



MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

(Note: The name of this committee was subsequently changed to the Master Plan Collaboration Committee)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023

LOCATION: Room 6 (Veterans Hall), Pembroke Town Hall

STARTING TIME: 7:00 pm

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Stephan Roundtree (Chairman), Steven Ciciotti (Vice-Chairman), Sharon McNamara (Clerk), Scott Chaharyn, George Grey, Curtis Kuta, and Martin Lu.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: David Boyle, Frederick Casavant, Rebecca Coletta, and James Eng.

OTHERS PRESENT: Matthew Heins (Planning Board Assistant), Susan Bollinger, and others.

OPENING THE MEETING

Mr. Roundtree opened the meeting of the Pembroke Master Plan Steering Committee.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

This was the first meeting of the Pembroke Master Plan Steering Committee. The committee's purpose is to guide and direct the process of creating a new master plan for the Town of Pembroke.

Mr. Roundtree was serving as the committee's Acting Chairman initially, because the committee is a subcommittee of the Planning Board and he is the representative of that board on the committee. He welcomed the committee members and emphasized the importance of the master plan. He also explained that he hopes this master plan will be a document that has long-term relevance and actively shapes the town's future.

Mr. Roundtree asked the committee members to introduce themselves. Mr. Kuta, Mr. Chaharyn, Mr. Ciciotti, Mr. Lu, Ms. McNamara, and Mr. Grey described their backgrounds briefly. Mr.

Roundtree talked about his background in more detail, discussing how previously he assisted in creating a new master plan for the town of Dunstable, Massachusetts.

Mr. Heins explained that Susan Bollinger, who will probably be appointed to the committee soon (replacing David Boyle), was also present. Ms. Bollinger briefly described her background and interests.

Mr. Heins noted that four committee members, David Boyle, Frederick Casavant, Rebecca Coletta, and James Eng, were absent. He explained that Mr. Casavant and Mr. Eng were traveling, that Mr. Boyle was being replaced by Ms. Bollinger, and that Ms. Coletta was being replaced by Tracy Marino, who will probably be appointed to the committee soon but was also absent.

Mr. Roundtree stressed the importance of transparency and the Open Meeting Law, and emphasized that deliberations should happen only in meetings of the committee.

SELECTION OF CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMAN AND CLERK

Mr. Roundtree asked for nominations for the positions of committee Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk.

Ms. McNamara made a motion that Stephan Roundtree be the committee's Chairman, and Mr. Chaharyn seconded the motion. A brief discussion followed, and Mr. Roundtree expressed ambivalence about being Chairman but said he would do it. The committee voted unanimously in favor.

Ms. McNamara made a motion that Steven Ciciotti be the committee's Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Chaharyn seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously in favor.

Mr. Heins explained that the Clerk would be the third officer of the committee and thus would serve as Acting Chairman if both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman were absent. In reply to a question, Mr. Heins said that he (Mr. Heins) would write up the minutes for the committee meetings.

Mr. Roundtree made a motion that Sharon McNamara be the committee's Clerk, and Mr. Ciciotti seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously in favor.

DISCUSSION ABOUT MASTER PLANNING PROCESS AND OTHER TOPICS

Mr. Roundtree briefly described the drawbacks of doing a traditional master plan document. A discussion followed about the contract for the master plan document with the consulting firm VHB, what VHB's role will be, and the anticipated timeline for doing the master plan.

Mr. Ciciotti said that VHB is now doing master plan documents that are more approachable and readable than in the past.

Mr. Roundtree emphasized that one major role of the committee members is to gather data and information, and explained that good ideas can come from anyone and it's important to keep an open mind.

A brief discussion took place about a community needs assessment (and/or strategic planning retreat) done several years ago.

Mr. Roundtree described his experience in doing a master plan previously in Dunstable, Massachusetts (where he formerly lived). He emphasized the need for the master plan to be a document with continuing relevance, which influences how the town develops and progresses in the future, rather than a document that sits on a shelf forgotten. The committee discussed the previous master plan for Pembroke done in 2004.

Mr. Roundtree talked about the master plan he previously did in Dunstable, and some of the techniques that were involved in it. He described the cluster zoning bylaw they created.

Mr. Grey asked Mr. Roundtree how the master plan in Dunstable was able to bring about change. Mr. Roundtree explained that the master plan was effective in communicating to developers and property owners what sort of development Dunstable wanted to see. Discussion ensued.

Ms. McNamara talked about how the Affordable Housing Committee is trying to come up with guidelines for “friendly” 40b projects, and seeking to work with the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. Conversation followed.

Mr. Lu asked about what sort of specific things VHB would evaluate or recommend in the master plan, and a discussion took place.

The committee discussed the danger of “kicking the can down the road,” with regard to the problems the town faces. Some committee members cited passages from the previous master plan document.

Mr. Heins noted the benefit of getting community buy-in, and emphasized how long it can take for ideas to take hold. Mr. Ciciotti described the value of the master plan being a “living document” that changes over time.

A wide-ranging discussion took place about the value of sidewalks, the need for a dog park, the recreation facilities and fields, how to work with developers, the availability of grants for planning-related projects, the importance of water quality, etc.

There was a conversation about which town boards, committees and commissions did not have representatives on the committee, and how to involve them by other means.

Ms. McNamara suggested changing the name of the committee, and Mr. Ciciotti recommended it be called the Master Plan Collaboration Committee. Discussion followed.

Mr. Roundtree said he felt it was important to get some “early wins” through the master plan, and the committee members talked about this.

Mr. Roundtree discussed cranberry bogs, agriculture in general, and the need for the master planning process to creatively engage with the future. A conversation also took place about marijuana dispensaries and the local tax base.

The committee members agreed that the committee's name should be changed to the Master Plan Collaboration Committee. Mr. Heins noted that the Planning Board had the authority to make this decision since the committee is a subcommittee of that board, and it was agreed to make the request to that board.

Ms. McNamara made a motion to change the name of the Master Plan Steering Committee to the Master Plan Collaboration Committee. Mr. Ciciotti seconded the motion, and the committee voted unanimously in favor.

Mr. Roundtree made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ms. McNamara seconded the motion, and the committee voted unanimously in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Heins, Planning Board Assistant