

Master Plan Implementation Committee

Minutes of February 24, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Ed Forsberg, Chairman, at 6:35 pm in the Main Meeting Room, Town Hall.

Committee Members Present: Ed Forsberg, Al Goetz, Mike Berry, Bruce Norwell, Michael Gallahue, Dick Power, Roger Turner, Dick Nottebart, John Desmond, Mary Kent (left at 7:05 pm).

Staff Present: Don Johnson, Stephanie Mercandetti, Maura Therrien

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss and develop the process for a comprehensive study and plan for the Town's facilities needs and land availability relative to these needs.

Ed noted that the Board of Selectmen sent their letter of support to the Northeastern University Department of Engineering Student Division's participation in the Spring Brook Trail and Park project.

Ed read a draft of a letter/memo to the Board of Selectmen updating the Board on the MPIC's recent activities and plans for the next few months relative to the Walpole Woodworkers site purchase and override. Specifically, the letter will include the following:

The MPIC is increasing meeting frequency to allow for weekly updates and specific fact finding tasks have been assigned to Committee members, and the Committee will be scheduling stakeholder meetings with the Fire and Police Chiefs, Housing Partnership, DPW, Recreation Department, School Administration, and Council on Aging and their respective representatives. The MPIC is developing a timeline and a specific outline (in the form to be used by our members when meeting with the department heads. The MPIC is awaiting additional input from the public information meetings to add to our fact finding mission on possible sites and the proper usage. Our effort beyond supporting the override is to assemble all studies previously undertaken and to create a repository for all information that will be helpful in making our future decision.

Dick P. moved to send the letter to the Board of Selectmen. Al seconded the motion. Voted 10-0-0.

Bruce Norwell had updated the statement, which had been discussed at the previous week's MPIC meeting, of the MPIC's support to the Board of Selectmen in its efforts to purchase the Walpole Woodworkers property located at 767-777 East Street with the notations that the Town of Walpole has a significant need for land in or near the downtown business district suitable to site a number of public facilities and that... "when the town is presented with what can rightly be considered a "once in a lifetime" chance to

acquire a sizeable parcel of approximately 11 acres that is centrally located in town and near the downtown business district, that opportunity must be seized.” Don had formatted Bruce’s statement into a letter addressed to the Board of Selectmen. Ed moved to send this letter as drafted to the Board of Selectmen. Dick P. seconded the motion. Voted 10-0-0.

Don distributed the following to the Committee members, per information requests from previous MPIC meetings, and for viewing various Town-owned properties:

- Draft colored map showing various categories of Town-owned and / or Open Space land (courtesy of Landis Hershey, Conservation Agent, as part of the draft of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update);
- Draft inventory listing the various open space parcels in town (courtesy of Landis, as part of the draft of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update);
- Two spreadsheets of Conservation Commission land (one prepared by Landis, and one prepared by Don from a spreadsheet provided by the Assessors’ Office);
- A spreadsheet of other Town owned land not under the Conservation Commission (courtesy of Stephanie);
- Deeds to the downtown recreation parcel including Memorial Park and the town pool (noting the recreation restriction),
- Town Forest deeds, maps, and information;
- Allen Dam and Emergency Spillway information and deeds; and
- Excerpts from chapters titled "Community Facilities Plans", "Fire and Rescue Stations", and Police Stations" from the book, Planning and Urban Design Standards, by Frederick Steiner and Kent Butler and the American Planning Association.

Dick N. noted that we may use some of the police and fire studies’ information from 2004 - 2006 rather than redo anything. He asked for a larger town map. Don will see if Maggie Walker, Town Engineer, may be able to help with that.

Ed went through his suggestions for the content of the questionnaire that the MPIC will have for the department heads when they meet with the Committee. Dick N. will work with Don on the questionnaire in the interim before the next MPIC meeting on March 10 meeting. Dick P. stated that our questions for the department heads should be conservative in order to frame our case as supportable.

It was noted that the removal of the Walpole Woodworkers site from the tax roles would amount to a loss of less than \$100,000 in tax revenue per year.

**Master Plan Implementation Committee
Minutes of 2-24-11**

Mike B. indicated the Board of Selectmen voted a strong 5-0-0 in favor of the purchase the Walpole Woodworkers property without signaling specific use. Purchase of the property by the Town could avert the creation of housing that would lead to a densely populated area that has not been anticipated in any planning documents. Public information meetings will be held by the Board of Selectmen in March.

It was mentioned that the that the Council on Aging has access to a grant of up to \$800,000 from the state to construct a senior center, and The Friends of the Council on Aging, Inc. has been actively fundraising to raise the necessary funds for a new center.

It was suggested that Michael Boynton, Town Administrator, will discuss, with Lincoln Lynch, School Superintendent, the availability of \$185,000.00 left over from a school project, as mentioned by John, to be used for the facilities study.

Al stated that without an updated and current Open Space and Recreation Plan, there will be no new grants for conservation land purposes. Most towns hire people to do the update, but here in Walpole, Don Johnson and Landis Hershey, Conservation Agent will be doing it. Hopefully it will be ready by the end of summer. If Landis is able to attend the MPIC meeting on Thursday March 10 at 6:00 pm to discuss progress on the plan update and coordination of the plan update with the MPIC's current work, the meeting will be posted to begin at 6:00 pm; if Landis is not able to attend the meeting it will be posted for 6:30 pm. Don will check with her on this and get back to the MPIC and post the meeting accordingly

Ed noted that the American Legion is donating a flag pole for Stone Field. He suggested that it be placed along the third base line of the softball field ten to fifteen feet behind the backstop. Don will check with the Recreation Department to make sure that this location would not interfere with equipment sheds.

Suggested meeting dates of the MPIC over the next few months of 2011: Tuesdays at 6:00 pm, 3-15, 3-22, 3-29, 4-5, 4-12, 4-19: subject to further discussion at the March 10 meeting and depending on the scheduling of meetings with department heads.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,