

## PLYMOUTH MASTER TASK GROUP

### **Master Plan Task Force**

Meeting: Meeting: via Zoom 8:30 a.m. – February 23, 2023

#### **Attendees:**

Members: Steve Bolotin - Chair, Kathy Castagna, Darice Wareham, Evelyn Strawn, Lorenzo Pizarro, Carl Donaldson, Don William and David Peck.

Staff: Lee Hartmann

#### **Guest:**

Birgitta Kuehn, Planning Board

Joanne Zygmunt, Old Colony Planning Council

Mr. Bolotin opened the meeting.

#### **Minutes:**

Mr. Peck moved to approve the minutes of February 9, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Castagna. The vote was unanimous 6-0-1.

### **Master Plan Scope of Work**

Mr. Bolotin supported using scenario planning as a basis for Plymouth's master plan update and the group's desire to use ideas such as social determinants for health as a basis for a master plan update.

He also mentioned that the Task Group should discuss a phased approach to funding.

Mr. Hartmann noted that the Finance Director has indicated that funding for the master plan update does not have to go through the Capital Outlay Process. There will be a great benefit since it will not be competing against the many other capital priorities of the town.

Ms. Zygmunt noted that she works in the comprehensive planning and sustainability department of OCPC. The Council covers 17 municipalities, and exists to help these communities plan for their present and future needs. Example work includes; age friendly planning for Duxbury, zoning bylaw amendments, Green Communities assistance, housing production plans, as well as assisting affordable housing trusts with action plans. The main source of funding for such projects is District Local Technical Assistance and grants.

Mr. Hartmann said that to be ready for the Fall Town Meeting we need to have a scope and estimated cost somewhere around the middle of July. He said he would contact the Finance Director to identify possible sources of money for the Fall 2023 Town Meeting and a potential amount.

Mr. Williams recommended seeking the highest amount of funding possible.

Ms. Strawn noted that there is an article on the Spring Special Town Meeting seeking \$167,000 for a Plymouth Center/North Plymouth traffic study. The request has a considerable amount of support. There seems to be more of an appetite in Plymouth to fund planning initiatives.

Ms. Castagna agreed with Ms. Strawn. She also supported a first phase process that includes baseline data collection and evaluation as well as goal setting using scenario-based planning.

Mr. Hartmann noted the planning initiatives currently underway and supported by the Planning Department's limited staff including: Master Plan update, MBTA Communities, Housing Production Plan, Cedarville Village Master Plan update, Historic District expansion, and the Open Space Plan update is coming soon.

Mr. Williams suggested looking for planning grants.

Mr. Peck looked into the master plan processes underway in Braintree and Barnstable. Braintree has 4 planning phases, Today & Yesterday (existing conditions), Braintree Tomorrow (public outreach), Achieving Braintree's Tomorrow (recommendations) and Plan Finalization and implementation.

Mr. Pizarro noted Plymouth's many existing planning documents. All of them include a range of implementation recommendations.

Mr. Hartmann noted that an existing conditions section of a master plan will look at previous plans and note consistencies and inconsistencies.

Ms. Strawn said that if money is available in the Fall we should request the entire amount needed for a complete master plan update. Funding in future years will continue to be a challenge.

Ms. Zygmunt likes the strategic approach discussed today. A master plan is the most important town document. It should be used by the Select Board, Planning Board staff and other boards.

She said that unfortunately, grant funding for master planning is a challenge. There are few opportunities for such funding and matching funds are always required.

She recommended obtaining all of the funding necessary for the update at one time. The public participation process will be the most expensive part of the update. If there are hot topics in Plymouth such as traffic, lead with it to gain support. East Bridgewater and Hanson, small communities, are both updating their master plans at a cost of \$125,000 each. Half a million dollars is not a lot of money for an update.

Mr. Hartmann noted that the scope set by this process is only a starting point to establish a cost. As Larissa Brown pointed out at the last meeting, consultants will outline their suggested public participation approach and the Town can select the consultant with the best ideas.

Mr. Peck noted that the Newburyport process is a 3 years and Barnstable is 2 ½ years.

Plymouth will be a 2 ½ to 3 year process. Braintree's public outreach portion of the master plan process cost \$200,000.

Ms. Kuehn asked how the Housing Production Plan and the MBTA Communities requirements fit into the master plan. Could that work be used as the housing component of Plymouth's master plan?

Mr. Hartmann said that the data collected will be useful, but the state requirements are very specific and geared toward state goals.

Ms. Zygmunt agreed. The data collection is important, but the recommendations for state required plans and will not necessarily be useful in the master planning process.

Mr. Bolotin discussed the scope: for phase 1:

1. Base line data collection
2. Public outreach using scenario planning

The Task Group agreed.

Mr. Peck noted that as part of this process we should still define the entire scope and approach to update.

Ms. Zygmunt said that to attract the best consultants they will want to be selected for the entire process. There is a short list regional consultant able to conduct scenario studies. A consultant with scenario building expertise will probably come from the New York, Washington D.C. or other large metropolitan area. The cost could be in excess of \$1,000,000

Mr. Hartmann said having full funding in hand will help but a contract could be awarded to a consulting team for the entire master plan process with future phases subject to town meeting appropriations.

Mr. Bolotin said that at our next meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup> we will look at scopes of work and begin drafting Plymouth's scope.

Ms. Castagna moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Peck. The vote was unanimous.

Approved: March 9, 2023