



**Town of Walpole
Commonwealth of
Massachusetts Master Plan
Steering Committee**



Master Plan Steering Committee

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, September 27, 2022**

Present: Philip Czachorowski, Kari Denitzio, John Hasenjaeger, Janet Fasanello, Jennifer Karnakis, Mike McGrath, Donnell Murphy, Katie Turco-Abate

Absent: Dean Bebis, Ashley Clark, Andrew Flowers, Glenn Maffei

Also Present: Patrick Deschenes, Community & Economic Development; and Judi Barrett, Barrett Consulting Group

Meeting stated at 6:05 P.M.

Mr. Czachorowski conducted meeting attendance and addressed the remaining section recommendations to discuss.

Continued Discussion: Initial Draft Recommendations

Ms. Turco-Abate asked Judi Barrett of Barrett Planning Group why the goal items did not 100% align with what the Master Plan Steering Committee had previously discussed. Ms. Barrett stated that her team tried to build on the Committee's suggestions and create a broader set of recommendations for each element in order to facilitate further conversation.

Multiple members of the Committee felt that several important key points were left out of the goal items list as originally presented. Mr. Hasenjaeger emphasized the importance of water as an essential topic.

Ms. Turco-Abate brought up the inconsistency in the strength of the language used, as some items use action verbs like "adopt" while others use weaker words like "consider".

Mr. Murphy asked if the action items are listed in order of priority. Ms. Barrett stated that there is no specific order to the action items.

Goal 1: Economic Development

Ms. Barrett stated that the mission of Economic Development is to increase economic activity, diversify the tax base, and provide more jobs, shops, and restaurants for residents to enjoy. Each action item under this goal should further that cause in some way.

Mr. Hasenjaeger stated that the action items are too specific and prescriptive and should instead be more broad. Ms. Karnakis suggested that the plan should be simpler and more accessible to anyone who may not be well versed in this area.

Ms. Barrett explained that the Donahue Institute is an entity of UMass Amherst that provides free technical assistance to communities to help generate ideas on how to best improve their local economy.

Ms. Turco-Abate asked about a duplicate action item about working from home that appears under both the Economic Development and Housing goals. Ms. Barrett stated that this was intentional and suggested including a cross-reference so people do not think it was an oversight.

Mr. Murphy suggested forming a committee to update the Town's bylaws. Ms. Barrett advised getting a professional consultant because the Walpole bylaws seem outdated and inconsistent in terms of language and tone.

Mr. Hasenjaeger stated that there should not be as much focus on heavy industry and manufacturing because the Town as a whole does not seem to be as interested in that sector. The Committee requested that Ms. Barrett include all of the commercial use districts into item 1.7.

Mr. Murphy proposed including the update and implementation of the 2015 Downtown Action Plan into one of the actions item for this goal.

Ms. Karnakis stated that 3.8's language should be updated to include reference to the Select Board, not the Board of Selectmen.

Motion to accept all the section recommendations under Goal 1: Economic Development as amended, by Ms. Denitzio, seconded by Mr. McGrath. The motion carried 8-0-0.

Goal 5: Climate Change & Resiliency

Mr. McGrath noticed a slight change in the wording for the description of Goal 5. Ms. Barrett stated that this was a suggestion by her team to revise the phrasing of the goal. The Committee approved of changing the wording of the goal to "Build Walpole's human, financial, and infrastructure resources to advance sustainability in climate change resilience priorities."

Ms. Turco-Abate suggested adding the Board of Health to item 5.2 because of their responsibility for the Town's waste and recycling.

Mr. Czachorowski asked about the CR3 Energy Reduction Plan. Mr. Deschenes explained that when a town becomes a Green Community, there are five elements that they need to pass. One of

which is the CR3 Energy Reduction Plan, which stipulates that a town's carbon emissions will be substantially reduced within five years.

Mr. Deschenes stated that the benchmarks set by the State and the Green Communities program will continually be updated as time moves forward, so there is no need to establish any specific goals further than meeting their expectations.

Mr. Hasenjaeger spoke against the need to create a new staff position to monitor Walpole's energy consumption issues, and suggested sharing a staff member with neighboring communities to avoid spending too much on this item.

Mr. McGrath suggested revising item 5.8 to read "Keep current with trends and technologies and consider becoming a member of the Clean Energy Center."

Ms. Denitzio suggested changing item 5.10 so that it was clear that they are only making local businesses aware of the climate-related resources that are available and not forcing them to take advantage of them.

Motion to accept all the section recommendations under Goal 5: Climate Change & Resiliency as amended, by Mr. McGrath, seconded by Mr. Murphy. The motion carried 7-1-0 (Mr. Hasenjaeger voted no).

Goal 6: Housing

Ms. Turco-Abate asked about the Three Rivers Interlocal Council and Neighbor Works Housing. Ms. Barrett stated that the Three Rivers Interlocal Council is a subgroup of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council that focuses on a sub-region that includes Walpole and nearby towns like Sharon, Medfield, Randolph, Canton, etc. She also explained Neighbor Works is a non-profit housing education center for the area.

Mr. Czachorowski suggested removing the names of the towns in item 6.2 because the group makeup may end up changing down the line.

Ms. Turco-Abate asked for an update on the MBTA Community Guidelines. Mr. Deschenes stated that based on the newly-finalized guidelines, Walpole's zoning laws are not yet fully in compliance with the agreement. As a designated Commuter Rail Community, Walpole will need to have zoning that allows for the construction of the number of dwelling units equal to 15% of the Town's existing 2020 housing stock (which is about 1500 units).

Ms. Karnakis suggested, as previously discussed in a prior meeting, avoiding the phrase "inclusionary housing" and replacing it with "large residential development including affordable units."

McGrath suggested changing the wording of 6.6D to read "Reform excessively restrictive zoning rules to allow for more accessible affordable housing in Walpole and create a formative plan to get Walpole to the subsidized housing threshold."

Mr. Murphy asked why item 6.9 makes reference to allowing for two-family housing but not three-family housing. Mr. Deschenes stated that three-family housing is typically allowed by a special permit that includes land area requirements.

Ms. Barrett stated that home occupation regulations are not designed to prescribe what occupations are allowed, but rather regulate all occupations based on their impact on the surrounding community (i.e. parking, noise level, sign size).

Ms. Barrett explained the difference between a multi-family unit (which has separate owners) and a house with an accessory unit (which has one owner that can rent the unit out to others).

Ms. Turco-Abate warned against allowing for accessory units in every Walpole neighborhood because there are some homeowners who moved here believing that accessory units were not allowed and would object to the change.

Motion to accept action item 5.11 as written by Mr. Czachorowski, seconded by Mr. McGrath. The motion carried 7-1-0 (Ms. Turco-Abate voted no).

Motion to accept Goal 6 items 1-10 as amended, by Mr. Czachorowski, seconded by Mr. Murphy. The motion carried 8-0-0.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. McGrath and seconded by Mr. Murphy to adjourn. The motion carried 8-0-1 via roll call vote (Hasenjaeger abstained).

Meeting concluded at 10:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitting: Patrick Deschenes