



# Town of Sudbury

## Master Plan Steering Committee

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### MINUTES

MAY 17, 2019 AT 8:45 AM

POLICE STATION MEETING ROOM, 75 HUDSON ROAD, SUDBURY, MA

**Members Present:** Vice-Chair Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi, At-Large; Nathalie Forssell, At-Large; Dan Carty, Board of Selectmen; Janie Dretler, Board of Selectmen; Pat Guthy, Commission on Disability; Ellen Joachim, Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School Committee; Lisa Kouchakdjian, Sudbury Public School Committee; Amy Lepak, Sudbury Housing Authority; Robert May, Council on Aging; John Riordan, Zoning Board of Appeals; Dick Williamson, Park and Recreation Commission; and Fred Taylor, Historic Districts Commission.

**Members Absent:** Chair John Sugrue, At-Large; Jan Hardenbergh, At-Large; Dave Henkels, Conservation Commission; and Lee Swanson, Historic Districts Commission.

**Others Present:** John Hincks, Planning Board; Adam Duchesneau, Director of Planning & Community Development; Beth Suedmeyer, Environmental Planner; Nate Kelly, Principal, Horsley Witten Group; Krista Moravec, Senior Planner, Horsley Witten Group; Fabiola Alikpokou, Staff Planner, Horsley Witten Group, and Tom Dworetzky, Project Manager, Camoin Associates.

**Public in Attendance:** Leon Goodman; Jan Costa, Historical Commission; Taryn Trexler, Historical Commission; and Jennifer Roberts, Board of Selectmen.

### **Welcome**

Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi opened the meeting at 8:47 a.m.

### **Regular Meeting Business**

#### *Approval of Minutes*

Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi motioned to approve the minutes of April 12, 2019. Mr. Riordan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

#### *Administrative Report*

There were no administrative reports presented.

Ms. Moravec presented follow-up regarding the April 12, 2019 discussion of Town Census data and added the Federal Census was beneficial when looking at trends.

### **Baseline Report: Housing**

Ms. Moravec stated the working group had reviewed the chapter before distribution to the entire Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) and suggested additional information be provided by the Horsley Witten team.

Key housing findings included:

- Fewer housing options for smaller units - in consideration of younger families and retiring empty nesters.
- Fewer rentals – most Sudbury homes are owner-occupied.
- Increased cost in housing – 11% increase since 2014.
- Increase in Cost Burdened Households (“house burden”) where a household’s housing costs exceed 30% of its income. Statistics indicated retirees experienced the most “house burden.”

Mr. Carty noted these baseline housing and economic reports represent a factual picture. He inquired if the Meadow Walk and Coolidge housing development numbers were included in the figures. Ms. Moravec responded work was being conducted on the reports in consideration of these developments.

Mr. Carty inquired about the neighboring towns affordable housing statistics.

Ms. Roberts stated she wanted to see neighboring town comparatives (Weston, Wellesley, Andover, etc.) with regard to location and attributes, from a housing perspective and from an economic development perspective. Ms. Moravec indicated this information could be pulled from the federal website and analysis of those comparisons would require additional research.

Regarding the comparison topic, Ms. Dretler suggested it would be beneficial to make comparisons to those towns similar to Sudbury when considering population, tax revenue, lack of public transportation, and proximity to Boston.

Mr. Hincks indicated it would be important to define exactly what the comparative criteria would be. He suggested criterion for study should include towns that are 20 to 30 miles away from Boston with a similar population.

Mr. Carty suggested first comparing the adjoining towns with more similar composition/attributes and then a second comparison to towns such as Dover, Weston, Wellesley and Andover.

Ms. Moravec stated two categories of comparison would be helpful in determining Master Plan strategies.

Mr. Carty noted the number of renters in Sudbury had increased since 2015 and referred to the date of various graphs within the draft Housing Baseline Report.

Ms. Lepak affirmed the average rent would be increasing with the development of the newer rental units in town.

Ms. Moravec noted that with regard to the Town's Housing Production Plan and its Subsidized Housing Inventory requirements, the Town partners with the Sudbury Housing Authority, the Housing Trust, and the Regional Housing Services Office to help monitor and plan for the Town's affordable housing needs.

Ms. Moravec stressed the importance of the Town meeting its Chapter 40B requirements moving forward. She added Sudbury had a good track record based on the numbers and indicated its 10% affordable housing mandate should be sustained over the next several years.

