

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE
THE TOWN OF STERLING**

**June 20 2019
Town Hall, Room 205**

Members Present:

Blaine Bershad, Services & Facilities Topic Co-Chair
Maureen Cranson, Board of Selectmen Co-Representative
Bob Dumont, Services & Facilities Topic Co-Chair
Jim French, Natural & Cultural Resources Topic Co-Chair
Angela Grattaroti, Housing Topic Co-Chair
Rose Koven, Natural & Cultural Resources Topic Co-Chair
Jed Lindholm, Circulation/Transportation Topic Co-Chair
Dick Maki, Circulation/Transportation Topic Co-Chair
Patty Page, Land Use Topic Co-Chair
Liz Pape, Land Use Topic Co-Chair
Chuck Plaisted, Open Space & Recreation Co-Chair

Absent Members:

Marion Larson, Open Space & Recreation Co-Chair
Rob Protano, Housing Co-Chair
Julie Rusch, Economic Development Co-Chair

Staff Present:

Domenica Tatasciore, Town Planner

Consultant Staff Present:

Judi Barrett, Barrett Planning Group

The meeting commenced at 6:45 pm.

Organization

Mr. French made a motion to elect Patty Page as Chair of the Master Plan Committee. Ms. Cranson seconded the motion. Vote was unanimously all in favor.

Mr. Maki made a motion to elect Mr. Plaisted as Vice-Chair of the Master Plan Committee. Ms. Cranson seconded the motion. Vote was unanimously all in favor.

Ms. Cranson made a motion to elect Ms. Koven as Clerk. Ms. Page seconded the motion. Ms. Koven respectfully declined.

Ms. Cranson made a motion to elect Liz Pape as Clerk. Mr. French seconded the motion. Vote was unanimously all in favor.

Review of Public Participation

Ms. Barrett of Barrett Planning Group thanked the Committee for the successful Master Plan Open House that was held on April 4, 2019 to gather feedback on various topics relating to the Town's strengths, weaknesses and future potential. She was incredibly impressed with the large turnout of residents who attended and for all the volunteers who made it such an amazing event. She stated that she would provide a Dropbox of the meeting photos.

Ms. Barrett distributed copies of the Sterling Master Plan Community Engagement Report, which is a compilation of the information gathered at the Open House and the online survey results. She directed the Committee to page 11 of the Report which showed the feedback by Open House participants who were assigned a specific number of colored stickers to indicate agreement (green dots) or disagreement (red dots) with regards to specific statements.

Ms. Barrett also recommended that the completed Master Plan not exceed 100 pages in length. Having a concise document was recommended and preferred.

Next Steps/Moving Forward

Ms. Barrett recommended the following next steps for the Committee to undertake:

1. Vision Statement

She asked the question of what do we want this plan to do for our community. She encouraged the Committee to read the Sterling Master Plan Community Engagement Report and to use the information within to write draft vision statements and even recommended that perhaps a small subcommittee of the Master Plan would write it. Ms. Barrett offered that the Committee solicit community feedback for the Vision Statement through a variety of ways: get feedback from the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board; display poster boards with the Vision Statement around town to get feedback/support; and/or use Survey Monkey to get community feedback. The final action would be to officially vote and adopt the Vision Statement.

2. Master Plan Logo

Ms. Barrett recommended that a unique Master Plan logo be created to brand the endeavor and to use on the website and other media. She offered ways to create a logo, which include: using a local artist; a school art competition; and online graphic resources.

3. Organizing to Maintain Interest

Ms. Barrett recommended the following suggestions while awaiting grants/funding to undertake and complete the document:

- a. Question of the month – Pose a Master Plan-related question of the month on the website and people who signed up to receive town news will see the question. The Town of Littleton did this as part of their Master Plan process.
- b. Activities – Consider planning cookouts/block parties, neighborhood/clean up events and potluck suppers as a way to engage the community to participate and garner support and awareness.
- c. Public participation plan – Consider ways to provide outreach to the public.
- d. Map your alliances & affiliations – Committee members should list the different organizations/groups/clubs they belong to or participate in for outreach purposes.

- e. Talk to your neighbors – Use word of mouth communication to talk about the Master Plan to your neighbors.

4. *Be a Committee*

Ms. Barrett advised that the Master Plan Committee communicate openly, cooperate and work collaboratively with one another. She stressed the importance of people who are willing to work together and to stand by all committee decisions.

5. *Administrative questions to consider*

Questions of this type include the following: Who will take care of meeting agendas and minutes? Who will be the liaisons to other boards and commissions (i.e. Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Committee, etc.)? Who will provide periodic reports to these boards and commissions? Who will be the “go to” person for the press and media?

6. *Committee Do's & Don'ts*

Do's include: advise, outreach, research, core assessment at topic meetings, be the face of the project, review/comment on deliverables.

Don'ts include: write the plan, do all the research and analysis, try to be the consultant or staff, expect to always have the final say.

7. *Lessons Learned*

These include the following:

- Plan for implementation. Implementation planning starts at the beginning, not the end of the Master Plan process.
- The Committee needs people with different opinions, backgrounds and interests and most of all, a commitment to work together as a team.
- The Planning Board should remain present throughout the process, if possible, and the Committee continues to proceed with the plan development.

8. *Dealing with Skepticism*

Ms. Barrett offered up the following tips:

- A plan with concrete outcomes tells residents and business owners that their involvement matters.
- Combine master planning with social events.
- Encourage naysayers (try to understand the valid concerns and not the complaining).
- Invite people
- Outreach beyond the usual people.

9. *Public Trust*

This ensures that all meetings are open, there is a central clearinghouse for Master Plan information & that it is timely and maintain good recordkeeping (minutes and agenda in a binder).

10. Last Things

Ms. Barrett informed the Committee that the last deliverable item is the Committee Handbook – she will prepare a draft that will be reviewed and refined at the following meeting.

She shared some parting recommendations:

- It will be difficult to synchronize and manage all the topics at one time – focus on the process and use manageable doses or the Committee will lose people.
- Consider prioritizing the topics, note areas of concern that require deeper research.
- Send meeting minutes to the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board.
- Provide a report of the Master Plan Committee at Town Meeting and also have an information table outside to promote the Master Plan.
- The Planning Board has a statutory role for the adoption of the plan.
- Town Meetings will be used to get involved in the actual Master Plan implementation.
- The Master Plan Committee will be the policy architects for the Master Plan.

Next Meeting Date

After some discussion, the Committee agreed to meet the 3rd Thursday of the month. The next scheduled meeting will be held on July 18, 2019 at 6:30 pm.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Ms. Page and seconded by Ms. Cranson, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.