

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire

Minutes of March 18, 2019

Members Present: James Kelly, Karen Hatcher, Valerie Jenkins, Sarah Heller Steinberg and Ivy Vann

Also Present: Peter Throop, Laura Norton, and Kristin Bixby, Office of Community Development

Co-Chair Heller (Ms. Heller) called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Minutes: A motion was made/seconded (Kelly/Vann) to approve the Minutes of January 14, 2019 with all in favor.

Review Updated Master Plan Chapter Summaries:

The Members did a comprehensive review of each Master Plan Chapter Summaries (*Economic Vitality; Open Space; Housing; Transportation; Water Resources; Land Use; Historic Resources; Regional Concerns; Cultural Resources; and Municipal Facilities*).

The Members did some wordsmithing of the language and discussed the importance of avoiding key words such as workforce housing, affordable, “and other words that set people’s hair on fire” said Ms. Vann. The Members also concentrated on the consistency of text fonts, eliminating italics in favor of regular text, color and shading schemes, and tweaking the text to allow more white space. “As one document it is incredibly busy,” said Ms. Hatcher adding “we need to let the pages breathe.” Ms. Heller agreed noting “we don’t need to fill every nook and cranny.” In an attempt to increase white space, allowing the pages to breath, the Members eliminated excessive doodle symbols, artwork, and some graphics, and rearranged several of the photographs.

During their review the Members did note some of the Chapter summaries may change: *Water Resource*: as the town moves forward and defines its long-term goals (including the Cold Stone Springs project); *Cultural Resources*: It was also noted the “Fill the Void” Campaign (for creating a new Performing Arts Center at the High School) has been renamed the Thornton Wilder Center for the Arts and its potential to be a destination for the arts was acknowledged; *Transportation*: noting a growing population of home businesses and entrepreneurs working from their homes and *Housing* as continued efforts in developments that positively impact residential life continues (including abandoning disconnected suburban models and encouraging traditional mixed use neighborhoods).

A motion was made/seconded (Kelly/Vann) to approve the Master Plan Chapter Summaries as currently updated on this date with all in favor.

When asked if a public hearing would be necessary Mr. Throop noted the document was a summary of the existing Master Plan and a Public Hearing would not be necessary. Ms. Vann added “it is just a distillation of old words without significant changes.” Mr. Throop noted “but it *will* have to be approved by the Planning Board.” Ms. Hatcher noted the importance of having the document ready for Town Meeting and Greenerboro. Ms. Vann volunteered to assist Ms. Bixby with a “last look” before a final approval at their April 15th meeting.

Ms. Heller noted her concern that if there was not a public hearing “what happens is finger pointing or blame as to why or who put this in the town document.” Ms. Hatcher suggested they create a cover letter from the Committee “stating we met and updated the chapters of the Master Plan in an unofficial manner and for informational purposes only.” She then suggested they add “Summary” to the cover page. “The letter can go behind the cover page and would be signed by C-Chairs Sarah (Ms. Heller) and Cathy (Ms. Lanigan). Mr. Throop agreed adding “it is a good idea, it provides an update of what we have accomplished.”

Housing Chapter Update – Next Steps:

Mr. Throop told the Members “with the budget process and Zoning season winding down” he intended to put greater attention and energy into the Housing Chapter of the Master Plan. Noting several housing forums both regionally and around the state he noted he and Ms. Bixby were attending a forum sponsored by the New Hampshire Housing Authority the next day. “With all the discussion, data and analysis going on it is clear to me we need to better understand housing and the needs that prevail as you move up in cost and wage levels. We need to talk to employers to understand the nature of the demand, where this is going and what we can expect in growth as a town and a region so we can get a better sense of priorities.”

Ms. Hatcher agreed noting the growth potentials of Millipore, So Clean Corporation, and New Hampshire Ball Bearing. “Hiring and growth is happening” she said. Ms. Vann added, “this is not nothing, this is a big deal.” She noted a recent trip where she travelled through many “pretty little southern towns with nothing left of them.” Mr. Throop interjected “you can have both, you can have growth with contributions to the fabric of the neighborhoods.” He went on to note that affordable housing comes in the form of multi-family housing “that must be on municipal water and sewer.”

Ms. Heller interjected “you can make that argument with the economic and employment data but then you hear reactions like “yeah, I am down with that *but* not in my neighborhood.” Ms. Hatcher replied “it is all about engagement, engagement, engagement. The need for public education, logical, reason and facts, not emotional blows.” Ms. Vann agreed adding “and it’s got to be everyone.” She went on to say “I want to make this perfectly clear. It will not ever be me again (leading the effort), not ever. But we have to defeat this warrant article.”

Ms. Heller asked “can the Board of Selectmen take a stand? Citing electioneering law Ms. Vann replied “yes, they can.” Ms. Hatcher suggested a Member come to a Board of Selectmen’s meeting and ask for support in defeating the article. Ms. Vann noted she did not feel it showed

unity when Mr. Ward abstained from the vote to not take a position of the support or lack thereof on this petition article. “It was disappointing” she said. “It was not just disappointing it was deeply heartbreaking” adding “and I don’t really want a Board of Selectmen that need to be asked” interjected Ms. Heller.

In closing Mr. Throop reminded the Members of the Employer Forum on April 3rd. Ms. Heller noted an idea to undertake that involved a couple of committee members try to rent an apartment in the region and see what they encounter. “Just to see the options over a two to three-month period and get their experience” she said. “That is a very interesting idea,” replied Mr. Throop.

The Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant

Next Meeting:

February 11, 2019 at a time to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant