



Town of Sudbury

Planning Board

PlanningBoard@sudbury.ma.us

Flynn Building
278 Old Sudbury Road
Sudbury, MA 01776
978-639-3387
Fax: 978-639-3314

www.sudbury.ma.us/planning

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 12, 2019 AT 7:30 PM

LOWER TOWN HALL, 322 CONCORD ROAD, SUDBURY, MA

JOINT MEETING WITH MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Planning Board Members Present: Chair Stephen Garvin, Vice Chair Charles Karustis, Clerk John Hincks, Justin Finnicum, and Nancy Kilcoyne

Planning Board Members Absent: None

Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) Members Present: Chair John Sugrue, At-Large; Vice-Chair Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi, At-Large; Dan Carty, Board of Selectmen; Janie Dretler, Board of Selectmen; Patricia Guthy, Commission on Disability; Jan Hardenbergh, At-Large; Dave Henkels, Conservation Commission; Ellen Joachim, Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School Committee; Lisa Kouchakdjian, Sudbury Public School Committee; and Amy Lepak, Sudbury Housing Authority

MPSC Members Absent: Nathalie Forssell, At-Large; Robert May, Council on Aging; John Riordan, Zoning Board of Appeals; Lee Swanson, Historic Districts Commission; Fred Taylor, Historic Districts Commission; and Dick Williamson, Park and Recreation Commission

Others Present: Fabiola Alikpokou, Staff Planner, Horsley Witten Group; Director of Planning and Community Development Adam Duchesneau; Nate Kelly, Principal, Horsley Witten Group; Krista Moravec, Senior Planner, Horsley Witten Group; Board of Selectmen Member Jennifer Roberts; and Environmental Planner Beth Suedmeyer

Welcome

Mr. Garvin opened the Planning Board meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Mr. Sugrue opened the MPSC meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Master Plan Working Session with Planning Board

Mr. Duchesneau stated the MPSC and Planning Board would be discussing formative issues for the Master Plan update as presented by the Horsley Witten Group.

Ms. Moravec indicated the draft Formative Issues document was compiled from:

- MPSC Meetings
- “Meeting In A Box” gatherings
- Community Meetings/gatherings

- Community Conversation Sessions
- May 2019 Public Forum
- Resident Surveys
- Interviews with staff from various Town departments

Mr. Kelly stated the meeting would involve brainstorming and discussion of issues to ensure all key aspects were represented in the Master Plan update. He added the session would be continued with another joint meeting on November 15, 2019. Mr. Kelly commented on the “tension” topics that needed to be addressed, which were as follows:

- Transportation – Mr. Kelly recognized Sudbury was thought of as a historic, quiet town; yet it contained urban traffic/transportation aspects.
- Municipal Services – Mr. Kelly noted the scale of such services had been consistent with the perceived complexion of the historic, rural township. Master planning was now recognizing the needs of a diverse population.
- Infrastructure – Mr. Kelly recognized the “tension” aspect when considering new wastewater solutions, development, and redevelopment, and how those considerations interfaced with the historic and rural character of the town.

Housing

Mr. Kelly recognized the Housing Trust and Sudbury Housing Authority for their contributions, as well as Sudbury’s considerable new housing developments which added to the Town’s Subsidized Housing Inventory.

Mr. Kelly highlighted the areas for group consideration as listed on the draft Formative Issues document:

Town Services

The Town needs to meet the needs of a growing older population. The Town needs to invest in technology to provide better efficiency and response to residents. The Town must have more effective communication with residents through diverse methods. The Town must invest in new infrastructure. The Town must make adequate capital investments in maintenance and upkeep of existing buildings and facilities. Town buildings, facilities, and infrastructure need to be more accessible. Implement methods of recognizing efforts of volunteers who contribute to support services. The Town must be more proactive with the installation and management of utilities.

Mr. Hincks indicated the draft Town Services topics appeared to be more like Town administration subjects, rather than Master Plan topics, which were not the same. Mr. Kelly responded much was dependent on what was expected from the Master Plan update, agreed with Mr. Hincks, and emphasized communities were increasingly including such tactical topics within their Master Plans.

Ms. Kouchakdjian asked about the bulleted elements under the “demographics” heading. Mr. Kelly indicated the significance of those elements would emerge as other topic areas were presented. Ms. Kouchakdjian asked about the reference used with the demographic statistics in the draft. Mr. Kelly stated such statistics were included in the baseline resource. Ms. Moravec note such reference would be found in

the Housing section. Ms. Kouchakdjian suggested inclusion of families with school age children when presenting the demographics. Mr. Kelly indicated he would include such numbers.

Mr. Garvin inquired if the topics included in the draft Formative Issues document were presented in any order of importance. Mr. Kelly responded they were not. Mr. Garvin stated a type of priority listing may be of benefit.

Mr. Henkels asked if Town Services were a result of population growth and various legal relationships, such as subsidized housing, etc. He noted if there were no reasons for people to come to Sudbury, the population numbers would reflect this. Mr. Henkels further queried if the services came first before population growth or if they attracted population. He noted that in 1962 the population projection predicted Sudbury would eventually have 30,000 people. In the last Master Plan, the projection was for 20,000 people and he noted the actual population was less than 20,000 at this time.

Mr. Kelly commented Town Services could be viewed in response to demands that result from increases in population and can also be in response to changes in types of populations. Demand for services can come from people with different quality of life demands. Mr. Henkels queried about attracting businesses to Sudbury so the Town could finance stormwater management and improved road systems, including sidewalks and infrastructure. Mr. Kelly suggested identifying ways/methods to increase funding for Town Services. Mr. Carty commented such considerations reflected the fundamental questions the group should try to answer and formulate where Sudbury might be in twenty years and if they wanted to change the direction the Town was headed or not.

Ms. Dretler mentioned despite anticipated future population estimates, Sudbury faced considerable problems and issues at this time which must be addressed.

Climate Change/Resiliency

Mr. Kelly presented the topic of Climate Change/Resiliency and mentioned the importance of the Town's participation in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant and the Hazard Mitigation Plan process, which considered areas focused around climate change. He noted the Master Plan could advance those processes already in place.

Mr. Garvin commented the Sudbury River was a real threat and climate change considerations could contribute to increased flooding. He stated the MVP grant helped, but indicated the Master Plan should specifically address the situation and the resiliency factor. Mr. Garvin asserted emergency shelter planning was vital for inclusion in the Master Plan. Mr. Sugrue agreed with Mr. Garvin's recommendations.

Energy

Mr. Kelly stated the Energy aspect needed to continue to improve with efficiency of Town facilities and operations, and promote additional sustainable energy usage to residents and businesses.

Mr. Finnicum asked if the Town was considering adopting the stretch code and Mr. Garvin responded the Town had done this already.

Mr. Karustis stated the Energy topic should be inclusive of all renewables, such as solar and wind. He noted the Planning Board was currently crafting a Solar Bylaw and the more specific the language of the bylaw, the better for the Town.

Mr. Hincks spoke of developer guidelines to install charging stations, which could be included under the Energy category.

Ms. Lepak asked if there were any geothermal regulations in Town or if there had been related inquiries about such installations. Mr. Garvin responded such installations went through the Board of Health or the Building Department. Mr. Finnicum mentioned the Town could decide to become a zero carbon town and could explore further options.

Natural Resources

Mr. Kelly noted three major issues had been identified:

- Protecting water quality for both surface waterbodies and groundwater (drinking water).
- Natural resources, such as farmland, open spaces, and forests; contributing to the historical landscape of Sudbury.
- Minimizing impacts to important wildlife and natural resources.

Mr. Finnicum noted management was the most important component in this area. He asked about management of forests regarding downed trees and spoke of proactive management aspects. Ms. Dretler indicated management was included in the MVP discussion. Mr. Carty spoke of the managed burn at the Hop Brook Conservation Land several years ago. Mr. Garvin detailed the history of Sudbury's open farmlands transforming into forests. He stated turning the forested land back to open lands/farmland could be a consideration.

Ms. Dretler noted she did not see the Sudbury Water District included in the draft document.

Mr. Henkels stated recently acquired Town properties over the last ten years should be reviewed daily and be an ongoing task. He felt this should not just be for inclusion into the Master Plan, as it would be helpful to know the number of people utilizing the trails, etc. He noted that as a member of the Conservation Commission, he had observed there was little community involvement. Ms. Dretler suggested identifying improved communication methods and outlining what was available in the Town. She asserted such outreach might lead to increased land stewardship involvement and Mr. Henkels agreed.

Mr. Hincks suggested adding an outline topic regarding facilitating the use of natural resources. Mr. Kelly suggested including such a topic into the Natural Resources section of the draft. Mr. Garvin mentioned the value of related Community Preservation Act funding. Mr. Henkels questioned if future open space Town acquisitions could be on a targeted list for such funding.

