



TOWN OF HINGHAM
South Hingham Study Group
210 CENTRAL STREET
HINGHAM, MA 02043

Meeting Minutes: 5/10/16

Members Present: Judith Sneath-Chair, Paul Healey, Dick Cook, Jerry Seelen, Sue Sullivan, and Marc Lucas

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m. and provided an overview of the agenda. She noted that she had recently met with staff and decided that it was time to wrap up the work of the Group. She envisioned a report that summarized everything presented to the Group. The final product could be extremely broad, and perhaps be called an interim report. She asked if any members objected to the idea. Mr. Cook said he believed that the Group's work revealed a number of issues, particularly related to infrastructure. He would like to continue the discussion to explore these issues in greater detail. He believes more could be done on the transportation plan if funds were made available. He also believes that there is more to understand about water capacity. Ms. Sullivan said that the HDIC often considers tax revenue from development, but she believes it would be helpful to better understand the projected fiscal impact on the municipality in terms of servicing development. Mr. Cook said that the proximity of this commercial/industrial area to residential neighborhoods concerns him. He would not want future development to devalue residential properties. He is uncomfortable with a preliminary review of the issues. The Chair asked whether the Group could summarize what it has learned to date and make recommendations as to what else needs to be examined to support certain levels of development. Mr. Seelen suggested that their work had revealed significant constraints and the Group could learn how to overcome these barriers. He reminded members that TM said it wanted to see more commercial tax base in South Hingham. After identifying opportunities and challenges, the Group could then recommend whether or not the Town should commit resources to solving the issues. Mr. Seelen said he saw little risk of inadvertently stumbling into catastrophic circumstances. The Chair said the consensus is that the Group should start to summarize. Mr. Cook said he heard otherwise and believes that other members share his concerns. Mr. Seelen said that the Group should be careful of providing a definitive direction, but he believed the Group had learned a lot and should synthesize that information.

The Chair said the charge of the group was really two-fold. First, Town Meeting wanted to encourage additional development in South Hingham. The Planning Board also needed to update the 2001 Master Plan and this Group could help with the South Hingham related components. Ms. Sullivan asked whether the Group could review the Zoning By-Law and make recommendations for potential changes. The Chair agreed that was possible.

She provided two approaches to completing the draft report. The group could review section by section or start with an overall idea for the area. Ms. Sullivan said she would like to put some parameters on future development. A discussion followed about the amount of development permitted by zoning.

The Chair said she would like to meet more frequently over the next six months. She indicated that the group has been more technically focused, so development of an overall vision may be too broad for this group at this point. She would prefer to put together a document that summarizes what has been done to date. Mr. Lucas doesn't believe that the work has been cursory. He thinks that the Group is well equipped to identify challenges in the area. It would be a useful tool for both residents and developers. He suggested that the next group can create the vision.

The Chair invited member of the audience to comment.

Judy Kelly, 19 Harvest Lane, suggested that the MAPC may not have had enough information to make recommendations. She believes that surveys and meeting participants may not have understood that additional tax revenue may result in greater traffic or water restrictions during the Master Plan Update process.

Buzz Constable, AW Perry, said the group had identified the constraints well. He feels that a description of limiting factors and identification of some of the opportunities to overcome these factors would be a helpful tool. He knows it is a malleable market and there will be changes, particularly to the existing 15,000 SF buildings in the industrial park, which are outdated. A partnership with developers and the town will be required in order to evolve.

Edna English, 36 Gardner Street, asked whether the Chair would consider including resident statements within the report. The Chair confirmed that public input had been documented in meeting minutes throughout the process, but there may not be individual chapters for residents.

2. Review South Hingham Master Plan Goals and Vision Statement

3. Discussion of Next Steps

The Group then discussed next steps. Members decided to begin with the three big infrastructure issues: sewer, water, and traffic. A brief discussion of goals followed. In response to a comment about Shipyard development and traffic in North Hingham, a member noted that traffic has grown, but also indicated that it has not been the tremendous hardship that was initially assumed by residents.

The Group decided to review a draft wastewater report in advance of the next meeting. Members would like to summarize the information collected and detail the obstacles and opportunities in each subject area. Each would come prepared to discuss what would be the best approach to presenting information for the next meeting.

4. Upcoming meeting schedule

The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 7, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

5. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.