

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Thursday May 27, 2021 at 7:00 pm

On line via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

Members Present: Bob Roemer, Brian Boyle, Cia Boynton, Ken Troup, Mary Ciummo, Panny Gerken, Sharon Shepela, Stacia Downey, Abby Ayotte, Ed Sterling

Others Present: Valerie Oothuys, Natalie Gabrielle, Michelle Tuck

On a motion by Panny and a second by Brian, the minutes of the May 13, 2021 meeting were approved 9-0-0 with minor corrections that had been provided by Stacia and Panny.

Design Review Board:

Michelle Tuck and Natalie Gabrielle of the Design Review Board attended the meeting to describe their Board, what rules they use, and how it affects planning. The Design Review Board (DRB) is a subcommittee of the Planning Board that provides architectural feedback to developers of commercial, industrial, and mixed use new construction or major modifications. Historically, the feedback provided is guidance only and not a requirement. The town regulations that govern the DRB's scope have been rewritten in recent months with the primary change being participation in a joint meeting with the Planning Board at the conclusion of the DRB process. This meeting occurs after the project has been reviewed by the DRB. The primary purpose of the joint meeting is to review the applicant's revisions to the project per the DRB's recommendations.. Those regulations are established by the Planning Board and are not subject to town meeting approval. The DRB provides guidelines and recommendations, but does not have authority to approve or disapprove proposed projects. The DRB often participates in the 40B process. Stacia wondered how our DRB compares with other towns. Michelle noted that Newton and Melrose had particularly strong DRBs, especially within Newton's historical district. One of the things Bolton's DRB looks at is signs. Several MPSC members noted that they had trouble finding information about the DRB, including their guidelines, on the town website. Valerie accepted an action to improve the availability of DRB information on the website.

Planning for a Public Forum:

The Outreach task group discussed the proposed July 17 public forum at the Common and Bob, Panny, Brian, and Valerie have done more detailed planning. Based in part on advice from MAPC, the planning now is for a higher level discussion leading to public feedback. Valerie is working on an agenda and provided an overview of the current plans.

The public forum will start in the pavilion with a slide presentation which will include the planning process, the existing conditions, and aspirations. Valerie requested a one-page horizontal slide from each subject of Climate, Economic Development, Housing, Land Use/Open

Space, Population/Demographics, and Transportation, each containing facts that would increase awareness and provoke questions. The interactive stations would be along the walkways at the Common and be organized at the big picture level, not details about particular task groups, and have overall questions for public feedback. The stations are yet to be defined, but should show our strengths, what the big questions are, and suggest what is necessary. Valerie will be providing more information for MPSC members to review. The stations will be discussed further at the June 10 meeting of the MPSC. Brian showed an overhead view of the Common with the stations between the pavilion and the amphitheater. Several MPSC familiar with other events at the Common noted that the stations should probably be spread out further along the paths and not all concentrated in the smaller space.

The plan would be to have one facilitator at each station whose primary job is to solicit feedback from public members who drop by a station. The facilitators will be chosen by the end of June from MPSC, MAPC, and Town Hall personnel. Valerie said that MPSC members who are not facilitators should move from station to station as individuals to engage the public and get feedback.

The plan is to standardize the look and feel of the slides that will be used in the presentation, with Cia playing a major role in the standardization of material and slides provided by the various task groups. Some slides from other towns are in Dropbox and can be used as examples of the kinds of graphics that could be useful on the slides. Slides from task groups are to be submitted sometime after June 10.

Mary noted that the Common could be noisy and lacks parking compared with Florence Sawyer School. Panny and Valerie responded that the school will be closed at that point and their tents all removed. Parking has been arranged at the library and at Trinity Church. Bob suggested that the police be contacted about the public forum plans to see whether or not a police officer should be directing traffic at the intersection. Subsequent to the meeting, Ed noted that parking at the Common itself can be tricky during well-attended events with cars driving in and finding that no parking is available. Ken asked if there was an interest in live music before or after the public forum, because he had access to small instrumental groups through the Concord Band. Bob indicated that there will be a DJ present playing music before and after.

Municipal Staffing Study:

Ken noted that at a transportation group meeting with the DPW head, he and Mary discussed the need for a staffing study to see what additional staff might be needed to address recommendations in the Master Plan. He noted as an example that additional recreational properties might need additional maintenance staff. Bob agreed that a potential short term action recommended in the Master Plan might be for such a staffing study. This could be a future discussion topic.

Next Meetings: The MPSC will meet June 10, 2021 to discuss more details of the public forum and especially to discuss the stations. MPSC will then meet on June 24 to continue discussing the public forum, as well as meet July 15 just before the forum to discuss last minute needs.

With no other business before the MPSC, Panny moved and Cia seconded that the meeting be adjourned. It was approved 9-0-0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.