

Town of Hingham



MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 17, 2020 at 7:00 PM

Remote Meeting information

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/join>

Call in Number: 1-929-205-6099

Meeting ID: 895 0198 5797

Present Remotely: Gordon Carr, Paul Healey, Nancy Kerber, Liza O'Reilly, Adrienne Ramsey, Deirdre Anderson, Liz Klein, Michael Kranzley, Jerry Seelen, Donna Smallwood, Bryce Blair, Vcevy Strelakovsky, Hans von der Luft. Also present: Mary Savage-Dunham.

Master Plan Committee (MPC) Chairman, Gordon Carr called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and welcomed the Committee. He read the following statement into the record "This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to an Order issued by the Governor of Massachusetts dated March 12, 2020 Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording." No person present indicated that they wanted to record the meeting. Mr. Carr then called the roll and turned the meeting over to Judi Barrett.

Judi Barrett, Daphne Politis and Alexis Lanzolotta were in attendance from the consulting team. Daphne Politis then began discussion of public facilities and broad discussion questions with the committee. Ms. Politis explained the intent of the discussion questions is to clarify questions for the consultants and help them move towards recommendations. The group discussed the proposed public safety complex in the warrant for Town Meeting. Dispatch will remain at Town Hall and Police and Fire will move to 335 Lincoln Street. There are currently 3 fire stations: Central, South and North. Should there be a new fire station in South Hingham and what is an appropriate trade off for the development of South Hingham? The group discussed the need to have developers provide mitigation to the town for infrastructure or public safety needs to offset the impact of development. The group felt a new or additional fire station was needed in South Hingham but did not take a position about if Hingham should have 3 fire stations or 4 fire stations overall. The existing stations are undersized and outdated. The 3 station model is thought by some to not be able to work well in Hingham to

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provide adequate response time to South Hingham. The group then discussed the opportunity to add 10,000 square feet to the senior center if the public safety complex advances. The committee discussed the recent trend to construction of intergenerational centers and what the renovated space that the public safety groups vacate in town hall should be used for. The group discussed the Library and their strategic plan for an addition and renovations. The group also discussed how to move forward and prioritize all these competing community needs given the existing needs for school renovations also. The Master Plan Committee (MPC) discussed how services and consumer demands are really in flux now due to the current circumstances we find ourselves in with regard to the public health emergency. The MPC discussed that it might be prudent to invest in services or technology and not buildings. Increased collaboration with private agencies and pursuing more vibrant public private partnerships as a way to provide services without duplicating existing services available in town. The MPC also discussed the need for better and more coordinated capital planning in town and heard about a previous proposal for a permanent building committee. Increased coordination as well as improved facilities management and maintenance is a need in town, both on the general government side and with schools.

Judi Barrett then discussed the housing draft document with the committee. The discussion began broadly discussing affordability and improving access to housing choice and also talking about housing form and diversity of housing form in town. The group discussed the missing middle of housing units which are the units that are not large apartment buildings and not single family housing units. Affordability doesn't dominate the housing element in the Master Plan and the housing plan that is underway will focus more on affordability issues than this broader document will. The MPC then discussed what the role of the government should be in providing housing for different groups, and also fair housing questions. The MPC discussed "big A affordable housing", which are the deed restricted affordable units that are counted on the State's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) and which the Town has a legal obligation to provide, and "little A affordable housing", which is housing that is or may be more affordable as a result of the type, density or form of the housing unit itself and not due to deed restriction. The "little A affordable housing" tends to provide the missing middle housing stock and more fair housing opportunities. This "little A affordable housing" also will result in greater diversity in town. Land prices and house prices were discussed too. The group discussed the Affordable Housing Trust and how to capitalize it and also how the town can continue to add affordable units to the SHI and stay above 10% so Hingham has more control over proposed 40b projects. There was discussion about the use of CPA funds for affordable housing. CPA funds are sometimes given to the Hingham Affordable Housing Trust (HAHT) for particular projects, but they also need funding for unanticipated opportunities that may arise.

. The MPC discussed teardowns and the trend of building large houses on small lots. This is an affordability matter but it also does change the nature and fabric of the

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neighborhood too. The MPC discussed that economic diversity now is less in town than it used to be years ago. Now teachers and public safety officials frequently don't live in town. There can't be opposition to every project that comes in if the town truly wants to commit to dealing with economic diversity and diversity of housing forms in town. The MPC then discussed encouraging higher density multi-family housing as well as preserving some of the "little A affordable housing" stock we already have, and then where does the missing middle fit in? The group noted that the town needs to programmatically protect the SHI units we have which affords us the luxury to develop the "big A affordable housing" units in a form that we feel fits the community. For small a housing the group felt we should have a toolbox of options at our disposal and look at doing whatever we can do in all aspects to encourage different kinds of housing development in the spaces we have available. The group discussed that stating the implications of the existing land use policies should be at least discussed in the Master Plan document because so many of these matters are inter related.

Mr. Carr then noted the time and his goal to be mindful of the clock and stated that the group would be meeting again next week. As there was no other business the meeting adjourned at 9:21 pm.