Mr. Williamson asked about new housing projections with regard to the new Master Plan. Ms. Moravec stated new projections would not be made, but there would be acknowledgement this investigation had been conducted.

Ms. Moravec asked if any MPSC members were surprised by the numbers presented in the draft Housing Baseline Report. Ms. Lepak asked whether Wingate and the other nursing homes were counted in Census housing unit count. Mr. May questioned if the residents of these nursing home/health care facilities were considered residents of Sudbury. The answer to Mr. May's question was affirmative. Mr. Dworetsky explained the Census separates the population in two categories; one is the household population and the other is the group population, which includes the nursing home population, college dorms, and other institutional populations which do not live in housing units. Ms. Lepak noted this meant nursing home residents were not included in the rental unit numbers. Mr. Dworetsky affirmed the statement.

Ms. Guthy asked if there was available data which provided the number of handicapped accessible units in the community. Ms. Moravec stated there was data on residents with disabilities and offered to research that aspect further. Mr. Kelly noted the Town Assessor's office may have those numbers.

Mr. Carty felt the MPSC should not become too prescriptive and read the following from the draft Housing Baseline Report: "Sudbury has reached and exceeded its 10% affordable housing goal, but still must maintain and improve upon its affordable housing inventory." Mr. Carty noted there was a big difference between maintaining and improving the housing inventory. Ms. Moravec acknowledged the message.

### **Baseline Report: Economic Development**

Mr. Dworetsky referred to the "Town of Sudbury – Economic Development" document dated May 2019 as assembled by Camoin Associates. Mr. Dworetsky stated the report reflected a baseline status and was not prospective or suggestive about recommending what should or could be done in this area. He indicated the report attempted to look at how various issues (including housing and transportation) impact economic development.

The "Town of Sudbury - Economic Development" document included the aspects of Purpose, Economic Trends, Employment, and Municipal Fiscal Indicators.

*Current Economic Situation:* Mr. Dworetsky noted there are 7,300 jobs in town, with fewer jobs per resident when compared to the region and a 3% job growth rate in 2008, which is slower than the region – which is 11% in Middlesex County and the Boston region.

*Businesses and Employment:* Mr. Dworetsky affirmed that in 2018 nearly 20% of Sudbury's jobs were in the health care and social assistance fields, with 1,400 total jobs (over half in child care services).

Professional Services, Government (schools), and the Retail Trade were the second largest category of employment in the town. In terms of size and number of jobs in the community, education, training, and library occupations reflected some 1,097 jobs. Mr. Dworetsky stated the next tiers in Sudbury employment, included: architectural, engineering, and related services, followed by; computer systems design and related services, followed by; employment at town restaurants and other eating places.

*Business and Employment (2013-2018):* Mr. Dworetsky included professional services, child day care, fitness and recreation, restaurants, education, and elderly services as the prime areas of job growth in the town. He noted manufacturing represented a declining sector and pointed out the decline with Raytheon as example.

*Earnings for Workers and Residents:* Mr. Dworetsky stated the median earnings for jobs in Sudbury was \$44,300, reflective of jobs in day care, nursing homes, education, food service, and retail. He indicated median earnings of Sudbury residents was \$81,609 reflective of employment in the areas of professional services, management, finance, insurance, and real estate. Mr. Dworetsky noted there was a mismatch between resident skills and employment opportunities in town, which accounted for the high commuting rate. He highlighted that 90% of resident employees work in locations out of Sudbury, and 88% of employees working in Sudbury, do not live in Sudbury.

*Major Employment Centers:* Mr. Dworetsky stated most of the town's employment centers were clustered along the Route 20/Boston Post Road corridor and the North Road area, school sites, and Town Hall area composed the secondary recognized employment sites.

*Top Employers:* Mr. Dworetsky referred to the report graphs and noted Sudbury Farms was at the top of the list. He indicated the most popular employers were grocery stores, schools, and nursing care facilities, (inclusive of full and part-time employment, with the exception of seasonal employment).

*Municipal Fiscal Health:* Mr. Dworetsky emphasized the Town's leading revenue source was its residential tax base, with a 91% tax levy. He noted residential property in town continued to dictate new growth (78% in 2019). Mr. Dworetsky spoke of the split tax rate, lower with the residential rate when compared to the commercial rate. He added Sudbury's rates fall in the middle point when compared to neighboring towns' tax rates. Mr. Dworetsky detailed budget and expenditure aspects.

