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By Karen Wilber, Town Clerk's Office at 1:52 pm, Oct 13, 2021

TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Master Plan Implementation Committee

Town Hall Offices • 63 Main Street • Northborough, MA 01532 • 508-393-5019 • 508-393-6996 Fax

Master Plan Implementation Committee Meeting

September 8, 2021

Zoom Meeting Minutes

Approved on September 30, 2021

Members Present, Remotely: Fran Bakstran; Julianne Hirsh, Amy Poretsky, Millie Milton, Ashley Davies, Tracy Cammarano, Adrienne Cost, Bill Peterson, Eugene Kennedy, Jean Cahill, Rick Leif, John Campbell and Dario DiMare.

Others Present, Remotely: Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Scott Charpentier, Director of Public Works; Donny Goris-Kolb, VHB.

Ms. Joubert opened the meeting at 7pm.

Introduction of Staff and Members. Members introduced themselves and provided some background.

Election of Officers—Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. Ms. Joubert said the role of Chairperson is primarily to facilitate the meetings, handle introductory work at the beginning (Zoom), review the agenda with herself and Mr. Goris-Kolb. In the event the Chairperson is not available, then the Vice-Chairperson will run the meeting.

Ms. Cahill noted it was difficult to select a chairperson at their first meeting, since this was the first time that many of them had met, and asked to vote on this at a later meeting. Ms. Joubert said that typically this is handled at the first meeting, so the Chair would run future meetings. Ms. Cahill was hesitant to vote until the committee hears the presentation.

Ms. Poretsky suggested nominating Ms. Davies; who said she'd planned to nominate Ms. Cahill.

Ms. Bakstran suggested hearing the presentation and holding the election at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Leif expressed his interest in taking the role of Chair if people were interested in having him fill it. He has been Chair of the Planning Board in the past as well as on other committees, and most recently was Vice Chair of the Master Plan Steering Committee.

Mr. Peterson said he would be interested in taking on the role of Vice Chair but was willing to listen to the presentation and circle back at the end of the meeting.

Consultant's Presentation on Implementation Committee Logistics. Ms. Joubert provided some history. The master plan process began approximately 2 ½ years ago, VHB was selected as the Master Plan consultant and a Master Plan Steering Committee of fifteen members was formed. This committee met over eighteen months, had eighteen different public meetings and held three public forums, all as part of public outreach. Three surveys were sent out to residents, and Steering Committee members and the consultants attended a few town-wide events in order to discuss the Master Plan with as many people as possible outside of meetings.

Ms. Joubert said that the Master Plan is a document that is outlined in the Zoning Act which gives the Planning Board the authority to create a Master Plan for the community, which the Planning Board adopted in March 2020. The seven chapters of the Master Plan (Land Use and Development; Housing; Economic Development; Open Space and Recreation; Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources; Transportation and Circulation; and Public Facilities and Services) conclude with the implementation chapter, now referred to as the Implementation Plan. Ms. Joubert explained that each chapter identifies key findings in the Town, baseline conditions analysis, with a section on goals, and a section on recommendations. The implementation chapter itself is done as a spreadsheet or matrix where goals are identified and boards, support boards and/or individuals involved in achieving that goal are listed, along with the cost to carry the goals out. Presently there is no order in which the goals have been set out but prioritizing those goals will be a key role for this committee.

Donny Goris-Kolb from VHB addressed the committee. He is a sustainability and environmental planner senior level and was the principal planner for the Master Plan 2 ½ years ago. He was excited to help this committee make the Master Plan a living document and to help create the framework for decision making on a municipal level.

Mr. Goris-Kolb stated that Northborough's Vision Statement was the statement developed at the first public meeting for the Master Plan process; that statement guided the work that the Steering Committee did. He said VHB's role is to bring the Vision Statement and Master Plan to life by advising the Implementation Committee and providing the necessary tools and support in the Committee's initial meetings. VHB is scoped for about five meetings.

Mr. Goris-Kolb said the last chapter in the Master Plan was turned into a tracking tool, or matrix, where the implementation plan within the master plan identifies the implementation leadership and partners, outlines the timeframe, order of magnitude cost (OOM) and potential funding sources and priority.

Mr. Leif asked how the decisions of the Committee get transferred into the workings of the Town. How does the work get communicated and agreed to so then it can be tracked?

Ms. Joubert said it is not the responsibility of this committee to physically carry these out, that is why the various boards and committees are listed. The goals should be realistically spread amongst other departments and boards, but how that's communicated, Ms. Joubert wasn't sure yet, and asked Mr. Goris-Kolb his opinion. He responded that, in his experience, some communities established liaisons to some of these groups and met at select meetings to work

directly with them to make sure the implementation committee has the tools necessary to implement the actions that they support, not to directly do the work. If there are tangential actions or supporting actions that the implementation committee is willing to take on, then they do those actions and work directly with departments; at minimum, other towns have worked with the Town Administration and the work gets funneled down or the Implementation Committee would get updates directly from the department.

Mr. DiMare asked if the document was set in stone, as it's already been adopted by the Planning Board. Mr. Goris-Kolb said there is some flexibility built in, context can change what these actions are; other communities have updated their Master Plan as they have gone along.

Ms. Cahill said a concern of hers is climate change and the repercussions that has for the town.

Mr. Goris-Kolb said that a Climate Action Plan might be something to look at in the future. He said when the Master Plan was first developed, it didn't include a sustainability chapter, and doesn't include a public health chapter, both topics which are trending now; there are references to sustainability and resilience as well as some references to public health, mostly related to environmental indicators and not necessarily pandemics. It is possible to do these supplemental studies after plans have been adopted, and can be added.

Ms. Hirsch said her impression is that bigger projects, such as water and sewer expansion, have to be written into the Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Peterson said, in his opinion, anything on the spreadsheet with a dollar sign should be something that the Financial Planning Committee should be taking a look at. Secondly, as a team, this committee has the ability to force rank these highs, and say, based on time and speaking with boards, are these feasible, and if not, re-rank, then the committee should layer over that the financial ability of the town to do it.

Mr. Goris-Kolb said it was smart to take a pass through the implementation matrix and identify those actions that are marked with the higher dollar amounts, particularly those that are high-priority, although he didn't see many over \$250K.

Ms. Davies said she believed that was important but the Steering Committee had been told during the process of writing the plan, to not think small; determine the ultimate priorities and brainstorm how to find it.

Mr. Peterson said he is a big plan of forced ranking and if they can force rank something in importance to the town, and they can afford it, it is an easy win.

Mr. Goris-Kolb said that one of the roles of the committee might be to explore funding opportunities and suggested creating a subcommittee for the purpose of identifying funds, when grant paperwork is due, and so on.

Mr. Goris-Kolb next moved to Implementation Committee Organization/Function and Case Studies in other communities.

Mr. Goris-Kolb said Walpole's Master Plan Implementation Committee considers itself an advisory body functioning as a subcommittee of the Planning Board. In Hanover, the Planning Board serves their Implementation Committee, and being stewards of the plan, they developed a seven-year action plan which supplemented the Master Plan; they 'bit it off in chunks' to make it more manageable. The Town of Arlington developed several subcommittees based on the topic (Land Use, other) and divided into groups, and each of those subcommittees also had their own web pages. Maynard's Implementation Committee considers itself an advisory board with liaisons to each of the different departments. This committee reports directly to the select board for Town Administration, provides reports for the town's Annual Town Meeting and Town Report, and performs community outreach with respect to new actions being implemented.

In conclusion, Mr. Goris-Kolb said that he urges the committee to begin by establishing and accepting a mission and duties; establishing procedures for internal and external coordination; determining committee organization; determining the schedule/process for updating the Master Plan; and developing a web page on the Town's website documenting the above. He will forward a copy of the presentation as well as the matrix before the committee's next meeting.

Mr. Campbell said that he was assuming, because of the format of the committee, and where the members have come from, that those directly with a board would naturally be the liaison? Ms. Joubert said that is partly the idea that she and the Town Administrator had. Mr. Campbell said he also thought that subcommittees within this committee would provide a role for the At-Large members to participate and generate activity to bring back to the MPIC. He thought that maybe one of the first subcommittees could be for one of the first short-term actions that they could actually show some visible progress on. Ms. Joubert said this committee has already completed one action item; one of the Implementation Committee's recommendations was to work with various boards to put together a stormwater bylaw. That was already done this year and brought to Town Meeting in 2021.

Mr. Peterson said the action list has approximately 155 items, but if they only have VHB for five of those, he wants to make sure that a framework is developed to reuse with modifications.

Mr. Goris-Kolb said that has to still be worked out. He said that he and Ms. Joubert will determine the extent to which VHB helps with implementation support. He added that in the past, VHB has developed implementation sheets, a template of sorts, to identify the action, with all of the information shown on the matrix specific to an action; in addition to that, you add in implementation steps, links to case studies, list of funding sources; that is what he envisions handing off to this committee in addition to the reference materials.

Ms. Joubert noted that although the committee only has five meetings currently set up with VHB, that it can be revised; that was the initial contract based on available funds, but as the committee becomes established and need more assistance, it can be worked out.

Establish Monthly Meeting Schedule—Ms. Joubert said initially they (herself and VHB) had discussed having monthly meetings. Since it appears as though they will be meeting remotely for the foreseeable future, she looked into the Zoom licenses that the Town has, and with already so many boards sharing those, and also due to staff availability, it was narrowed down to the 3rd Thursday, at 7pm or earlier if necessary. Several dates were proposed. Mr. Leif was hoping to meet sooner than later to sort out organizational business. After a showing of hands, the group decided to meet next on Thursday, September 30, although Mr. Goris-Kolb will not be available at that time. Mr. Leif didn't feel that was an issue, he said they could work with the information that Mr. Goris-Kolb will send after this meeting to help make some organizational decisions. The next meeting after that will be October 21 for which Mr. Goris-Kolb will be present.

Election of Officers—Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. The group returned to the subject of electing officers. Ms. Bakstran nominated Mr. Rick Leif for Chairperson, due to his experience and previously expressed interest. Mr. Peterson seconded that nomination. Ms. Poretsky nominated Ms. Davies for Chairperson, saying she also has experience and had been on the Steering Committee. Ms. Milton seconded Ms. Poretsky's nomination. Since no other recommendations were made, Ms. Joubert closed the nominations.

Roll call vote for those in favor of Mr. Leif went as follows:

Mr. Leif:	"aye"
Ms. Bakstran:	"aye"
Mr. Kennedy:	"aye"
Mr. Campbell:	"aye"
Ms. Cost:	"aye"
Ms. Poretsky:	"nay"
Ms. Cahill:	<i>abstained</i>
Ms. Davies:	"nay"
Mr. DiMare:	"nay"
Ms. Cammarano:	"nay"
Ms. Milton:	"nay"
Mr. Peterson:	"nay"
Ms. Hirsch:	"nay"

Ms. Joubert said there were five votes in favor of Mr. Leif, seven opposed, one abstention.

Ms. Bakstran said that since Ms. Davies has more votes than Mr. Leif, by default, she should be Chair and Mr. Leif Vice Chair. The group was in agreement.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06pm.

Respectfully Submitted By
Michelle Cilley, Board Secretary

