identifying old data that would need to be updated, and set the stage for new context and data. Ms. Chollet noted the committee could decide the scope of the geographical area to be reflected in the data analysis (just Peterborough or regional/state wide). Mr. Throop suggested the Southwest Regional Planning Commission may be a source of information to consider in building a picture of the Monadnock Region. He concluded by reviewing the components of the charge which includes context, data updates and analysis, outreach, the April 2014 Forum results, what has worked and what has not, what is still relevant (dedicated outreach position, work-force housing, labor supply, child care, education) and what may not be (impact of the school system as an employer, and school and businesses impact on property taxes) as well as what changes to make. He suggested the members of the subcommittee review this information prior to the kick-off meeting. Ms. Alpaugh-Cote suggested just the current Economic Vitality Chapter be provided with links to the data sources "so as not to overwhelm the members."

Mr. Ward reiterated the affordable housing problem (“it does not exist in the \$150,000 – \$160,000 range for new construction” he said) Dr. Cadorette asked about prefabricated homes and Ms. Alpaugh-Cote noted the potential for land trusts “where you build a home but you do not own the land.” Mr. Throop interjected “that is a community land trust model.” When the conversation started to take off Ms. Chollet redirected it to the topic at hand “these are all good points” she said adding “but that discussion is for the Housing Chapter.” She then asked if it would be helpful to update the commercial inventory in town. Mr. Throop noted that may be difficult to ascertain “with all the Doing Business As (DBAs) and Limited Liability Corporations (LLCs) out there.” Ms. Alpaugh-Cote suggested if the subcommittee members thought the commercial inventory was important, they could contact the Secretary of State’s office in Concord. The members then briefly discussed the potential for a business registration system for the town and the benefit identifying key local economic sectors including retailers, manufacturing and telecommuters.

Noting the focus on locally grown foods and healthy eating habits Dr. Cadorette asked if future trending was important. She also cited Belcampo Farms, Meat Company and Restaurants located in California whose main focus is on the growth of a sustainable, high-quality food movement.

In an attempt to identify the real and potential strengths of the town to be able to develop strategies to promote itself, Mr. Throop summarized healthcare, manufacturing, agriculture and housing (briefly described the state’s mandate to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that are owner-occupied). Mr. Ward briefly described noted “granny pods” with Dr. Cadorette interjecting “allowing seniors to stay in their homes.” Mr. Kelly asked “did we say educational branch?” “Right” replied Mr. Throop adding “and the innovation of the Maker Space.” He looked at the members and noted “we also have to look at the challenges (lodging and retaining young people). Dr. Cadorette asked “when you talk about retaining younger people are we letting them go to have them come back to have and raise their children there?” Ms. Chollet agreed noting “they are drawn back and they have something to come back to.”

A brief discussion about strategies to attract younger residents and the need for a housing authority to reach out to this population that also has the energy and willingness to proactively make it happen followed. “That requires leadership” said Mr. Throop adding “it is a key to building a vital and strong economy and increase businesses in the local economy, making it more resilient.”

Proposed Master Plan Chapter on Agriculture:

Mr. Ward began by noting some of the great things the Agriculture Commission was accomplishing. “They have programs in the schools where kids visit local farms or have a farmer come in and give a talk” he said. Mr. Throop noted resident Andrea Cadwell has established *Seeds of Community*, a local CSA selling income restricted shares for summer and fall seasons. Mr. Ward interjected the focus on the food movement and the Farmer’s Markets “should have more of a presence in the Master Plan.” Mr. Kelly agreed adding “agriculture is a part of our economy” and asked “do we need a separate chapter?” Mr. Ward replied “or a part of the Economic Vitality Chapter, that is a good question.” A brief discussion of what the state requires for Master Plan chapters versus what else can be written about in the Master Plan followed. “The state has a minimum list of the chapters that must be in the Master Plan” said Mr. Throop with Ms. Chollet adding “but you can have other chapters beyond that *and* many of those we have said we did not want to write.” Mr. Throop noted “other chapters can be added if they are helpful to your town, if it guides future action with the blessing of the town.” Ms. Chollet interjected “the who we are and who we want to become.” Mr. Throop agreed adding if Peterborough wants to become a large distributor or a food hub “agriculture may go beyond the Economic Vitality Chapter.” He went on to say “all the chapters are related to each in some way, you cannot separate them out.” Mr. Ward interjected “the Historical Resources Chapter is like a bible to me” adding “if there is a growth opportunity for the Ag sector, it should have its own chapter.” A brief discussion about the Agricultural Business Enterprise Uses followed with Mr. Throop noting “the Ag addendum adopted in 2014 identifies trends in the industry.”

Mr. Kelly expressed an interest in attending the Agricultural Commission meetings and received full support from his fellow Committee members. Mr. Ward confirmed the next one was April 6, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Selectmen’s Meeting Room.

Housing Master Plan Update:

“This was discussed earlier” said Mr. Throop adding “and it may be the next Master Plan Chapter update we want to tackle, but we may not want to be working on this simultaneously with the Economic Vitality Chapter.

Next Meeting: April 13, 2016 at 5:45 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant