

## **MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire

Minutes of August 31, 2016

**Members Present:** Sue Chollet, Beth Alpaugh-Cote, Bob Holt, Ivy Vann, Theresa Cadorette, Alan Zeller and James Kelly

**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. “Alan, it is especially nice to see you” she said.

### **Nominations and Elections:**

Ms. Chollet began with a discussion of the potential of having Co-Chairmen. The members briefly discussed this notion and without a definitive preference decided the structure would best be determined by those voted into position.

A motion was made/seconded (Vann/Alpaugh-Cote) re-elect Sue Chollet as Chairman of the Master Plan Steering Committee with all but Ms. Chollet (who abstained) in favor.

A motion was made/seconded (Chollet/Vann) re-elect Beth Alpaugh-Cote as Vice Chairman of the Master Plan Steering Committee with all but Ms. Alpaugh-Cote (who abstained) in favor.

### **Minutes:**

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

### **Request for Letter of Support – TAP Grant to extend the Common Pathway:**

Rodney Bartlett spoke briefly about a Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Grant (a NH DOT Grant opportunity). He noted the grant would increase non-

motorized transport (pedestrian, bicycle transport) from Summer Street at the Fire Station to Depot Park and the new Riverwalk and parking area on Grove Street. “This would create a formally designated route for the Common Pathway to follow. It would formalize the alignment” he said.

Mr. Bartlett went on to note the re-use of the railroad corridor including the two piers and two abutments originally constructed in 1904 and 1911. “We have a letter of support from the Heritage Commission, the Board of Selectmen, the EDA and the Greater Downtown TIF” he said. When asked about the cost, Mr. Bartlett replied “a total value of a million dollars” adding “it would be an 80/20 (State/Town percent) funded project and we would apply Town funds already designated for the extension of the common path across the river and along the new parking lot up to Grove Street to meet the 20% local match requirement”

Mr. Bartlett listed several improvements (traffic calming, increased greening and lighting, elevated intersections, raised crosswalks and entirely ADA accessible) that would be the result of receiving the grant. Mr. Bartlett reiterated the presence of a clear pedestrian corridor and told the members “it does not take long to get to a million dollars” adding “and DOT has recognized this as well increasing its minimum grant allowance of \$100,000 to one million to \$300,000 to one million.” When a member asked about the price tag, Mr. Bartlett replied “just under one million, \$993,000” he said. He went on to tell the members “the application is due Friday and we should hear in October.”

“OK” replied Ms. Chollet adding “let’s talk about questions and concerns.” Mr. Zeller asked a question about parking and the line of the pathway with Mr. Bartlett cautioning against going into specific detail at this stage. “We need to get the public involvement and then complete the design” he said. Mr. Throop interjected “it is still conceptual at this point.”

With no other questions Ms. Chollet noted her concern. “The Master Plan Steering Committee usually works from public opinion for everything we do” and asked “has there been any public input yet?” Mr. Bartlett reiterated “members of the Greater Downtown TIF, the Heritage Commission, the Economic Development Authority and the Board of Selectmen have all been approached, and with success we will drill down the details for an acceptable plan at public hearings.” Dr. Cadorette agreed noting the Vision Plan, as well as Ms. Vann who noted “another piece is a better pedestrian atmosphere and I would argue that this matches what we were told.”

Mr. Throop handed out a sample of the letter of support. Ms. Chollet began to read “a town with attractive village centers with architectural and landscape designs that reflect the heritage of the community while creating spaces that are interesting, inviting and aesthetically rich; a mix of residential options, shops and services to meet the everyday needs of community members and a diversity of dining, gallery and entertainment options, amenities that are oriented toward pedestrians, bicycles and people of all abilities.” When done she looked up and asked “anyone against it?” with no response the members agreed to support the grant request and after the correction of a typo the letter was signed.

### **Economic Vitality Update:**

Mr. Kelly reiterated what a good subcommittee had been formed. “We meet frequently” he said as he gave a few headlines of their progress. He told the members the Matt Waitkins, the Subcommittee Chairman was in the audience should they have any questions. Mr. Kelly noted the review of a number of documents (current and past Vision Chapter of the Master Plan, the Vision Forum sessions and outcomes of April 2014 and numerous other documents by other committees) used to draft the outline for the new chapter. He told the members the subcommittee had voted to change the format of the chapter. “It is unique *to* Peterborough to highlight the uniqueness *of* Peterborough so it is a different style than in the past” he said adding “it is different than the last chapter.”

Mr. Waitkins added “it is not a grim document, it tells a story up front to draw people in. The charts and associated data will be in an appendix. We want to be innovative and we are starting with this document. It is slightly different in that it has guidance but is also is a marketing piece.” Mr. Holt noted “it is a look at Peterborough today and shows what we have, what we do *not* have and what we need, which leads to a discussion of how to achieve those goals by 2025.” Holding up the tri-fold brochure recently prepared by the Economic Development Authority (EDA) Mr. Kelly interjected “and we are tied to them (the EDA) on why people move to Peterborough.”