Open Space and Recreation

- The Open Space and Recreation Plan, which is currently being updated, documents the Town's goals and objectives for local open space and recreational needs, and how the Town will meet those needs. The Master Plan should be consistent with the plan.
- Conservation areas may benefit from management plans to address ongoing maintenance and upkeep of trails, addressing invasive species, and mitigating user conflicts.
- Connecting open space areas, parks, schools, and historic resources with residential areas for walking/biking will increase recreational opportunities and access to these resources.
- There are opportunities to increase programming at conservation areas.
- The number of conservation and recreation areas that are accessible needs to increase, including amenities such as restrooms, benches, and accommodations for the visually impaired.
- The Town lacks public areas for gathering such as picnic areas or spaces for concerts and other community events.
- Maintenance and improvements to existing outdoor recreation facilities is needed to address field conditions and drainage problems.
- The Town lacks a process or methodology for acquiring conservation land and educating residents about how decisions are made.
- Land stewardship of Town conservation land is needed, either through Town staff or volunteers.
- There is a growing demand for organized adult recreation, particularly team sports. Space at existing Town fields is scheduled at capacity and access to school fields is limited.

Mr. Garvin commented turf and lighting for fields were considerations. Mr. Kelly noted many citizens had differing opinions regarding those aspects.

Ms. Guthy commented about the accessibility aspect when accessing such natural resources, stressing people age into disability.

Mr. Hincks inquired if the first bullet point was inclusive of the most recent Town land acquisition. Mr. Kelly stated the plan would include a list of priority parcels.

Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi recognized the value of turf fields and lighting, but reiterated the Town had purchased acres of land which should also be investigated for potential usage as grass fields in consideration of the problems associated with turf.

Mr. Karustis commented he was concerned the coverage in the Master Plan would not be specific enough and several more focused plans might be beneficial. Mr. Hincks agreed.

Historic and Cultural Resources

- There were about 300 historic buildings and structures outside of Town's local historic districts, spread throughout the community. These buildings have no protection, but not all need to be preserved.

- More preservation tools need to be available.
- More education is needed for local decision makers around the value of historic resources.
- Town-owned historic buildings need improvements; however, the challenge is weighing modernization while keeping the historic integrity of the structure. Of immediate concern is the Town Hall.
- There is little awareness of cultural resources and opportunities in Sudbury (see communications issues in Town Services).

Mr. Hincks affirmed the Historic and Cultural Resources section continues to be a very important part of the Master Plan, and noted the Historical Commission might need some guidance, especially in consideration of Zoning Bylaws. He asked where the Historical Commission charter ended and the Master Plan charter began. Mr. Kelly stated typical issues in the Master Plan would include public education, discussion regarding permit review processes (what is working and what is not working, or needs to be added), specific tools of the Town (such as a Scenic Roads Bylaw), Demolition Delay Bylaw, Community Preservation Act funding toward historic preservation, and facilities (especially in a town like Sudbury). Mr. Carty stated it was most important to make the distinction between private and public buildings when considering historic resources. He added the vast majority of some 300 historic buildings are private and opined about how the Town could help with the maintenance of those private historic buildings. Mr. Karustis queried about offering the owners of such private buildings some incentive, as is done in the Town of Weston. Mr. Hincks stated he felt such considerations should be covered in the Master Plan.

Mr. Hardenbergh reiterated the importance of having a preservation plan for such structures. Mr. Carty recognized the need for turning a list into a plan to help save the historic buildings. Mr. Karustis asserted having several subplans would be helpful and the inclusion of such a list would be of great benefit. Ms. Moravec noted a Master Plan and a town-wide preservation plan could help with the articulation of these areas, including incentives for property owners as well as properties the Town might wish to acquire.

Mr. Garvin suggested that going forward with the joint meeting, each member could identify their own two highest priorities. Mr. Hincks stated the ultimate test of prioritization was actionability. Ms. Moravec suggested various exercises that would help with that process.

Mr. Henkels mentioned follow-through and function. Mr. Sugrue commented about the timing of various projects (smaller projects and larger projects) and funding. Mr. Hincks noted it took a significant amount of time to change Zoning Bylaws and recommended continuing with such changes as had been done with the Town's Overlay Zoning Districts.

Ms. Roberts asked if any local communities had undertaken climate control goals. She noted Concord had undertaken some very ambitious goals in 2017 which called for a 25% reduction in town-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, as well as establishing a Sustainability Department and director. Ms. Roberts detailed other related goals undertaken by the Town of Concord.

At 8:35 p.m., Mr. Garvin closed the Planning Board meeting.

At 8:35 p.m., Mr. Sugrue closed the MPSC meeting.