



Town of Walpole
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Master Plan Steering Committee

Master Plan Steering Committee
Dean Bebis John Hasenjaeger
William Buckley Jennifer Karnakis
Philip Czachorowski Margaret Kundert
Kari Denitzio Glenn Maffei
Andrew Flowers Katie Turco-Abate
Janet Fasanello

MINUTES
MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
Tuesday, October 5, 2021

Present: Andrew Flowers, Dean Bebis, Glenn Maffei, Janet Fasanello, Jennifer Karnakis, John Hasenjaeger, Kari Denitzio, Katie Turco-Abate, Margaret Kundert, William Buckley, Philip Czachorowski, Patrick Deschenes (Director of Community Development), Judi Barrett (Barrett Planning Group), Daphne Politis (Community Circle)

Introductions

Mr. Deschenes opened the meeting and introduced the Consultant, Judi Barrett to the Committee.

Ms. Barrett introduced herself and sub-consultants to the committee and explained the main focus of the meeting tonight would be to begin planning the community engagement process.

Committee members introduced themselves to the consultant and the larger group.

Ms. Barrett introduced consultant Daphne Politis to the group. Mr. Barrett stated that Ms. Politis and she had worked on numerous projects in the past, and that Ms. Politis would be able to assist the committee with the community engagement plan.

Project Overview & Timeline

Ms. Barrett provided a breakdown of the proposed timeline which outlined committee meetings, public forums, and goals for the next year.

Mr. Czachorowski stated that two more members would still need to be appointed by the Planning Board at their upcoming meeting and that the full steering committee would be available by the next steering committee meeting.

Ms. Barrett discussed the obstacles with planning meetings and working to

Ms. Barrett provided an overview and purpose of a Town creating a Master Plan and the different sections of information that the Town will want to address. In particular, the importance of the inventory document that she hopes to have to the committee by February.

Ms. Barrett explained the need for continued small group or leadership interviews in order to help compile local knowledge from different groups around Town.

Ms. Barrett explained that a master plan is a plan for the physical evolution of a Town and that within that evolution that you wish to achieve you want to determine where the best opportunities are to grow business, provide housing, preserve land, provide recreation facilities, save land for future municipal facilities, promote sustainability, and to ultimately how all these needs fit into the plan.

Community Engagement Plan

Ms. Politis discussed points to think about while planning for the November 17th public forum.

Ms. Politis asked the committee what their goals would be for the process. The committee discussed reaching a wider audience and having a diverse group with different opinions.

Mr. Politis asked the group to think of what topics the public would need education on in order to provide feedback.

Ms. Kundert stated parking needs. Mr. Hasenjaeger stated financial sustainability. Mr. Flowers stated the 40B housing process and affordable housing laws. Ms. Denitzio stated understanding the residential and commercial tax base. Mr. Czachorowski stated transportation. Mr. Bebis stated conservation land and its uses. Mr. Hasenjaeger stated looking into joining the MWRA for municipal water. Mr. Czachorowski stated sustainability and renewable energy.

Ms. Politis asked the group to think of what previous public engagement events and actions worked well or didn't work well.

Mr. Maffei stated that some actions from the open space plan such as surveys worked well, but he had hoped for a wider reach in participation.

Mr. Czachorowski stated that in the Housing Production Plan included displaying posterboards with maps and statistics were helpful for getting information out there, but the larger issues was getting more people to come to informational sessions. Mr. Flowers stated that they had some public forums and a survey.

Mr. Maffei stated that going to where people are rather than having them come to use might be helpful.

Ms. Karnakis stated that they need to think of different ways to get people engaged. Ms. Denitzio stated that conveying to people why they should care about something like the Master Plan and why it matters is vital.

Ms. Politis stated that they will want to provide multiple opportunities in multiple locations for people to participate in this process. Ms. Politis also stated that branding the process will help with recognition and show that this process and plan is different from other plans that the Town has worked on.

Ms. Politis asked the committee who the difficult to reach populations were in Walpole.

Mr. Flowers stated renters. Ms. Denitzio stated parents of young children and senior citizens. Mr. Maffei stated new residents to the town. Ms. Karnakis stated non-native English speakers. Mr. Hasenjaeger stated busy parents. Mr. Czachorowski stated different sections of Town feel separate and might not feel as welcome in getting involved. Ms. Fasanello stated that those that are economically in need.

Ms. Politis asked the committee about ideas on how to best reach the groups that were discussed. Mr. Buckley asked Ms. Politis about methods that's works in other communities. Ms. Politis addressed having a liaison from the committee that can reach different segments of the population. Ms. Politis also addressed the existing diversity within Walpole currently.

Ms. Politis asked the committee about the different forms of existing communication or media within Walpole. The committee discussed the various local papers and websites. The committee also address the existing municipal social media accounts.

Ms. Politis asked the committee about the different neighborhood groups in Walpole. The committee discussed a few of the existing groups.

Mr. Hasenjaeger stated that developing guidance on topical areas that need input would be helpful for providing focus to the planning involved with the Master Plan.

Ms. Politis stated that processing input is structured around three main town-wide community events. These events include visioning and goal settings, sharing and discussing the findings on existing resources and conditions, and the final is presenting the key recommendations for review.

The group discussed locations for providing flyers to advertise the Master Plan and public forums. Some of the locations discussed included school events, grocery stores, the train station, the library, ball fields, churches, parks, electronic sign boards, polling locations for the upcoming town vote, and within the tax bills.

Ms. Politis discussed several ways to promote feedback from residents and to make the process accessible.

Ms. Barrett stated that her and her staff were developing an online interactive map that would allow people to write comments on areas of town that they liked.

Ms. Barrett also stated how in surveys they would be able to include demographic questions to determine where in town responses were coming from. This would help to determine who in town was participating and if sections were underrepresented.

Ms. Politis asked about town-wide events occurring before. The group discussed an Art event on 10/16, the farmer market and town meeting on 10/23, and the town elections on 11/2. Ms. Politis stated that having certain information on available on the flyer will make the event more appealing to the general public.

The committee discussed logistics, planning, and advertisement for the first public forum scheduled on 11/17/21.

MOTION to adjourn by Mr. Flowers, seconded by Mr. Czachorowski, all in favor 11-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitting: Patrick Deschenes, Director Community Development

Next meeting: 10/26/21