

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Thursday July 22, 2021 at 7:00 pm

On line via Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.

Members Present: Bob Roemer, Brian Boyle, Mary Ciummo, Panny Gerken, Sharon Shepela, Stacia Downey, Ed Sterling

Others Present: Valerie Oothuys

On a motion by Panny and a second by Ed, the minutes of the June 10, 2021 meeting were approved 7-0-0.

Participation in Backyard Bolton events: Brian spoke with Eric Nyland who oversees the Backyard Bolton events about the possibility of the Master Plan Steering Committee having a tent spot at the event. Brian viewed it as a way to get the word out about the Master Plan. Members liked the idea. The scheduled events are Saturdays August 21, August 28, and September 11. Bob suggested we provide a big picture, soliciting input from residents while showing posters and maps. Stacia asked if the idea was to push out information or pull in information and Bob said “both.” Ed and Bob said there should be provocative questions or information to engender discussion. Brian and Panny both volunteered to attend all three days. Members are asked to email poster ideas to Panny and Brian. Stacia said it would be good to indicate to the public the task groups the MPSC has as a way to show where areas of interest are.

Apple Country Vulnerability Report. Valerie recommended that all members read at least the Bolton portion of the study done for the towns of Harvard, Bolton, and Devens and study the related on line map. Bolton material starts on page 91 of the report. Valerie said the report includes examples of things that can be done in town to reduce the impact of climate change. It includes preventative and mitigation methods, with recommendations for town government actions as well as individual actions that could help. In response to a point that Sharon made about the lack of a town organization to lead, several members agreed that a unified organization (e.g. not just a revitalized energy committee) would be helpful. Bob said it would definitely be a recommendation in the Master Plan. Sharon mentioned the Harvard recommendation to create a regional sustainability coordinator to work on some of these issues. Sharon said that Don Lowe liked the idea. While Bob did not disagree with the idea of a multi-town coordinator, he noted that Nashoba Associated Boards of Health works for all of its member towns. A smaller more focused group in the Bolton-Harvard area might be better.

Public Forum. The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing the proposed public forum. The focus was on the timing and venue. After reviewing a few dates, the members at the meeting settled on Sunday afternoon October 17 at the Florence Sawyer School cafeteria. The back up date will be October 24 and in either case, the forum would be from 2:00 pm until 4:00 pm. Panny took the action to speak with Lisa the Parks and Rec agent about Bolton sports events that might occur on October 17. Valerie asked the various groups to look again at slides they have previously provided and suggest any revisions. She showed a few slides that she had

derived from materials various members from task groups had provided to her. Rebecca Longvall had provided some useful graphics that Valerie used. Members liked them, but thought they needed to be simpler and more readable. Bob and Panny liked the concept of showing various areas of environmental resilience in Bolton, but that the graphic needed to be easier to understand. Bob also suggested that sometimes copies of headlines from local newspapers are useful for showing what is happening with climate change or extreme conditions. Everyone agreed that the purpose of slides to be used was to educate people and tell them where to go for additional information.

There was particular interest by attendees in some of the housing graphics, especially a graph showing the age of homeowners. This led to discussion of when the 2020 Census data will be available. Brian noted that release is expected in December, so it won't help for the Forum but could be useful in the actual Master Plan. All agreed that the slides Valerie was using, as adapted from inputs she received, were both engaging and should stimulate discussion with residents. Valerie will notify MAPC of the new dates and hopes they will be able to participate and assist the MPSC in the operation of the Forum. As a final comment about the Forum, Brian urged flexibility in case there is an uptick of Covid that affects social distancing and public gatherings.

At the end of the meeting, Bob mentioned that member Paul Tisini would be resigning soon because of the press of business, but that he was interested in being involved in the more or less dormant Economic Development task group.

Based on a motion by Panny and second by Brian, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm