

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH, New Hampshire

Minutes of November 13, 2017

Members Present: Beth Alpaugh-Cote, James Kelly, Ivy Vann, Bob Holt, Cathy Lanigan and Tyler Ward

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

Also Present: Becky Sakellarion

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman:

Deferred

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Kelly/Vann) to approve the Minutes of October 9, 2017 with all in favor.

Municipal Facilities Update:

Mr. Throop reviewed the large projects being addressed in the Fiscal Year 2019 CIP Plan, “all of which are municipal facilities related” he said.

Mr. Throop noted specifically a bond for three million dollars for the Library, \$430,000 for proposed construction design for a new Fire Station, a placeholder four million dollar bond for a Public Works Facility (DPW), and a proposal for \$400,000 a year for the next ten years for a Road Improvement Plan.

He concluded by noting “Those are the big ones keeping in mind a new Fire Department Ladder truck around FY 2026.”

Mr. Throop told the members the CIP Committee had reviewed the 2005 Weller & Michael Study and the Evans Flats Steering Committee (EFSC, a report from 2009

assessing the future *best use* (development or redevelopment) of the town-owned property as well as the Municipal Facilities Chapter of the Master Plan (updated in 2013) and the recommendation that a joint Fire/Police complex be located there).

He told the members “the Chiefs don’t see a need for it at this time.” He reviewed the actual building (DPW’s motor pool storage building) noting “it is in good shape.” He also noted alternative locations considered over the years that for one reason or another were not appropriate. “Overall the CIP is budgeting five years out but at the end of the day the Budget Committee looks at *one* (the next) fiscal year and this year the Library is out in front followed by the Fire Station and then the DPW Garage. With a likelihood of fatigue these other big projects may get kicked down the road” he said. He noted the Budget Committee has been doing this very thing over the years. “They even took the DPW Garage off the CIP for several years” he said.

Citing better news Mr. Throop told the members the town had hired a financial consultant to help staff understand the cost of bonding and opportunities, refinancing of existing bonds and applying for a bond rating. “The bottom line is that costs will go down over time. Town Staff, the Board of Selectmen and the CIP Committee are wrestling with this” he said and asked “are you interested in wrestling with this?” He added that the Master Plan calls for the DPW and Buildings & Grounds be consolidated with the Wastewater Treatment Plant. “All in one location” he said. Mr. Throop suggested it might be time to revisit the Municipal Facilities Chapter of the Master Plan even though it is only four years old and was revisited two years ago. “Things are still hanging out there” interjected Ms. Vann. Mr. Throop replied “my recommendation is that if we do, we not start from scratch, just look at it critically.” He also suggested they add the DPW Roads Program into the Chapter. “Most importantly” he said “is to engage public in conversation on all this.” Ms. Vann noted she had a public outreach program she was working on. For clarification Mr. Kelly asked “so no merger of Police and Fire? Is that conversation off the table?” Ms. Vann replied “it comes up in the chapter but it is not definitive.” Mr. Kelly added “in fact the Police have said they are fine where they are.” He also noted he was puzzled with “not a lot of evidence provided to spend seven millions dollars to redo another garage for the Fire Department.”

A brief conversation about the location of the current Fire Station in the 100-year flood plain and their traffic problems followed. A term of art and part of a math model from FEMA, the 100-year flood plain was explained as the 1% chance of a devastating flood in 100 years. “All of the Downtown is in the 100-year flood plain, so we should move the whole downtown?” asked Mr. Kelly. Ms. Lanigan asked “has it ever flooded?” Mr. Throop replied “it has, (Hurricane of 1938) and if

the Downtown floods you wouldn't want your emergency response vehicles being in the middle of it." Mr. Kelly reiterated the need for more research on the project. Citing the Master Plan addressing the need and demonstrating justification for a new Fire Station isn't enough. "It just says you have to move it, not why, not where" he said. Mr. Kelly also noted recent upgrades to the Fire Station and suggested continued upgrades at the current location. Ms. Vann noted "we do need to take a hard look at the Master Plan Chapter." Mr. Throop asking for one or two volunteers from the Committee to assist. Ms. Alpaugh-Cote volunteered and the remaining members agreed Ms. Stenberg Heller should be asked as she would be an excellent representative. Mr. Ward agreed with Mr. Kelly noting "we need objective opinion, I agree with James. That is what I am looking for. You don't do something *just* because it is in the Master Plan."

