

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Thursday March 24, 2022 at 7:00 pm

On line via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Members Present: Bob Roemer, Panny Gerken, Cia Boynton, Mary Ciummo, Ed Sterling, Mark Sprague, Brian Boyle, Stacia Downey, Ken Troup

Others Present: Valerie Oorthuys

On a motion by Panny and a second by Mark, the minutes of the February 24, 2022 meeting were approved 9-0-0.

Role of Master Plan Members. Bob reiterated that when individuals on the Steering Committee or on Task Groups speak in public they should not represent themselves as either MPSC or Task Group members. He reminded attendees that the MPSC holds public meetings with information promulgated or distributed by the MPSC after it votes to release such information. On the other hand, Task Groups are research organizations that provide information to the MPSC for its action at posted meetings. Bob stressed that individual input was extremely important and encouraged, but only as individuals. He said that ideas or interim products should stay within task groups until brought forward to the MPSC.

Public Engagement Efforts. Bob commented and attendees agreed that the MPSC has lost some momentum and needs to get some of the useful information and activities it had underway out to the public. He suggested that the next thing be publicity about the on-going consulting contract for the business district assessment and market analysis. Valerie discussed the latest status, noting that the consultant had interviewed three key business land owners, Condyne (580 Main), the Country Cupboard, and 626 Main Street. She noted that for the purpose of the contract, the “business district” had been defined as the area on 117 from Hudson Road to 626 Main Street. One of the key next steps is a residential survey of retail business practices (where people go to shop both in Bolton and other towns) as well as a business survey of all businesses in the district and town. The contract is to be completed in June. Ed wondered whether Bolton Orchards and Bolton Spring Farms should be included. Valerie noted that they are not in the district, but would be included in the business survey. Bob suggested a media article on the subject and offered to draft such an article with Brian’s assistance. Ken suggested there be a broader article about MPSC status to date. This turned out to be a segue to the next agenda item.

Master Plan Warrant Article. Bob noted that there will be a \$30,000 article on the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) warrant for hiring a consultant to assist with completion of the Master Plan. Brian noted that both the Advisory Committee and the Select Board had unanimously approved the article. The article is an opportunity to make a presentation to the town meeting about the Master Plan and what the consultant will do to assist the MPSC. Ken noted that Moderator Doug Storey usually restricts presentations to 3 minutes, but Bob will be talking with Doug about being granted more time so that he can explain what the master plan is and what the Plan’s objectives are and what the consultant will do to help. Stacia noted that the Master Plan

should be considered a community roadmap. Brian recommended a letter to the editor of the local papers and Bob suggested we have some FAQs that could be distributed to the public in advance of the meeting. Mark said the information should include the return on investment from the consultant effort and the Master Plan. Valerie noted that the warrant article funding will only be a part of the consultant funding, with additional grant funding being obtained from housing choice and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, bringing the total between \$100,000 and \$150,000. She said a request for proposals was released that day with proposals due on April 25. She hopes for 5 proposals and said the work would cover 18 months and include assistance with up to 4 forums as well as completion of the Master Plan. Bob reminded everyone that even with a consultant the MPSC would need to continue to meet and do its work. Bob will draft slides for the town meeting presentation with assistance from Ken and Brian.

Ed wondered about how to assure that the Master Plan gets used. Ken and others pointed out that a number of the items in the 2006 Master Plan were completed and reminded the group of the graphic used at the October 2021 forum to show that progress. Going forward, Brian suggested that Master Plan goals become a part of Select Board and Town Administrator goals. Everyone hoped that both the Select Board and Planning Board would ultimately approve the Master Plan and use it as a roadmap.

As part of the information dissemination by the MPSC, Bob asked that Task Group reports last prepared in June 2020 be updated to reflect what is being done now. He thought this would be useful public information and asked that the updated reports include prior progress as well as more current accomplishments. Bob asked that the updated task group reports be completed and sent to him by April 4 so that public release could be done soon. Brian reminded attendees that the forum for the HS building project is next Wednesday March 30 in person at the HS.

The next MPSC meeting will be Thursday April 28, 2022. All agreed the meeting would be in person, but Valerie will determine whether or not a hybrid meeting will be required to allow public access and meet state requirements.

Without additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm