

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Thursday August 27, 2020 at 7:00 pm

On line via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

Members Present: Cia Boynton, Mary Ciummo, Bob Roemer, Ken Troup, Brian Boyle, Abby Ayotte, Megan Irvin, Mark Sprague, Stacia Downey

Others Present: Erica Uriarte, Rebecca Longvall, Nicki McGachey, Jess Terry

After a motion by Brian and a second by Ken, the minutes of the July 23, 2020 meeting were approved without comments 8-0-0.

Task Group Status: Each task group provided an update of its status:

Cultural will be meeting next week.

Economic Development has not made progress because of the difficulty of contacting and meeting with business owners.

Housing is reviewing documents and plans a September meeting. Mark Sprague will assist with the current status of housing bylaws.

Land Use is gathering GIS mapping data in conjunction with Rebecca Longvall, will be updating with the latest assessors' data, and will then identify the maps that will be needed for the Master Plan.

Municipal group has met with police and EMS to confirm services and facilities. Some DPW information has been received.

Climate change has not made additional progress. Ken has an action to investigate the status of area emergency shelters. The group needs to coordinate with Land Use.

Population has no new information except that the group as applied for a REMAP grant discussed below.

Finances group is compiling data about tax rates to prepare some FAQs about taxes.

Outreach was contacted by Ken Cleveland of the Item and has provided information for future newspaper articles.

Survey produced a useful presentation of results with graphs as well as answer counts and percentages. That information will be publicized via Facebook as well as Bolton Access TV. Work continues on analysis of written comments, including compiling the data by age group. This was acknowledged as being a time-consuming analysis that perhaps will be done as needed going forward.

Transportation has created a "Ted-talk" to reflect its status, covered later in the meeting.

Water and sewer is meeting next week and the group is looking into the possibility of an emergency public water supply to be available to residents during or after emergencies. The group is also hoping to update information about aquifers that can be included in future land use planning.

REMAP: MAPC has a new grant program called Racial Equity Municipal Action Plan (REMAP) to help communities become more aware of racial equity needs. Bolton has applied, although there are only 3 or 4 grants available. Brian showed a slide of Massachusetts and Bolton percentages of population by racial group, noting that Bolton is quite a bit less diverse than the state. The state's white population is 71.1%, while Bolton's is 92.2%. The MPSC will include appropriate racial justice information in the Master Plan.

Taggart Property: Rebecca provided background information on the agreement between the town and the Taggart family, which wanted the land to be for town use. During discussions with the town, everyone agreed on 4.5 acres being for general town use with the remaining land protected for conservation and forestry purposes. The grants being applied for, including the LAND grant, acknowledge the 4.5 acres, although the exact location of the 4.5 acres is to be decided. It would include any access road to any town use, such as a water supply, building, etc. Because the 4.5 acres was included in the agreement as well as the town meeting article, that amount cannot be increased. Bob suggested that, in general, the Master Plan should identify needs as well as opportunities for land banking for future town use.

Master Plan Teach In's or TED Talks - Transportation: Mary and Ken presented an overview of transportation in Bolton, from pre-pandemic traffic congestion on 117 through recent improvements to the roads including the nearly complete MassWorks project at the 117-Wattaquodock intersection in the center. Mary noted that traffic count and speed information are available from the several speed limit signs that are installed on 117. She said data shows the traffic is creeping back up after pandemic lows, but that the average speed has increased because of the reduced congestion. MPSC members suggested we publicize some "FAQs" about speed limits since that is of particular interest to residents. Ken noted the conflicting aspects of residents' opinions and desires. While there are concerns about traffic and desires for more sidewalks and road improvements, residents want more businesses that will increase the traffic and want lower taxes which will limit funding available for road improvements.

The next MPSC meeting will be Thursday September 24, 2020 at 7:00 pm. With no other business before the MPSC, Brian moved and Mark seconded that the meeting be adjourned. It was approved 10-0-0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.