

# **MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday January 28, 2020 at 7:00 pm**

**On line via Zoom**

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

**Members Present:** Bob Roemer, Cia Boynton, Ken Troup, Brian Boyle, Abby Ayotte, Mary Ciummo, Megan Irvin, Mark Sprague, Stacia Downey, Ed Sterling, Panny Gerken, Sharon Shepela, Molly Myers

**Others Present:** Erica Uriarte, John Ahearn

After a motion by Panny and a second by Mark, the minutes of the December 17, 2020 meeting were approved without comments 11-0-0.

**Task Group Planning:** To facilitate coordination amongst the task groups, Bob and Brian will be having meetings at least with the chair of each group independent of and between MPSC meetings. This will help with community input as well as help all volunteers best apply the resources available.

**Survey TED Talk:** Molly, Megan, Abby, and Brian presented information about the survey results in a series of slides. The slides were organized by the focus elements of the vision. There were 609 responses to the survey with a great many written comments to some of the open-ended questions. The slides provided graphs of results, although not all questions had 609 answers. Some quotes from comments were included on some slides. Over half the respondents have lived in town less than 10 years. More than 50% of respondents are between the ages of 41 and 60. A similar percentage said they would like to stay in Bolton as they age. Open space and farm preservation were important to respondents. There were widely different views about having more business, but no strong feelings on the location of affordable housing. In terms of commuting to work, more than 70% drive alone and most prefer it and most travel toward the Boston area rather than Worcester or west along Route 2. Some respondents complained there were not enough services for the high taxes in Bolton. Strengths identified were conservation, rural character, and schools. Improvements needed were identified as traffic on 117, high taxes, and the need for more businesses in town. The wish list included a community center, commuter options, trash pickup, and gathering places including the town center.

During discussion about the survey and the presentation slides, Cia wondered whether any of the views expressed in the survey might have changed as a result of the pandemic. There was some discussion of possible follow up smaller, more focused surveys, but resource constraints seem apparent. There was agreement that because there were so many comments that task groups should analyze them for applicability. After additional discussion, Molly agreed that she would compare the slide data with what was used by Stacia in the housing talk. The plan endorsed by the MPSC is to have a virtual public forum at which the survey slides would be presented and there would be several breakout rooms set up to discuss community issues and ideas that relate to

the vision approved by the MPSC last fall. No date was chosen and everyone agreed that a good bit of planning would be needed for a smooth forum.

Fortunately, Stacia and Cia both participated in a virtual forum run by MAPC for the Dedham Master Planning Committee. While we do not have MAPC under contract, there are definitely lessons learned from Dedham and some help that might be available from MAPC. Abby said she has a friend who does Zoom breakout rooms and that he might be willing to help. Brian is going to check with Jenny Jacobsen about the town's Zoom account to determine its limits on participants.

Ken suggested a forum on taxes be held prior to the town meeting. The consensus was that such a forum was better done by the Advisory Committee. Brian proffered that it could be part of the budget forum Advisory and Selectmen usually hold.

**Outreach Task Group Update:** Bob noted that the Outreach task group had an excellent meeting and plans to do a lot of the things that Dedham is doing. One recommendation, which Cia is willing to lead the effort on, is to assure consistent branding of all external correspondence from the MPSC and its task groups. The Dedham virtual forum discussed earlier demonstrated that very well. There will be more discussion of such an outreach forum at the next meeting.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be Thursday February 25, 2021. With no other business before the MPSC, Panny moved and Mark seconded that the meeting be adjourned. It was approved 12-0-0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.