

TOWN OF ALTON  
MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE (MP)  
MINUTES OF 2021  
JANUARY 6, 2021

APPROVED

Members Present: Paul LaRochelle, Selectmen's Rep.  
Phil Wittmann, Selectmen's Rep. Alternate  
Kelly Sullivan, Citizen Member (6:30 pm)

Others Present: Jessica A. Call, Town Planner

Others Attending Remotely: Bob Regan, Planning Board, Chair  
Russ Wilder, Planning Board  
Tom Hoopes, Planning Board  
Aimee Terravechia, Citizen Member  
Ron Rubbico, Citizen Member

Mr. Regan read the remote attendance instructions into the record.

*“UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE: To keep our members and staff safe, and to comply with RSA 91-A, the COVID-19 State of Emergency, and the Governor's Orders on restrictions at public gatherings, the Town of Alton is holding "remote audio participation meetings". If you cannot attend remotely, please contact the Planning Department at (603) 875-2162 or [planner@alton.nh.gov](mailto:planner@alton.nh.gov) for further instructions. To remotely attend the meeting, visit our website: [www.alton.nh.gov](http://www.alton.nh.gov) for telephone access and Zoom access instructions listed under News and Announcements on the home page the day of the meeting. If you are having difficulties accessing the remote meeting, please call (603) 507-1002.*

*\*As a reminder, at the Master Plan Committee's October 7, 2020, meeting, the Committee voted to temporarily suspend in-person public attendance. If the public has any comments on anything discussed at the meeting, they can email their comments to the Planning Department at [planner@alton.nh.gov](mailto:planner@alton.nh.gov), or mail them to: Town of Alton Master Plan Committee, PO Box 659, Alton, NH 03809.”*

Roll Call Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. +/-

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Hoopes **MOVED** to approve the agenda as presented.  
Mr. Wilder seconded the motion.

Mr. Regan called for a roll call vote:  
Tom Hoopes, Yes; Russ Wilder, Yes; Aimee Terravechia, Yes; Paul LaRochelle, Yes; Bob Regan, Yes.

Ms. Call shared that she would like to start using Dropbox to share documents with the Committee. It was a program that you could drop .pdf files in, therefore, alleviating the numerous paper copies that were provided to members for each meeting. She pointed out that some documents were too large to attach to

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an email and it made that difficult for the members that would remote in for each meeting. Some of the members were familiar with Dropbox already and were interested in trying it out.

Mr. Regan noted that there were some small changes to the RFP suggested by Liz Dionne, Town Administrator, but other than that, it looked ready to go. Ms. Call had a question on Page 2, #5, Scope of Services, Finalization Process. At the last meeting the Committee removed some wording under Purpose that talked about the final process, which would have the consultant assist with a presentation at a Planning Board meeting, and she wondered if #5 still made sense.

(Ms. Call unmuted Mr. Rubbico, who had been in attendance all along but was muted. Mr. Regan received a text from Mrs. Sullivan that they were trying to get into the front door, but it was locked. Mr. LaRochelle went to open the door, but she had left.)

Mr. Wilder agreed with Ms. Call that the wording was inconsistent. Mr. Regan thought that the title of Finalization Process should be modified. The consultant was expected to be present when the draft was given to the Planning Board. Mr. Hoopes pointed out that the final sentence stated, "The finalized Master Plan will be maintained electronically in editable and printable formats.", but he wondered who would be responsible for that. Ms. Call thought that since it was listed under Scope of Services that meant that the consultant should be able to provide that information to the town. Ms. Call asked if #5 should stay the same. Mr. Rubbico's recollection was that the Committee wanted to limit the Scope because the funds were limited, and they did not want to confuse the actual preparation of the Master Plan with the initial scope. If the RFP was asking with assistance for the preparation and not the actual drafting of the plan, it was inconsistent. Mr. Wilder thought that it should be worded like, "the consultant will participate in the presentation of the draft plan to the Planning Board." Mr. Rubbico stated that #5 talked about a draft plan, and nowhere prior to that did it reference a draft plan, it referenced an outline of the proposed Plan update. He thought that it would be consistent if #5 stayed in place, but add, "The outline of the plan will be presented to the Planning Board." Ms. Call agreed with the wording.

Ms. Call moved onto Proposal Submission Guidelines. She pointed out that the envelopes should be marked, "Master Plan Consultant RFP". On Page 4, the paragraph that started with, "Any consultants submitting or considering.....", she added to the last sentence so that it would read, "Any questions and answers given will be provided to all proposers as soon as possible after the deadline, but no later than February 8, 2021." Under the section, "Proposal Review...", Ms. Call shared that she included a schedule of what was going to take place through the whole update process. Mr. Rubbico thought that the final bullet should refer to the outline.

(Mrs. Terravechia shared she received a text from Mrs. Sullivan and she was wondering if someone could open the door for her in a few minutes. Mr. LaRochelle would let her in. Mr. Rubbico thought that there should be some process to inform the Committee if someone was having issues getting in the building. Ms. Call noted that Amelia Cate, Planning Secretary, was out today and no one was available to man the computer so she was going back and forth from the table to monitor the meeting.)

Mr. LaRochelle pointed out that Ms. Call suggested to delete the sentence that required the consultant to assist with the final acceptance of the Plan so it coincided with earlier discussion. Mr. Rubbico thought that it should state, "final acceptance of the Master Plan outline and process." Ms. Call asked if the September

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2021 deadline for Work Product should be reworded. Mr. Regan thought that the work product received by September 2021 would be outline and the process by which the Committee would go forward.

**Mr. Hoopes MOVED that the Committee accept the RFP as revised.  
Mr. LaRochelle seconded the motion.**

**The Chair called for a roll call vote:  
Tom Hoopes, Aye; Russ Wilder, Aye; Ron Rubbico, Aye; Aimee Terravechia, Aye; Paul LaRochelle, Yes; Kelly Sullivan, Yes; Bob Regan, Yes.**

Mr. Regan noted that a member brought up a question about the funding and whether it would still be available in light of the town trying to address some budgeting issues. He was hesitant to release the RFP without knowing for sure if it was available. Ms. Call stated that the money from the warrant article can only get spent on the Master Plan Consultant, so those funds should be available. Mr. LaRochelle stated he would present this question to the rest of the Select Board at their next meeting to clarify any confusion.

The Board then discussed the interview process. Ms. Call stated that interviews could take place during the day, at night, or on Saturdays depending upon what worked for everyone and what dates the meeting room was available. It was noted that the interviews were not open to the public. Mr. Wilder asked who would be receiving the RFP. Ms. Call stated that there were four (4) consultants on the list, but it would also be posted on the Town's website, NHMA website, the Planning Department's Facebook page, and Planlink. Mr. Wilder suggested that the Committee score a limited number of submittals. He thought that Ms. Call should whittle down the submittals, and then the Committee would discuss them at a meeting. Ms. Call stated at that meeting the Committee could come up with some interview questions. It was suggested to send out questions ahead of the interview so the consultants could come prepared to answer them.

The Committee scheduled their next meeting for Wednesday, January 27, 2021. Ms. Call asked what the Committee would be meeting about. Since there were only three (3) members that provided information on their review of the Vision section, Mr. Regan thought that talking about that at the next meeting would be more productive. Mrs. Sullivan, Mr. Rubbico, and Mr. LaRochelle both stated that they had their list, but they had not had the chance to email to Ms. Call. The Committee decided to discuss the Vision section at the next meeting. Mr. Regan thought that during his review process, he noticed that were areas that were not addressed, for example, there was no mention of the Police or Fire Departments, or recreation, education, or anything about town hall and other municipal services. Mrs. Terravechia agreed that adding this information was important. Mr. Regan noted that while sitting on the CIP, the Master Plan was not set up to guide the Committee on much.

Mr. Wilder noted that as a result of what had been going on during the last year, it will increase the pressure for growth that would happen organically. Things like housing, services, and new ideas will be needed because the make-up of the town would change. Mr. LaRochelle agreed and thought that the need for housing and business was growing. Mr. Rubbico thought that not only should the economic development be looked at, but may how to influence the economic development of the town based upon what the community thought was appropriate. Ms. Call shared that the Planning Board created a subcommittee to discuss alternative housing opportunities that should be starting up in February.

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Mr. Rubbico shared that he found information on the Office of Strategic Initiatives for Master Plans and was going to share that link with Ms. Call. Mr. Wilder noted that there were a lot of people working from home nowadays and that would tie into the need for housing. Mr. Hoopes thought that the town would have to allow for more home businesses. Mr. Regan thought telecommunications was a vital piece of that.

Mr. Regan suggested that the members make sure that they send Ms. Call their ranking on the Vision section so she could compile the information on the spreadsheet. It would help to identify specific areas of agreement. Mrs. Terravechia noted that providing some additional notes would be helpful. Mr. LaRochelle thought that there was a lot to discuss in the Vision section. Mr. Regan hoped that the Committee would have a better idea of what they were up against before the consultant was on board. Mr. Rubbico thought that it could take up many meetings worth of time for each of the 50 items in that section, so he asked if there could be a time to explain some of the items that were put in place. Mr. Hoopes offered to help with the explanations. Mrs. Terravechia thought that for the next meeting, before getting into the paragraphs was to discuss what was missing, what needed to be added, what was no longer relevant, and then create an outline of what the Committee wanted the Vision section to look like.

On top of the Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Committee scheduled additional meetings on Wednesday, February 10, 2021, and then Wednesday, February 24, 2021, to review the RFP submittals. These meetings lined up with the proposed schedule.

The approval of minutes was continued to the next meeting.

Mr. Rubbico was having fun and he felt really great about being part of this Committee.

Mrs. Terravechia echoed Mr. Rubbico's sentiments. She was really excited and thought that the Committee had a good foundation. She was looking forward to see what the Committee could accomplish.

Mr. Wilder thought that there was some information that the Committee should be using, like a Smart Growth document that Ms. Call sent to the Planning Board and the document used for the Roads Workshop. He thought that this would help the Committee with the items that they wanted to focus on like housing and transportation along with energy. He also shared that he really appreciated the team.

Mr. Hoopes thanked the new members for being involved. He shared that the Committee needed to look at the forest because sometimes you can get lost in the trees. He noted that if any of the members had questions about anything, Mr. LaRochelle was not only a Selectmen, he was a ZBA member. There were things that the ZBA did that may answer some of their questions. He stated that it was important to work with the ZBA to get their input as well. Mr. Regan thought that the ZBA needed to get involved so they knew what was updated. Mr. Hoopes noted that they did get updated through the ZAC Committee.

Mrs. Sullivan thought that the Committee was a good group. She liked that there was a broad demographic in the group. She really liked the round table discussion and the fact that everyone appreciated each other's opinions. She looked forward to seeing what the Committee did with all of the information.

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Mr. Wittmann was the alternate Selectman member and he thought that he should show up even though Mr. LaRochelle was present. He wanted to get familiar with what the Committee was doing. He thanked the Committee for having him.

Mr. LaRochelle wished everyone a Happy New Year, and he hoped that 2021 was going to be a good year. He thought that this was a good group of people. He shared that this process was new for him. He had been a Selectman for a year and a half and he was still learning new things everyday with the different departments. He stated that it was eye opening and educating to be on this Committee and he could relate some of what he was learning with the ZBA.

Ms. Call stated she was glad to be a part of this Committee. She noted that the Planning Board had struggled for many years to get this update up and off the ground and she felt honored and excited to be the representative of the Planning Department to head this update. She was excited to go through the RFP process and the interviews because she had not been through that process before. She was looking forward to all of it.

Mr. Regan thought that at each meeting, the Committee got a little bit further down the road and pictures were starting to formulate. He thought that was a good sign of progress and as long as the Committee kept moving forward, they would be able to reach their goal. He thanked everyone for having an open mind and he thought that the Committee had a good core, and that they were moving along in the right direction.

**At 7:45 p.m. +/- Mr. LaRochelle MOVED to adjourn the meeting.  
Mrs. Sullivan seconded the motion.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica A. Call  
Town Planner

Minutes approved as amended: April 29, 2021