

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Thursday September 23, 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, Panny Gerken, Sharon Shepela, Stacia Downey, Cia Boynton, Ken Troup, Mary Ciummo, Ed Sterling

Others Present: Valerie Oothuys

Sharon asked that the minutes of August 26 be amended to reflect that the climate slide included in the draft slide presentation had not been prepared by the Climate Task Group. On a motion by Panny and a second by Stacia, the minutes of the August 26, 2021 meeting were approved as amended 9-0-0.

Public Forum. The Committee discussed the proposed public forum on October 17 at Florence Sawyer School cafeteria from 2:00-4:00 pm. Valerie discussed the presentation slides acknowledging that the sub-committee of Cia, Brian, and Ken streamlined and improved slides to keep the presentation focused and to approximately 30 minutes. Rather than walking through the slides, Valerie said she will put the current draft on Dropbox for everyone to review. She explained that the presentation will highlight work that has been done by the MPSC and what's left to do; what a Master Plan is. The presentation will include a current assessment of the town based on what we know from various task group efforts. Sharon wondered how long each slide would be up during the presentation. Valerie said it will vary, but usually no more than a minute. Slides will be made available to the public on the town website.

Following the presentation, there will be an hour for attendees to visit the interactive stations which will be set up around the room. People can spend as much time as they want at a station. The stations will be the following:

- Where do you live? – map for people to tag their location in town
- Community Aspirations – review, comment, and add to aspirations list
- Wish Poem – I wish Bolton were/could
- SWOT Analysis – community strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities and threats
- Transportation and Mobility – including speed limit map
- Economic Development – desired businesses
- Housing – needs and desires for different types of housing
- Open Space and Recreation - maps

Sharon noted there is not a climate station. Valerie said that climate should be a part of each group and discussion in Master Plan and suggested a separate later charrette. Sharon said that we shouldn't leave it to attendees to bring up climate issues. Bob agreed and suggested we have

the climate group provide talking points to each station facilitator so they can ask questions and collectively we can think about how climate applies to each station.

Stacia wondered what's at the SWOT station? It is an opportunity for attendees to write down what they consider to be Bolton's strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats. All agreed climate was an external threat and should be brought up. Valerie noted that the external threats are for the next 15 years. An example of an opportunity of what Bolton could do might be a green building code. Bob noted that implementation of the recently-enacted Massachusetts Climate Bill in Bolton will be a big deal and require a lot, including advocacy.

The last 30 minutes of the Forum will be as a group for closing discussion with very brief feedback from facilitators and then moderated discussion. This will help attendees know what was discussed that they weren't involved with and will allow people to talk about next steps. The Board of Health has a guideline for use of masks indoors which will be the guidance to participants. Panny suggested we provide a contact for people if they have further comments. We will have people sign in with email so they can be contacted. There will be a printed agenda available at the Forum which will have the names and contact information for MPSC people. We want people to be comfortable contacting members. Both attendees and MPSC members will have name tags.

Most likely, we will not have food available at the forum for health reasons, although we plan make available small bottles of water, with the understanding that empties are returned for recycling.

Forum Outreach. There will be an Outreach meeting next week around the logistics and planning for the Forum.

Cia showed the timeline chart that she and Bob put together for the slides. Cia noted that she had added future dates, showing completion in mid-2023, although she wasn't sure of those dates. Stacia liked the later dates because the Census data will be available. Brian said that even with the later dates we may want to put the MP completion off to be able to cover the decision about the HS building

Economic Development. The Economic Development task group met on September 16. One of its objectives is to update the town's business list, but there are questions: what types of businesses? Home or other locations? Valerie said they want to do an analysis of business parcels including who is where and what the vacancy might be. They want to determine what the potential is for some parcels. At this point, they are not looking at pre-existing non-conforming. After assessing the parcels, the group wants to talk with owners of the business buildings in order to do surveys in the future. What are obstacles to business in Bolton? Are there any bylaw issues they believe are adversely affecting businesses? What do businesses want the town to be focused on?

Valerie said they want to do a business district market analysis with a consultant perhaps with a grant. People who apply for Business Certificate are important, but not enough. Assessors will

need to be contacted at some point. Bob said the overarching question related to economic development is: what does Bolton want in the way of businesses?

Bob and Valerie mentioned the Stow Lower Village market analysis document, on Dropbox now, is what Valerie would like to see done in Bolton. The market analysis would also look at where people in Bolton spend their money. Valerie said it could show what money Bolton could get if it had the businesses in town instead. Bob and Valerie said we need to know what businesses people in Bolton want - and what are the implications of having such businesses, in some cases closer to residents than such businesses in other towns? Bob said the market analysis deals with both sides of the equation, the people who buy and the businesses that sell. Bob says the timing is critical, the sooner the better, which may or may not be related to timing for grants.

Brian suggested keeping an eye on American Rescue Plan money for planning or economic development related things. Valerie said Don Lowe has knowledge of the ARPA program, dollar limits, restrictions, etc. She noted there may be a dollar limit on some grants.

Action items from the meeting: MPSC members should review the slides and stations. Bob will set up an Outreach group meeting.

Next meeting: Thursday October 28 unless they decide a meeting is needed before the Forum.

Without additional business, and based on a motion by Sharon and second by Bob, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 pm