Ms. Lepak inquired about agricultural employment, which did not appear in the report and questioned the employment numbers for J.P. Bartlett's Wholesale Greenhouse, Cavicchio Greenhouses, and other similar agricultural companies in Sudbury. Mr. Dworetsky noted the agricultural data was not well-defined in the report and the Horsley Witten team could investigate the topic further. Ms. Dretler asked about other companies not listed on the report chart.

Ms. Moravec acknowledged there were various entries in the draft Economic Development Baseline Report that needed further study and follow-up.

Ms. Dretler suggested making a distinction between companies that have a corporate address in Sudbury but actually employ those outside of the town..

Mr. Hincks stated a comparison of the earnings of neighboring towns when compared to Sudbury, would make for an interesting study.

Ms. Roberts pointed out the connection between residents working outside of the town and gridlock traffic conditions. Ms. Suedmeyer commented Sudbury restaurants are faced with the challenge of securing employees in consideration of heavy traffic and very limited public transportation options.

Ms. Roberts recommended reaching out to the Chamber of Commerce regarding the employment/traffic issue. Mr. Dworetsky stated he had reached out to the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Carty noted the Transportation Committee had been working with the Chamber of Commerce regarding this topic and would follow-up.

Ms. Costa mentioned the benefits of remote employment possibilities. Mr. Dworetsky responded he was unaware of any such data tracking for that aspect. Ms. Kouchakdjian offered to gather remote employment data from within the Sudbury Public School system.

Mr. May suggested the Town should provide technological incentives such as extended WiFi, to encourage businesses to locate in the community. Mr. Hincks agreed small businesses might be attracted to Sudbury by such offered incentives, especially in consideration of shared office spaces.

Mr. Dworetsky reiterated that when comparing other Town budgets and expenditures, the school system and per pupil spending is the lead determinant.

Mr. Carty suggested adding another seven communities to the comparative study.

Ms. Costa asked if the economic development piece examined the rate of commercial space vacancies. Mr. Dworetsky stated that the proposed plan included speaking with local real estate brokers for that information.

Ms. Roberts felt one of the Town's economic challenges was the absence of a sewer/wastewater treatment plan along Route 20/Boston Post Road and asked where that piece would fit into the analysis. Mr. Kelly noted the sewerage aspect fit within various areas, such as the environment – management of wastewater, economics in regard to capacity and housing, depending upon what the goals are.

Ms. Moravec added the sewer aspect would be examined by the MPSC within the Town services piece and the Town's Department of Public Works (DPW) was navigating that effort.

Ms. Roberts commented on the aesthetic consideration of the Route 20/Boston Post Road corridor and the fact that the Route 20/Boston Post Road area is not walkable because there is the absence of sidewalks. She stressed that safety, appearance, and connectivity; would make for a better outcome. Mr. Dworetsky replied that aspect reflects "quality of place." Ms. Roberts added the preferred quality of residential areas did not match the existing conditions and appearance of the commercial areas of the community.

Mr. Williamson noted the Meadow Walk development was an interesting addition to town because a sewer system was constructed there. Mr. Hincks stated there were design considerations that could be made with or without sewer. A group discussion took place and Mr. Carty noted that Meadow Walk represents the first ideal planning model for the Route 20/Boston Post Road corridor.

Mr. May stated the prime theme of the Livable Sudbury Report was the implantation and advancement of an age-friendly community. He indicated he wanted the team to incorporate more of this concept when considering planning proposals going forward. Ms. Moravec responded the team was on track with some of those findings. She noted the study within the second volume of the proposed Master Plan strategy

would utilize the Livable Sudbury Report recommendations. Ms. Moravec felt the presented baseline reporting data definitely kept the Livable Sudbury principals in mind.

Mr. Carty asked for clarification regarding the 90% out-commuting and the 88% in-commuting concept. Mr. Dworetsky stated 90% of the people who work and live in Sudbury do not work in Sudbury, and 88% of the jobs in Town are employing people that do not live in Sudbury.

Mr. Hincks asked if the Town wanted to establish more of a commercial base. He wondered if there were realistic strategies that could help achieve that goal. Mr. Dworetsky suggested attracting net revenue/positive type developments (commercial or housing that does not increase the school child population) would add revenue to the budget without adding considerable expense. Mr. Hincks reiterated that great care must be taken when defining the objectives, and senior housing was a good example.

Ms. Moravec noted the expenses associated with maintaining schools was increasing, whether or not the school population was increasing.

Ms. Dretler stated an increase in senior housing might not affect the school budget, but it did affect the budget in regard to the amenities and services seniors were seeking. Ms. Moravec acknowledged transportation would be among those sought services.

Mr. Williamson indicated the amount of space allocated to the senior population at the Fairbank Community Center was miniscule when compared to the space provided to the rest of the population at the Center. Mr. Hincks stressed that in consideration of the Master Plan, the clarity of the objectives for the town would detail the value of investment in the Community Center.

Mr. May initiated a discussion regarding budget appropriation considerations. Mr. Hincks affirmed the short-term and long-term objectives must be clearly outlined, and there must be a balance in strategies. Mr. May suggested consideration be given to which Town properties have a zero cash flow for the Town. He suggested hospitals were a great incentive for a community and indicated conservation lands did not appear to increase home values. Mr. Duchesneau mentioned the importance of a quality of life factor which could not, necessarily, be quantified.

Ms. Moravec stated the need the town currently has for studios, and small one- and two-bedroom units. She noted there were less than 100 small rental condos (studios and one or two-bedroom units) that were available to people under the age of 55 at market rate pricing. Mr. Dworetsky agreed smaller rental units were revenue generators and should be given appropriate priority.

Ms. Trexler asked if there were benchmarks for efficient communities. Mr. Kelly stated there were communities which had shifted their focus from a traditional Master Plans to sustainability focused plans. He explained these communities were not benchmarking themselves against other communities, but were focusing on post-planning indicators and listing items to benchmark themselves against.

Mr. Riordan reiterated an important point was the direct link between open space and economic development in Sudbury. He indicated one half of the Town was already composed of open space, which did not allow for much economic development.

Ms. Suedmeyer noted lands need to be reviewed to determine which are actual conservation lands/wetlands, and which might serve a higher financial purpose and how they might do so.

Ms. Moravec suggested the land use map might help to determine those needs and land use decisions would be a tool to come out of the Master Plan.

Ms. Guthy spoke of accessory dwelling units in the community and questioned how many such units were currently in town. She suggested it might be a worthy concept to pursue. Mr. May noted Sudbury was one of the few neighboring towns which allowed accessory dwellings. Ms. Moravec confirmed an accessory dwelling unit could either be part of the principal building or within a detached structure on a property. Mr. Duchesneau noted accessory dwelling units were only allowed by Special Permit and the Building department could supply the actual number of such units in the community.

Mr. Riordan indicated approximately eight to ten Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) were presented for Special Permitting each year and were usually allocated for elderly parents. He added there were some square footage requirements, but it was not a difficult permitting process and helped maintain a diverse community, as well as helping to keep families together.

### **Public Outreach Update**

Ms. Moravec noted MPSC members had been responding to the Meeting In A Box activity. She detailed meetings within the individual groups and suggested an end of June target date for the commencement of the op-ed series in the Town Crier.

### **Public Outreach: May 22, 2019 Public Forum**

Ms. Moravec stated edits had been made to the Master Plan Public Forum presentations. She noted registration for the forum would take place at 6:30 p.m., with the forum beginning promptly at 7:00 p.m. on May 22, 2019 at the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School cafeteria. Ms. Moravec reiterated the design of the forum would be group discussion formatting.

Ms. Lepak asked if it was acceptable to share the Forum Design & Logistics outline with community groups or other committees. Ms. Moravec felt those groups would get more benefit out of the topics listed by attending the forum and suggested composing a draft agenda to share with those groups with more description, such as the general themes to be discussed. Ms. Moravec stated there would be a follow-up forum survey which would also include details about the results of those survey questions.

Mr. May stated it would be great to have a daytime follow-up summary forum meeting. Ms. Moravec indicated the follow-up summary meeting would not be an exact duplicate of the forum, but would summarize findings for a smaller group.

Ms. Dretler asked if there would be a child activity at the forum. Ms. Moravec stated there would be informal activities for kids, such as coloring and provisions for an area for children who might attend with parents.

Ms. Joachim asked if any forum announcements had gone out to Parent-Teacher Organizations. Mr. Duchesneau suggested coordinating such announcements. School committee members discussed circulating the announcement to their prospective groups.

**Next Meeting**

Ms. Moravec stated the next MPSC meeting would be held on June 21, 2019.

Ms. Asbedian-Ciaffi motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 a.m. Mr. Riordan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.