

**RECEIVED**

By Karen Wilber/Assistant Town Clerk at 5:34 pm, Feb 21, 2023

TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Master Plan Implementation Committee

Town Hall Offices • 63 Main Street • Northborough, MA 01532 • 508-393-5040 x7 • 508-393-6996 Fax

Master Plan Implementation Committee Meeting

January 19, 2023

Zoom Meeting Minutes

Approved February 16, 2023

7:00pm—Chairman's Introduction to Remote Meeting

Mr. Leif, Chairman, opened the remote meeting. Mr. Leif stated that this Open Meeting of the Master Plan Implementation Committee was being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of July 16, 2022, an Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency and that all members of the Master Plan Implementation Committee are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. Mr. Leif noted that the Order allows the MPIC to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. He added that ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. Mr. Leif noted that this meeting will not allow for Public Comment. He indicated that the public may view the meeting via the link as listed on the posted agenda.

Members Present, remotely: Rick Leif, Chair; Ashley Davies, Vice Chair; Amy Poretsky, Millie Milton, Tracey Cammarano, Fran Bakstran, Gene Kennedy, John Campbell, Dario DiMare, Jeanne Cahill

Others Present, remotely: Laurie Connors, Planning Director; Johnathan Law and Melissa Green, Weston and Sampson

The meeting opened at 7:00pm.

Discussion with Consultant Regarding Downtown Revitalization Strategy & Design Report

Mr. Law updated members with steps taken since the last MPIC meeting.

Traffic Counts Completed— Traffic counts taken at three intersections (Main and Church Streets, Main and South Streets, Main and Hudson Streets) will be analyzed to determine average monthly calculation conditions. This data will be used to project conditions for seven years out to predict future traffic patterns and help determine design concepts for the 'road diet'.

Flyer Developed for Community Workshop #1—A flyer was developed and mailed out in preparation for the meeting on Thursday, January 26 at Algonquin High School.

Confirmed Date for Business Owner's Workshop—February 7, 7am at the Town Library.

Preparations for Community Workshop #1—The meeting will not have a virtual option. Ms. Connors said after meeting with the Cable Access Director, they determined it would be best if the meeting was recorded and broadcast at a future time because of the difficulty of filming what's happening live at the various tables; a more summarized version would be more fruitful.

Ms. Connors said the public will enter through the main door. Directional signage will be posted but she thought it would be helpful if a member could assist with directing people to the library. Ms. Bakstran hoped that the side doors to the library would be open for those with limited mobility. Ms. Connors will check with the school.

Ms. Connors said the flyer was mailed to all property owners within the study area. The Town Clerk's office sent an email blast and it has been publicized on Facebook, on the Town's website, cable, and in the Community Advocate. Mr. Leif asked members to help publicize this meeting via Facebook or otherwise.

During their pre-meeting conversation, Ms. Connors, Mr. Leif, Ms. Davies and Mr. Law established the four main study areas of the Downtown: (1) Cold Harbor Brook as it incorporates some of the streetscape on Main, Church and Pierce Streets; (2) the opposite side of Main Street adjacent to the Town Common, ending at South Street; (3) Blake and Hudson Streets; and (4) Assabet River with Town Hall and the surrounding wooded area.

Four vision boards will be presented at the meeting to help attendees determine the features and look they would like for those areas. The boards will be 36" x 48". People will be given stickers as a means of voting. The purpose of the activity is to see what people want to see in a downtown and specifically ideas of what they want to see in each one of these zones.

Four staff from Weston and Sampson will be present; one consultant will be stationed at each of the four tables, with some committee members to help facilitate the process.

Ms. Bakstran thought four sets of these badges/labels would be best; for example, people might want more accessibility in all four districts, or people might think seating is important in two districts.

Mr. Leif added that there will be the capability to draw on these maps, in the event they end up missing a sticker representing something they would like. Mr. Kennedy suggested providing a blank symbol for that purpose as well.

Next steps—Community Workshop next week; Business Workshop in February; collation of the information to begin development of the conceptual master plan; collation of the traffic counts.

Ms. Davies asked whether committee members should be present at the Business Owners workshop. Ms. Connors thought it would be helpful particularly due to the early start time.

Mr. Leif said he will be present at each meeting to present an overview and introduce Weston and Sampson. He asked that those who plan to attend to email Ms. Connors as soon as possible.

Mr. Law asked Ms. Connors if there was a way to get a rough idea of the number planning to attend. Ms. Connors said she was hopeful to have at least 50 people for the Community Meeting, but she thought the Business Workshop would be a smaller number of 15 or 20. Mr. Leif said that in the week following this meeting, details should be ironed out for that workshop. Ms. Connors said that she and Ms. Green were brainstorming ideas on how to get business owners to commit to attending. Mr. DiMare said he can mention the workshop to the business owners in his plaza. While they are not in the Downtown area of focus, they may be interested. Ms. Connors said that if they have an interest in the Downtown, they'd certainly be welcome.

Ms. Bakstran volunteered to help make phone calls to confirm attendance after invitations were sent. Ms. Milton offered to distribute flyers once they are ready.

Ms. Poretsky asked how people can provide their feedback if they are not able to attend. Ms. Connors said she will have a sign-in sheet at the meeting and will provide her business cards, she was hoping that Mr. Law will have a slide at the end of the presentation with her contact information for those watching on cable.

Update on Status of Complete Streets Prioritization Plan

Ms. Connors said the prioritization plan was submitted to MassDOT at the end of the year. They'd responded quickly with a full page of comments and suggestions for clarification. She and Mr. Charpentier met with Woodward and Currant to go over changes they'd made to the prioritization plan based on the comments that were received. The most significant comment made was with regard to the Aqueduct Bridge Project; it's not considered a fundable project under the Complete Streets Program because of the cost and the complication of the bridge project. However, they did say the connections to the bridge would be fundable, so they combined those two projects (the bridge connections to the multi-use trail project). Woodward and Curran will file the updated prioritization plan to MassDOT as soon as those changes are added.

Mr. Leif asked about the timing of those projects. Ms. Connors said that Complete Streets projects have to be fully designed and shovel-ready before being considered a fundable project. She estimated that it would take about a year and a half before a downtown project will be ready to apply for Complete Streets construction funding.

Ms. Connors said that there are pieces that are fundable and some that are not; the goal is to use one grant program to match another grant program in order to help finance the entire project.

Minutes from December 15, 2022

The minutes were discussed, there were two changes to be made.

Ms. Cammarano made the motion to accept the minutes as amended; Mr. Campbell seconded. Roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Poretsky—aye; Ms. Milton—aye; Ms. Davies—aye; Ms. Cammarano—aye; Ms. Bakstran—aye; Mr. Kennedy—aye; Ms. Cahill—aye; Mr. Leif—aye; Mr. Campbell—aye; Mr. DiMare—aye.

Mr. Campbell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. DiMare seconded. Roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Poretsky—aye; Ms. Milton—aye; Ms. Davies—aye; Ms. Cammarano—aye; Ms. Bakstran—aye; Mr. Kennedy—aye; Ms. Cahill—aye; Mr. Leif—aye; Mr. Campbell—aye; Mr. DiMare—aye.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04pm.

Respectfully Submitted By
Michelle Cilley, Board Secretary