Mr. Waitkins briefly reviewed the next steps of community outreach and a business needs assessment. Mr. Throop interjected “there are many initiatives going on right now” noting “the committee agrees a broad communication strategy that starts with the Vision Chapter and then reviews the EDA’s recent initiatives, the Planning Board’s work, and the effort to update of this chapter.” Since there are so many things going on right now, one of our goals is to try to avoid confusion” he said. Mr. Throop noted three themes from the Vision Chapter

(quality of life, economic vitality and housing) that the committee had identified as important in relation to economic vitality. He explained “the second part of the outreach approach is a needs assessment for existing businesses with an emphasis on retention and expansion, and building relationships with businesses as data is collected.” Mr. Throop concluded this data would initially be collected by the Subcommittee and the EDA for a sample of businesses, as input for completing the plan and then the EDA would subsequently continue the data collection as an ongoing visitation program with other businesses that make up our local economy. Ms. Cholet asked about the connection of housing and education with Mr. Throop replying “those are core parts of workforce development and will be included in the data collection.”

Mr. Kelly noted he expected workforce training and housing would be addressed in the Chapter and noted another form of outreach would be a town-wide forum would be held in late November or early December to share results of the data collection and solicit feedback regarding goals and recommendations.

### **MTAG Planning Grant Update:**

Ms. Vann began her update with the idea of wanting to create a new piece of form-based code that could be laid down on appropriate parts of the community that had town water and sewer. “This would be accessible by right and people could build a new piece of Peterborough that looked like the rest of Peterborough” she said. She noted the subcommittee included business representatives (NHBB, Rivermead, MCH) as well as prominent business people and large land owners. Ms. Vann also noted a kickoff event for the Village Program with a dinner meeting at the All Saint’s Church (Reynold’s Hall) on Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. She went onto note that after the kickoff meeting another public meeting would be held October 6, 2016 for the whole town. She concluded by noting she and subcommittee members had been hanging signs around town and at local businesses asking people to note what makes their neighborhood a good place to live.

Ms. Chollet asked about what they had dubbed the “missed-middle housing.” with Ms. Vann explained that housing can be built in variety of forms ranging from single family houses and condos to large density apartment buildings, but that some types such as duplexes, cottages, in-law apartments and tiny houses are limited in Peterborough. She told the members the market for big houses on big lots “is not what it used to be.” The members briefly discussed the liking of housing that was easily accessible to restaurants, bars and the grocery store. “It is

infill protecting the outreaches of the town” she said adding “and if we do nothing, we know what we will get. We have plenty of water/sewer capacity, we can do this. That is where we are.”

### **OSRD Update:**

Ms. Vann spoke briefly about some of her research and the work the subcommittee was doing on the open space residential development regulation. She concluded with “it will be a nice conjunction with the New Villages Project, with both working to protect the rural character of Peterborough.”

### **MPSC Work Planning:**

Ms. Chollet began with “we have the Housing Chapter, the Municipal Facilities Chapter and the Land Use Chapter to discuss” adding “the question is one of timing and primary importance.” Noting they could not do all the chapters at once (“they are all important” she said) Ms. Chollet asked Mr. Throop for some guidance.

As Mr. Throop distributed a copy of the 2015 Vision Update and noted he had highlighted various themes in the chapter. “I identified them on the left side margin” he said. Mr. Throop and the members reviewed the document where economic vitality, quality of life, open space development and housing were implied or inherent in the language. (As an example one priority mentioned was *the maintenance, protection and enhancement of the quality of the natural resources, open spaces and rural environments with a particular emphasis on protecting the quality of the water resources*. This touches quality of life, economic vitality and open space development). The members also briefly discussed the idea of the Town’s brand, and the importance of brand protection.

Mr. Throop noted the growth of independent/assisted living facilities in town. “We need to address the needs for a number of those groups” he said. He noted much of the demographic data available was questionable “a lot of it is extrapolated from census data and may not be that accurate” he said adding “this is one of the challenges I see.”

Referring to the recent meeting with the local realtors Mr. Throop told the members the people who have bought starter homes are not moving up over time as they once did. A brief discussion of changing life choices (less house and more living) followed. Ms. Vann concluded by noting the best way to afford a home is *not* to build it. Ms. Alpaugh-Cote agreed and advocated for rehabilitating existing

buildings to increase the number of units. Mr. Throop interjected “this be may require making changes to the parking standards and other codes and requirements.” Ms. Chollet replied “and fairly soon.”

Ms. Vann told the members her sense was that the Housing Chapter should be addressed first followed by Land Use and then the Municipal Facilities Chapter. “With so many initiatives” she said, land use is critical for new uses in new places.”

Ms. Chollet reviewed the chapter priorities with the members. “I think Housing, like the Economic Vitality Chapter would be an outside group” she said adding “Municipal Facilities would be revised by the Master Plan Steering Committee and town staff, while the Land Use chapter would be an outside group as well.” With the members in agreement a brief discussion of the time frame in recruiting the Housing subcommittee (December/January) and Land Use subcommittee (March) followed.

**Next Meeting:**

September 28, 2016 at 5:45 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant