

STERLING PLANNING BOARD MINUTES – January 9, 2019

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**Present:** John Santoro ~ Chairman  
Michael Pineo ~ Vice Chair & E.D.C. Member  
David Shapiro ~ Clerk  
Russ Philpot ~ ANR Agent  
Craig Miller ~ Member  
Betty Kazan ~ Administrative Assistant  
Domenica Tatasciore, Town Planner

Mr. Santoro called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in Room 202 of the Butterick Building. He announced that the meeting was being video recorded by the Sterling/ Lancaster Cable TV and audio recorded by the Planning Board.

### Minutes

Mr. Pineo moved that the Board approved the minutes of December 12, 2018 as corrected. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed with four in favor and one abstain (Mr. Shapiro was not in attendance for this meeting).

### 7:09 p.m.

#### Master Plan Discussion ~ Arden Sonnenberg

Ms. Sonnenberg, Chairman of the Master Plan Committee presented the Board with a Progress Report of this citizen focus group. She further explained that the Committee is learning about the elements of a Master Plan as set for in MGL Chapter 41, § 81D. Group meetings are led by Barrett Consulting.

An informative discussion was had between the Board and the members of the Master Plan Committee with the Board being informed on a number of points regarding their operations, membership, goals, and what the Committee has accomplished to date. Among the points made by the Committee were:

    Their membership varies from 15 to as many as 25 people but they've been averaging 15 people at their meetings.

    They consider themselves an "informal committee" which is why they have not kept minutes of their meetings – All minutes of their activities to date are the presentations provided by their consultant The Barrett Planning Group. This is true for all their agenda.

    They consider themselves a "focus group" who are learning about the Master Plan process and the requirements for a Master Plan as defined in MGL Ch. 41 §81D. This somewhat confused the Board as the definition of "Focus Group" contradicts what the committee is and does.

    They clearly stated they will not be writing any part of a master plan. They are simply gathering information on what might be needed or included in a master plan which will then be written by a "master plan committee to be created by the BOS later." They see their job as simply gathering information and then organizing it into the 9 requirements for a master plan as outlined in §81D. This confused the Board somewhat – particularly the point about another master plan committee writing the plan.

The Board complimented them on their apparent mastery of §81D as it is mentioned often throughout all their presentations. Everyone agreed it is the foundation of a master plan. After

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some time, some committee members commented that they might not be “intimately familiar” with §81D.

The Board brought to everyone’s attention that MGL Ch. 41 §81D clearly states the master plan is the authority of the Planning Board and nobody else, certainly not the Selectmen. Mr. Philpot commented “it’s the very first sentence of 81D.” They recognized the committee are caught in the middle as they have been created by and answer to the B.O.S. and did not want people such as themselves to be disappointed because of this, especially after working so long and hard.

The Board agreed to allow the master plan committee to update them on a quarterly basis.

This concluded a discussion with the Master Plan Committee of approximately 49 minutes.

Town Planner’s Report/Discussions

Ms. Tatasciore asked the MP group to stay as they may want to hear what she had to say.

Ms. Tatasciore announced the DLTA Fund Grants are open for applications for consulting services only. With the Board’s support she would like to apply for service grants for housing (40B), Transportation and Economic Development. Mr. Philpot inquired as to who the consultant reports to. Ms. Tatasciore stated she was unclear but that the Board of Selectmen would sign off and she would be the Project Manager/Liaison. He asked that she provide a short summation – not more than a page of bullet points for each – so that he understood what he was voting to support. The Board agreed they were in favor of the grants, supported the idea, but wanted to see a synopsis as Philpot had requested.

Ms. Tatasciore presented the Board with a list of Proposed Bylaw Amendments for 2019 Annual Town Meeting.

Ms. Tatasciore presented the Board with a list of proposed Special Permits issued by the ZBA and Planning Board.

Mr. Philpot offered to the Board that he would like Ms. Tatasciore to start investigating more opportunities to generate more non-residential tax revenue in this Town. Ms. Tatasciore stated that there have been discussions about this with the MP Committee and some of these will come out as goals. Philpot suggested the Board engage this process directly since it is an element of a Master Plan which is “our job” to do. The Board agreed to develop an outline of the process before moving forward. Mr. Philpot offered to draft a list of bullets and questions for this non-residential tax revenue project.

Ms. Tatasciore also encouraged a proposed vetting process to assist potential developers. She recommended the development of a land use group comprised mainly of various department heads to meet with perspective developers. Mr. Philpot commented that he has had personal experience with these types of groups in other towns and while a good idea felt a more valuable asset in this building would be – this Town needs a traffic director so applicants don’t feel they’re wasting their time just trying to learn who to speak with and in which order.

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Warrants & Payroll

Board Members reviewed a payroll warrant and a warrant for Haley & Ward expenses.

ZBA Notices

Mr. Santoro mentioned that there were ZBA notices for Board Members review.

Chairman's Report/Notices/Discussions

Sadowski Engineering

Mr. Santoro acknowledged a letter dated December 11, 2018, from David Sadowski, President, DBA Sadowski Engineering. The letter states there is an anonymous complaint letter, which erroneously discredits his company that is being circulated in Towns that he is currently working in or did so in the past. The letter suggests that his company is not legal and his employees are not professional. This is simply not true.

Sterling Town Center Improvement Project

Mr. Santoro acknowledged a letter from the Town Administrator who is looking for input and participation on a working group to develop a plan to upgrade, refresh, and improve the center of Town. The Board felt this was not applicable to them.

Administrative Assistant's Report/Notices

Ms. Kazan reported that she has received the MRPC FY20 Assessment in the amount of \$2,683.89 based on the population of the census. She also distributed a copy of a draft provided by MRPC explaining the Local Technical Assistance Program.

FY20 Budget Submission

The FY20 Budget was submitted to the Town Accountant.

Update on LKQ, Chocksett Road (Rock Breakers) Valve Installation

Mr. Santoro stated he received an email from Mr. Campobasso that the valve has been installed behind the LKQ building.

100 Leominster Road ~ Request for Extension

Mr. Santoro stated he had received a request for an extension of time to June 30, 2019, from Brian Milisci, Whitman & Bingham, on behalf of Chacharone Properties.

Mr. Philpot moved that the Board approve the request for extension to June 30, 2019, contingent upon a revision of Mr. Milisci, December 28, 2018 letter stating the 'good cause' reason (delays due to inclement winter weather). Mr. Pineo second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Planning Board Goals

The Board agreed to establish their goals by the end of February.

Scanning

Mr. Philpot offered to inquire on the cost of just scanning documents.

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Non-residential Tax Revenue

Mr. Philpot stated this should be a goal of the Board.

Subdivision Rules & Regulations

Mr. Philpot will come in to the office and review the paperwork that Ms. Kazan has been gathering.

Future Agenda Items

- ~ Discuss opportunity for non-residential tax revenue (Mr. Philpot)
- ~ Finalize participation of DLTA

9:40 P.M. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. Philpot moved that the Board adjourn. Mr. Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVED BY:
