



Town of Walpole
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Master Plan Steering Committee



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Dean Bebis, Ashley Clark, Philip Czachorowski (Chair), Kari Denitzio, Andrew Flowers, Janet Fasanello, John Hasenjaeger, Jennifer Karnakis, Glenn Maffei, Michael McGrath, Donnell Murphy, Katie Turco-Abate (Vice Chair)

MINUTES
MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
Tuesday, July 26, 2022

Present: Philip Czachorowski, Kari Denitzio, Andrew Flowers, Janet Fasanello, Mike McGrath, Jennifer Karnakis, John Hasenjaeger, Katie Turco-Abate, Dean Bebis, Ashley Clark

Absent: Glenn Maffei, Donnell Murphy

Also Present: Patrick Deschenes (Director of Community Development), Tyler Maren (Barrett Planning Group), Judi Barrett (Barrett Planning Group), Anna Sangree (BETA Group), Martha Lyon (Martha Lyons Landscape Architecture)

Meeting stated at 7:05 P.M.

Mr. Czachorowski introduces the consultant team and conducts meeting attendance.

Overview and Discussion: Initial Draft Recommendations

Mr. Czachorowski presented an overview of the format for tonight's meeting. The purpose being to present draft action recommendations pertaining to goal sections of the Master Plan. Each committee member would be able to provide their feedback on any item from a section that they wished and a general vote would be taken in order to assess the committee's overall opinion of the action items within the section.

Goal 1: Economic Development

Mr. Czachorowski stated that they would start off with the items in the Economic Development section

Ms. Barrett stated that she hoped every member had a chance to read each action item because for each item they tried to explain both what it was and why it was included. Ms. Barrett provided a brief overview of each economic development action item recommendation listed.

The Committee went around discussing the Economic Development section actions.

Ms. Barrett provided further clarification on the home occupancy regulations needing to be brought up to current practices.

Mr. Flowers stated his agreement with all items, especially item 1.3 discussing analyzing existing zoning for best physical, economic, and market practices.

Mr. Hasenjaeger stated that rewriting/updating the town's zoning would suffice for most of the suggested actions. Mr. Hasenjaeger stated he would also like Route 1 addressed with economic development actions. Mr. Hasenjaeger stated he was not in favor of implementing the recommendations of the Rapid Recovery Plan.

Ms. Karnakis stated that having an independent audit for zoning would be helpful for moving the town forward.

Ms. Turco-Abate expressed some concern on working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council on consulting matters as she wanted to make sure their advice fit Walpole's needs first.

Mr. Czachorowski stated that he agreed with all suggestions but would also like to add changes to be more proactive with the photovoltaic overlay district.

Goal 2: Open Space and Recreation

Ms. Barrett provided a brief overview of each open space and recreation action item recommendation listed.

Ms. Denitzio asked about the coordination between the Recreation Department and Recreation Committee and whether brining in additional applicable committees would also be needed. Mr. Denitzio also asked about including some of the other more well-known recreation resources.

Mr. Flowers felt recommendation 2.3 could be stated a little more clearly. Mr. Fasanello agreed with Mr. Flower's statement.

Mr. Hasenjaeger stated that better integrating the community's existing recourses (such as Adam's Farm) with more programing and access would be important.

Ms. Karnakis stated that tying in open space & recreation improvements with elements of historic preservation could be looked into.

Mr. McGrath stated that enhancing the existing passive recreation areas should be included with future suggestions. Mr. McGrath agreed with tying in existing resources better with the downtown. Mr. McGrath felt item 2.2 could be reworded as meetings were taking place.

Ms. Turco-Abate stated that improving and preserving the passive recreation resources close to downtown were important.

Mr. Bebis also agreed with better utilizing the resources that the Town already had rather than building or purchasing new.

Mr. Czachorowski stated having a better plan for utilizing locations, such as Blackburn Hall, would be helpful for increasing activity and usage.

Goal 3: Natural Resources

Ms. Barrett provided a brief overview of each natural resource action item recommendation listed.

Ms. Denitzio did not disagree with any item listed. Ms. Denitzio did want to acknowledge the importance of preserving the natural resources that the Town has, such as the town forest and Adams Farm.

Mr. Flowers agreed with all items listed.

Ms. Fasanello agreed with all three actions listed but did feel that item 3.3 was taken well care of by the Sewer & Water Commission and Water Department.

Mr. Hasenjaeger expressed his support for all items listed and also discussed the need to expand the Town's water infrastructure which is a key natural resource.

Mr. McGrath stated that he liked all three actions but would also like to see an expansion on public education of the town's natural resources.

Ms. Turco-Abate stated her agreement will all three actions, especially action 3.1 dealing with better pond management plans.

Mr. Bebis stated he felt item 3.2 could be tied in 3.3 and also talk about the potential for contamination of listed sites impacting our groundwater.

Ms. Clark asked about the existing conditions section of the plan and adding a glossary to the plan as some language shown was very technical.

Goal 4: Land Use

Ms. Barrett provided a brief overview of each land use action item recommendation listed.

Mr. Czachorowski stated his support for all three action items listed especially in regards to item 4.1 dealing with a zoning audit.

Ms. Turco-Abate stated she did not have an issue with any recommendation but she felt that any changes to the zoning bylaws should be done specific to the needs of Walpole. Ms. Turco-Abate also agreed with getting ahead on the planning needed with item 4.3.

Mr. Flowers stated that items 4.1 and 4.2 are essential for the long term vision of the town. Mr. Flowers stated that enabling more housing choices through a reform of the zoning bylaws was very important. Mr. Czachorowski agreed with Mr. Flowers statements on housing.

Ms. Fasanello asked why there was no current Town Planner. Mr. Hasenjaeger and Ms. Turco-Abate spoke to history as to why there was no current Town Planner and the history of the job in Walpole.

Ms. Karnakis agreed with all three actions and that the town needed to be more proactive rather than reactive when it came to zoning.

Goal 7: Transportation and Circulation

Ms. Sangree provided a brief overview of each transportation and circulation action item recommendation listed.

Ms. Hasenjaeger stated that he wanted to see pedestrian improvements at recreation location but see less density within the downtown.

Ms. Karnakis stated that she agreed with all three suggestions but that she would want to include the 34E bus route at all.

Goal 9: Historic Preservation

Ms. Lyons provided a brief overview of each historic preservation action item recommendation listed.

Ms. Karnakis stated that she agreed with all items and she wanted the Town to be more proactive rather than reactive. Ms. Karnakis was worried that education wouldn't be enough to save historic buildings.

Ms. Clark asked if they wanted to include exploring zoning bylaws or incentives for adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Ms. Lyons stated that they could look into that option.

Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Fasanello and seconded by Ms. Denitzio to adjourn. The motion carried 10-0-0 via roll call vote.

Meeting concluded at 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitting: Patrick Deschenes