

Master Plan Update Committee 2023

Meeting Minutes

January 24, 2024, 6:30 PM

Third Floor Training Room

355 East Central Street

This meeting was available to be attended in person by all citizens. The meeting was also live-streamed by Franklin TV and shown on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29.

Recordings have been made available on Franklin TV's "Franklin Town Hall TV" YouTube channel. Additionally, citizens were able to participate remotely via phone and Zoom.

Committee Members in Attendance: *Chair Glenn Jones; Vice Chair Cobi Frongillo; Clerk Melanie Hamblen; Kenneth Elmore; Joe Halligan; Ginelle Lang; Gino Carlucci; Rick Power; Eric Steltzer; Meghann Hagen; Bruce Hunchard; Jennifer Williams;*

Committee Members Absent: *Erin Gallagher;*

Others in Attendance: *Bryan Taberner, DPCD Director; Maxwell Morrongiello; Amy Love, Town Planner; Jill Slankas, Barrett Planning Group LLC; Emily Farmer, BETA Group, Inc.; Lily Kramer, Barrett Planning Group LLC;*

Chair Glenn Jones called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Subcommittee Updates

Vice Chair Frongillo provided the CSFC subcommittee's update that they would be present at GATRA's public hearing at the Senior Center on January 25 at 2:30-4:00pm, where they would be available to answer questions and do a walk-around with Senior Center staff to have a discussion with them and collect input. Member Elmore updated Committee on the Housing and Economic Development subcommittee is trying to bring together individuals from different organizations and departments to gather information from them in regard to forming the subcommittee's Goals and Assessments. Member Carlucci discussed how the Sustainability subcommittee continued reviewing survey results and planning their outreach events, saying that they have had a session at the Farmers Market back in December and are planning a session at the Senior Center for February 15 and March 9 during office hours. Member Hagen provided an update of the OSRP and NCHR subcommittee confirming public hearing times, possibly on Saturdays depending on if weekend hearings are allowed, and if so then they would start on February 3 at the Library. Director Taberner weighed in to say that having the weekend events would have to be called something other than public hearings to avoid any issues that could be present. Member Hagen also said that comments have been received back for the Open Space and Recreation Plan that will be shared at their next subcommittee meeting. Member Lang provided an update for the Land Use and Zoning subcommittee is planning to work with the Planning Department on their goals and outreach plan at their next meeting January 29.

Chair Jones then said it is one of his goals this year to keep communications smooth and clear. The Committee then clarified that February 14 will be the next Committee meeting date.

Review Final draft Inventory & Assessment Report

Chair Jones confirmed that everyone on the Committee had been able to review the report in their own time, and asked to confirm it is in fact the final version. Ms. Slankas answered that additional requested data has been incorporated into the report since the last iteration, and the Consultants are present to discuss any remaining questions from the Committee after they have reviewed the changes, at which point the Consultants will work with the Planning Department to address them. The Committee Members pointed out parts of the report that they believed should be changed, to which the Consultants either explained the reason for why such data is displayed the way it is, or said that they would make final changes to it. Discussion was also had in regards to economic opportunity areas not being up to date or being counted in the report after they had been decertified. Vice Chair Frongillo and Ms. Farmer both said that discussion of changes to parking requirements are a data point that would be saved for the recommendations phase, but a line could be added to help understand the intention of changes to parking policy in the downtown area. Chair Jones reminded the Committee that BETA and Barrett are under contract with the Town and the Town has a limited amount of budget and time to put everything together, so there may not be room for further revisions and studies.

Timeline Discussion

Ms. Slankas began a presentation which visualized the next steps forward from the Inventory & Assessment Report on to the rest of the Master Plan process. Director Taberner explained to the Committee where they are in the process and that they will be speeding things up as far as what the subcommittees and Planning Department will be doing for the larger schedule. The Draft Implementation Plan will be a months-long process and require everyone's input. Chair Jones reiterated that September 9 is the intended date of presenting the final draft to the Planning Board and September 18 to present it to the Town Council, but added that the Committee has the chance to postpone it to October. He continued by explaining that the Committee will have to establish firm deadlines to meet its goals, once it has determined which goals can be effectively pursued by the implementation of a Master Plan. Vice Chair Frongillo further clarified the process and the timeline the Committee needs the Consultants to work by. He also asked to clarify what the key issues phase entails, to which Ms. Slankas answered were things they had identified in the existing inventory and mentioned in the report as part of a narrative of issues and opportunities that determine recommendations. Ms. Farmer added that it is very useful to have the reasoning for why recommendations were made when going out for funding. Vice Chair Frongillo also asked if the Consultants help the Committee with developing goals and implementation, to which they confirmed that they do. Ms. Slankas added that there is an element of the process that remains fluid, which can include extending deadlines in the process by a month or so.

Planning for Public Outreach Meeting

Town Planner Love provided an update that the Consultants and the Planning Department are working to prepare for what they need to have for the first public outreach meeting. Director Taberner added that having a summary of the community survey would be important for showing to the public among other slides of information. At Chair Jones request for reference, Member Hagen discussed how the Conservation Commission had carried out its public hearing process for the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Member Williams asked about how feedback back-and-forth might eventually be finalized for the plan, to which Director Taberner responded that they may be showing a final draft those who are the key stakeholders in the process, including those in public service and facilities. Member Lang recommended that an open comment session be scheduled for a weekend at a public location that could be used to foster engagement from the public, especially for visual-location based feedback, to which other Committee Members expressed favor of her idea. Member Williams added that incentives for people to go to these sessions would go a long way in improving public outreach. Chair Jones noted that with so many moving parts in the process happening all at once, the subcommittees should discuss in the meeting ideas about what specifically should happen at any open house events. The Committee Members discussed organizing events and using the term “open house” for them. Member Elmore commented that when talking about the plan and the process to the public, starting with discussing the ideas from the vision statement and mission statement are very good at maintaining cohesiveness and coherency.

Next Meetings (Main Committee)

February 7, 2024 at 6:30PM

Public Hearing 1: February 14, 2024 at 6:30PM

Next Meetings (subcommittees)

Open Space & Recreation, Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources: TBD

Community Service, Facilities & Circulation: February 7, 2024 at 5:15PM

Land Use and Zoning: January 29, 2024 at 7:00PM

Housing & Economic Development: February 1, 2024 at 5:00PM

Sustainability: TBD

Additional Comments

The Committee, while deciding on a date for a future public hearing, decided not to consider March 16 due to that being the week of Dean College’s spring break.

Adjourn Meeting

Member Hunchard motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Clerk Hamblen. There was a unanimous vote in favor of adjourning. Meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant

--Master Plan Update Committee Approved Minutes at February 7, 2024 Meeting