

## MINUTES

### Master Plan Steering Committee

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH  
Wednesday, August 14, 2013 – 5:45 p.m.  
1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

**Members Present:** Mose Olenik, Sue Chollet, Beth Alpaugh-Cote, Alan Zeller, and James Kelly and

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

Chair Zeller called the meeting to order at 5:44 p.m. and introduced the members.

#### Election of Officers

Mr. Throop stated that this item is on the agenda because the Committee did not meet in the month following Town meeting (June) when it would typically be on the agenda. At the committee's July meeting, the item was inadvertently left off the agenda. Chair Zeller said "I will take a motion from the floor for nominations."

Ms. Olenik replied "for Chairman I nominate Sue Chollet." Ms. Alpaugh-Cote seconded the motion. Chair Zeller then noted "I would like to nominate Beth as Vice Chairman." Ms. Chollet seconded the motion. A vote was taken and all were in favor of the two nominations.

#### Minutes

After brief discussions about the status of the Economic Vitality Chapter of the Master Plan update (next chapter to review), a second request for the Harvard Case Study (Ms. Alpaugh-Cote will email it out to the members) and a status report on the Traditional Neighborhood Overlay Zone (Ms. Ogilvie has been retained to complete this draft and a meeting with the Consultants has been scheduled for August 20<sup>th</sup> in Concord, with hopes of workshopping that ordinance in September) a motion was made/seconded (Chollet/Alpaugh-Cote) to approve the Minutes of July 10, 2013 with all in favor.

#### Review of Master Plan Public Hearing

Mr. Throop noted that two chapters (Municipal Facilities and the Population & Housing) were the subject of a Planning Board public hearing on Monday August 12. He noted that during the testimony, a minor change was suggested to one of the recommendations on the Population and Housing Chapter to reflect what was currently included in the draft Innovative Subdivision Design ordinance that is proposed to replace the existing Open Space Residential Development ordinance. Upon deliberation, the Planning Board had a brief discussion about the language in the Recommendations for the Population and Housing Chapter, Goal #1 (B) "Amend the Open Space Residential Development Ordinance to improve the process so as to encourage its use for the protection of open space and sensitive natural features." Mr. Throop suggested they add "*and consider requiring its use in the Rural District*" noting "this is a guidance document not a regulatory one and it is not required in all districts."

Mr. Zeller interjected “I feel this captures the spirit of what you intended”. Ms. Olenik asked if a motion by the Committee would be appropriate with Mr. Throop replying “it would.” A motion was made/seconded (Zeller/Olenik) to accept Goal #1 (B) in its re-written form with all in favor.

#### Further Reflections of the Bus Tour

Mr. Zeller began with noting the tour “was a real eye-opener for me, especially the Business Park, I had never driven down that road.” In reference to the Planning Board meeting two nights before he also noted he was not aware of some of the past changes to the permitted uses in the district and was shocked some of those uses are not allowed anymore. “I am concerned about that, we need to look into this” he said. A brief discussion on how those uses may have been negated back in 2008 followed. Also referring to the Planning Board two days earlier Ms. Olenik noted everyone’s reaction when Mr. Brown told them the permitted use of Research & Development had also been eliminated. Mr. Kelly noted that some of the issues mentioned at the Planning Board meeting were not mentioned on the bus tour. “I found nothing really revealing about the Commerce Park or the Business/Industrial Districts on the tour” he said adding “a discussion of the pros and cons of issues facing the town would have been more valuable to me.”

#### Discussion Approach for Economic Development Chapter

Mr. Kelly noted a difference of opinion regarding the impacts of commercial/industrial development on the tax base that came up at the Planning Board workshop relating to uses in the Commerce Park and Business/Industrial districts. He asked Joe Byk (who was present in the audience) to reiterate the effect of changes in the ratio of total assessed value between residential/commercial uses and the consequences of this change on the town’s tax rate. Mr. Byk told the members “economic development to many people means building more real estate.” He noted that the common belief is that a higher proportion of commercial development in the total assessed value would reduce town taxes, which can be true as it relates to the town portion of our tax bill; however, because the school tax is apportioned by the state based on total aggregate assessed value, an increase in high value commercial development increases the school portion of the town tax bill more than it would decrease the town portion of the tax bill. He said that “other towns are very happy to see us build out – it keeps decreasing their portion of the school bill.” Mr. Byk encouraged the members to ask the Financial Director or Town Administrator for verification.

Mr. Byk went on to note what he called the “Jim and Jane Report” a response from Jim Hassinger and Jane LaPointe to a charge by the Board of Selectmen to look at recruitment and retention of local businesses, the different business related communities and options for revising permit processes. Mr. Kelly asked about what could be done to improve the business environment of the town and Mr. Byk gave the members a brief review of the work of Jack Dugan and Monadnock Economic Development Corporation in Keene, New Hampshire. He cited several projects associated with Mr. Dugan whose motto is “the best thing you can do for economic development is to retain and grow what you’ve got.” Mr. Byk went on to say “that is exactly what we did with the hospital.” Mr. Kelly asked “so sustain what we have and that is all?” Mr. Byk replied “no but do not equate economic development and economic vitality solely with developing more real estate.” Mr. Byk noted Depot Square and compared what it is today to what it was 15 years ago. Mr. Kelly noted the existing chapter in the Master Plan “is entirely about business development.”

Mr. Throop reminded the committee of the initiative underway to update the current Economic Vitality Chapter because it seemed to be out of date with the Town's current thinking. He noted that Ms. Ogilvie had attempted to form a subcommittee to move the chapter update forward, but an advertisement to recruit subcommittee members was unsuccessful. The proposal brought to the Steering Committee in July was for Carol to draft an update following an outline reviewed by the committee and then to "have the EDA review the draft chapter and provide input."

Mr. Throop noted that sometimes business recruitment is a zero-sums game particularly if you are drawing a business away from a neighboring town. "From a regional perspective you haven't created any new jobs and in those cases where you are trying to attract a business from farther away, there may not be a compelling reason for them to come" he said. He suggested that with respect to the Commerce Park and Business/Industrial Districts discussion, the Planning Board will be considering which alternatives are in the best interest of the community and what changes to the zoning ordinance they want to propose at town meeting." He also pointed out the land owner's ability to change zoning via petition at Town Meeting.

Mr. Throop went on to talk about an alternative approach to the Business Vitality master plan update that would look more broadly at the town's economic future and he shared a revised outline proposal with the Steering Committee. He stated that since joining the town staff he had become aware of a few people who might be willing to participate on a steering committee and he suggested a direct invitation to prospective committee members and a well-defined project scope and timeframe so that participants would not feel like the process would go on forever. Mr. Throop then asked if the committee would prefer "to proceed with the approach considered at their last meeting or take another shot at forming a subcommittee?"

Ms. Olenik replied "I think we can best serve the community by working a lot harder on it" adding "I would like to do more, especially with the information from Monday" (referring to the Planning Board Meeting two days before).

Mr. Kelly interjected "I am the newcomer but I know some people who run businesses and they chose not to come to town" adding "and when I asked them why they said they did not get any support at all from the town but got tremendous support from the town next door (Jaffrey). They were completely neglected by this town." Mr. Byk noted "there is a disconnect, we need an ambassadorship." He told the members about meeting with potential buyers of the Monadnock Plaza. "We met with them and encouraged them. They left in a good frame of mind."

Ms. Olenik asked what Jack Dugan's business did with Mr. Byk briefly reviewing several of the projects Mr. Dugan has been involved with (including Union Mill, the Granite Block and MCH) "at zero cost to the tax payer." Mr. Throop noted that Mr. Dugan was most effective when brought in for a defined project or "a framed out idea that needs help with financing or negotiating." He went on to briefly review his understanding that the existing Economic Vitality chapter envisioned that "the EDA might play a role in supporting recruitment, but it doesn't seem to have played out that way. Currently the EDA does not have a Chairman or leadership and is not meeting on a regular basis."

Another brief discussion as to why certain permitted uses in the Business/Industrial District were eliminated in 2008 followed. That discussion included ways to be more business friendly with Mr. Byk describing the role of an ambassador for business. The discussion included who would do it (i.e. the Chamber of Commerce? The Board of Selectmen?), what would the role be and who would pay for it. “Those are sticky questions” said Mr. Byk.

Referring back to the revised outline, Mr. Throop proposed that the plan consider current economic conditions and trends in town and identify the town’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. He suggested that the town might want to think about economic vitality from a strategic perspective. He asked, “What are the town’s strategic strengths that we can build off of? What infrastructure, support services, retention and recruitment activities do we have and what do we need?” He went on to note several other local leverage points and guiding principles to enhancing economic vitality. Mr. Throop suggested that a subcommittee would be very important to make sure local knowledge was incorporated and he mentioned several potential candidates who had expressed some level of interest. He also suggested that it would be important that the scope and time commitment be well defined.

Ms. Olenik noted “so this subcommittee would have a specific charge with goals and a schedule of meetings.” Mr. Throop replied “yes” and noted a review of the 2003 criteria for identifying the contributions of new businesses and services to economic vitality. “Flush out the scope, figure out what information to collect and how to collect it, then get to work” he said, adding “then the committee works to interpret the data and identify alternatives and recommendations.” He noted the work being done should focus on the perspective of “what is in the best interest of the town.” Mr. Byk concluded by noting “I am passionate about the economic development chapter, we need to be involved and not just listen without taking a step back and critically thinking about it.”

Discuss Process and Timing of Visioning Sessions/Land Use Updates

The members briefly discussed the process for updating the Master Plan Vision Chapter, including whether it makes sense to complete this chapter before completing the Economic Vitality Chapter. Mr. Throop suggested that if the committee envisions a scope that would require hiring an outside consultant to design and facilitate a visioning process, as was done in 2003, it might be necessary to submit a request through the CIP process. One member suggested that it would be helpful for Ms. Chollet (who had left for another meeting) to share her perspective on the process.

Other Business

None

Next Meeting Date

October 9, 2013 at 5:45 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:08p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton  
Administrative Assistant