A brief discussion about response times and whether or not the Master Plan has addressed and justified moving the Fire Department followed with Mr. Kelly reiterating the need to identify what is driving the Master Plan recommendation followed. Mr. Throop interjected the Town was part of the National Flood Insurance Program and building permits for new construction were not permitted in the flood plain unless the structure was above the base floor elevation. Mr. Kelly replied "for seven million dollars I would like to see more on it."

Economic Vitality Chapter Update:

"We are making slow progress on Economic Vitality" said Mr. Throop with Ms. Vann adding "we have a rough draft for housing, we know what we need to do and hope to get it to the Housing Subcommittee and wrapped up before December 1st. The work is done, we just have to put it together."

Guest Becky Sakellariou asked what the term economic vitality meant with Ms. Vann giving her a brief definition. "Attraction, retainment and assistance in keeping the economy strong" she conclude adding "the focal point boils down to workforce development."

Zoning Amendment Subcommittee – Zoning Workshops:

Ms. Vann reviewed a zoning simplification project "that addresses the whole question about housing." She began with a slideshow citing and explaining the Rural, General Residence, Family and Commercial Zoning Districts and told the members "for ten years we have been working on ways to make our zoning more rational." As she presented her slides she gave a history of zoning in Peterborough. She explained the strict Euclidian zoning was based on the use of the parcel and

housing where “never the twain shall meet.” She reviewed the town’s overlay districts as an effort to “get more of what we want” noting “this was our way of getting out feet wet with form based code.”

Ms. Vann reiterated “what is built on the ground and what the zoning says is different. We all bought into this (Euclidian model) and implemented it but it does not fit very well.” She proceeded to give the members a full presentation on form based code introduced by the Congress for New Urbanism that included *Transect Zones* (T-3 Village Edge, T-4 Residential, T-4 Village Main Street and T-5 Main Street). As she concluded she noted “the parts of town we like most could not be built under the existing code” adding “the Planning Board has decided not to start fresh but make changes to the zoning so it conforms. That way when we go forward we have a more predictable result and more of what we want.” When she was asked about the definition of form based code Ms. Vann replied “it is a regulation that explains these are the rules. It is organized primarily by *form* not *use* as well as things like proximity and orientation to the street and parking in the back. It is a regulating plan with public standards that is very different from Euclidian zoning.” She projected a slide showing the Transect Districts with fact sheets noting “there will be about 35 pages and every District will have a paper that looks like this. Each District fact sheet contains information of allowed building types, lot standards, and uses (civil, commercial and residential). It makes it a very clean for the Code Officer as well” she said.

Ms. Vann concluded by noting “this is a hill I am prepared to die on” adding “our hope is to maintain ourselves a cute, little town that is walkable and charming.” “And safe” interjected Ms. Lanigan. “And safe” replied Ms. Vann adding “and I would like *not* to have any more drive thrus. That is crucial to what we are. Drive thrus allow cars to permeate the sidewalk, introducing cars to the pedestrian realm.”

Ms. Vann concluded by reviewing building types of Civic, Commercial and Residential (mixed use residential, duplex, cottage courts, townhouses and live works) citing the five things they have in common (complete, compact, complex, connected and convivial). She told the members Howard Blackson offered to review the code for free and that “the structures are not all built by the same hands.”

Other Business:

Mr. Throop noted a request of the CIP Committee regarding any known public sentiment about underground utilities in the Downtown. He explained the Main

Street Bridge project sidewalk replacement had originally been a town (financial) responsibility “but a redesign of the plan has the state picking up the cost, freeing up that anticipated and approved \$460,000.” Ms. Vann replied “I have definitely gotten positive feedback on that.” Mr. Holt suggested staff review the questionnaires completed at the Vision Forum held in 2015. Mr. Throop replied “well if ever a time, **now** is the time to do it.”

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant