

TOWN OF ALTON  
MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE (MP)  
MINUTES OF 2020  
NOVEMBER 18, 2020

APPROVED

Members Present: Bob Regan, Planning Board, MP Chair  
Russ Wilder, Planning Board  
Paul LaRochelle, Selectmen's Rep.  
Kelly Sullivan, Citizen Member  
Paul Monziona, ZBA

Others Present: Jessica A. Call, Town Planner  
Amelia Cate, Recording Secretary

Others Attending Remotely: 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 6:04 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:  
Russ Wilder, Aye; Paul LaRochelle, Aye; Bob Regan, Aye; Paul Monziona, Aye; Tom Hoopes, Aye

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Mr. Rubbico introduced himself as one of the new at-large citizen members. His background was in technology and software, and he had a good solid background in the business world. Mrs. Sullivan introduced herself. Her background included having a business in town, and being involved in the PTSA and the Alton Business Association, along with being involved with several other Committees in town. Mrs. Terravechia introduced herself as well. Her background included having a small business here in town, and she was also involved with the Alton Business Association and was an at-large member in last year's CIP Committee.

Mr. Regan noted that the Committee was given some sample RFPs to look at to get an idea of what other towns had put in for their requirements. The hope was to draft up an RFP and have it out by January of 2021. Mr. Regan asked the Committee if they were looking for a consultant to help them with the process or the content. Ms. Call noted that if the Committee was sending out an RFP for just the process, and then the Committee decided in the long run that they needed assistance with the content, she thought that should be included in the RFP to ensure that the consultant they chose would have the qualifications to do that.

Mr. Monziona noted that if the Committee was seeking a consultant to update the Master Plan, it may actually mean to edit or update the content. He did not think that the RFP needed to be really specific. Mr. Regan thought that one of the items should be to look at the focus. Mr. LaRochelle noted that the warrant article was written for a consultant to get the process going, and not necessarily the content. Mr. Regan thought that by next September/October, if the Committee needed help with writing the updated plan, there was enough time to prepare another warrant article for additional funds.

The goal was to get input from the townspeople, and to have the Consultant would lay out the steps by which the Master Plan would be updated, and to prepare an outline of the proposed Master Plan. Mr. Wilder thought that there were steps missing in between #4 and #5 in the draft RFP because it went from drafting an outline to presentation of the Plan. He thought that the RFP should end at #4. He asked if the Consultant would be setting up and running the community engagement meetings or just figuring out a plan of how the Town can run them. Mr. Regan hoped that the Consultant would be involved with the subcommittee level, at least with the Master Plan Committee, and to help the Committee integrate the input from the various subcommittees. Mr. Wilder wondered if the Consultant would be responsible to organize input meetings with stakeholders, or would they be developing a procedure to that successfully. Mr. LaRochelle thought they would assist with the procedure. Mr. Regan thought that #5 should be reworded to state, "to identify the steps required to finalize the plan". Mr. Monziona thought that the RFP would be designed to give a bidder a general understanding of what the job entailed so they could determine costs, and their contract would consist the scope of work. Mr. Rubbico thought that #4 should state that it should be to prepare an outline of the plan and not the plan itself, and that it was an expectation that the Consultant would participate in the community engagement.

Mr. Hoopes shared that this would be his third Master Plan update, and with the last one, the Town had assistance from the Lakes Region Planning Commission. The Commission and UNH helped run the meetings and they created a framework from the information from the questionnaires. This only

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resulted in a Land Use chapter, and Mr. Hoopes thought that maybe it was time to include additional chapters. He also shared with the new members that the whole time throughout the update process, the Vision chapter, the body of the Plan, and the Town's Zoning Ordinance all had to agree with each other. If something new was proposed, it needed to be stated in the Vision chapter and in the body of the Plan, along with amending ordinances.

Mr. Regan thought that other stakeholders needed to have input with the update, instead of just getting input from property owners, like business owners, people who were employed in town, town employees, and other townspeople. Mr. Hoopes pointed out that the update in 2007, and the survey from 2015 and the input from "All in for Alton" in 2019 showed that the responses were amazingly repetitive. There was the group that wanted to develop, but there was a majority that wanted to keep the town the same. He pointed out that there was a serious need for a new style of housing and that had to be incorporated into the Vision and the plan itself. Mrs. Sullivan pointed out that you could not stop progress, it happens all on its own, so it needed to be guided and the town needed to be proactive instead of reactive. Mr. Hoopes pointed out that with the influx of people moving to town recently, they were a younger population, and that was important for the town.

Mr. LaRoche noted that he went through the sample Master Plans that were provided to the members to get ideas from, and he circled areas that were of interest like, Land Use for the Future; Age Friendly Community; Housing Opportunities; Acknowledgement of Past History; Physical and Natural Assets; Diverse Background Interests and Skills of our Residents; Economic Development of Businesses in Town and Surrounding Towns; Population Growth and Natural Resources; Infrastructure of Maintenance Management; Docks, Sidewalks, and Parking Lots; Water and Sewer; Cottage Colony Development/Small Homes/Affordable Housing; and Energy.

Mr. Hoopes was hoping that the Consultant would be able to guide the Committee on the necessities of a Plan, and then the Committee could go from there. Mr. Regan thought that the information compiled in the previous surveys were still valid. Mr. Hoopes thought that the information from a questionnaire should be compiled with a certain timeframe in order to get updated input. Mr. Monziona thought that once a Consultant was on board, they would be expert enough to be sure that the Committee was following all the right steps. Mr. Monziona thought that the RFP should consist of the scope of services.

The Committee went through the draft RFP starting at the beginning. It was suggested that the entire process would take about 18 months until adoption with a potential date of March 2023 to be presented at a town meeting. The RFP could go out in January with 30 days to submit a proposal, and the Consultant awarded by early-April. Once a Consultant was awarded the position, their contract would be subject to negotiations with the town, and it could take a while. The idea was to not update the Plan until 2033. The second paragraph should include the wording "to identify areas of focus".

Mr. Wilder asked what the relevance was with the reference to GIS capabilities. Mr. Regan noted that a big part of the Plan was the Land Use section that contained zoning references, and he was hoping that the zones could be one of the layers that got implemented. Mr. Wilder did not think that needed to be included in the Plan because that did not get updated often. Mr. Monziona wondered if that

reference meant was that we were looking for a Consultant to assist with what types of levels could be added to GIS. The last sentence was suggested to be deleted. Mr. Hoopes thought that additional maps could be done. He pointed out that the majority of property in town was located in the Rural and Residential Rural zones, about 80%. Instead of having just those two (2) zones, he suggested having four (4) subdivision of the Rural zone because there were places where the Rural zone came into contact with Lakeshore Residential and there should be some sort of a buffer there. There were also places where the Rural zone was more than a mile from any existing road, and some where there were poor dirt roads and paved roads. Mr. Regan thought that one of the layers could be what parcels in town contained conservation easements.

Mr. Wilder moved onto the primary vision of the town was to retain its character. He also wanted to add, while accommodating external changes that will influence how the town will develop. He took exception to the last sentence of #5. He noted that the reason why a town would want commercial development was to provide local jobs and services for the town, it did nothing for the tax rate. Mr. Regan thought that the town had a list of services that they did not provide and he was hoping that the Consultant would be able to assist in capturing that. Mr. Wilder thought that would come out of the community involvement.

1. Community Engagement: This should include stakeholders other than just residents. The Committee also thought that town employees should have some input because they too were also familiar with the town.
2. Goal Statements: No changes were made.
3. Planning Process: Mr. Monziona thought that additional language should be included to say, "and number of subcommittees, structure, and composition".
4. Plan Preparation: The only change was to note that the title would be, "Plan Outline Preparation".
5. Finalization Process: This step should include that the Consultant should be able to identify steps to finalize the plan.

The Proposal Format consisted of boilerplate information. Mr. Wilder noted that under Proposal Submission Guidelines, if Consultants were asking questions, it was only fair to allow all bidders to hear the answers to the questions. Ms. Call thought that not only was that fair, it was a requirement. Mr. Wilder noted that there should be a date by which questions would be submitted. An oral presentation would be given by each Consultant at the interviews. He asked if there would be a pre-selection of submittals so the Committee only interviewed some of the Consultants. Mr. Regan did not think that the Committee had to interview everyone. Mr. Rubbico wondered if references would be checked before the final selection.

Mr. Monziona left the meeting at 7:20 pm. He pointed out that the legal section of the RFP had some harsh language but he thought that was just standard legal jargon. He thought that Town Counsel

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should take a look at this section. Ms. Call was going to implement the changes discussed during the meeting, and at the next meeting the Committee could go through the second half. Mr. LaRochelle thought that having Mr. Monziona on the Committee was very important. He also shared that speaking on behalf of being on the ZBA, it was valuable to have Mr. Monziona and Tim Morgan on the team because they understood a lot of the logistics of the legalities of different cases.

Mr. Regan went around the room to ask everyone what their final thoughts were:

Mr. Hoopes was delighted to have some new members who were unprejudiced and who had new points of view because every point of view was extremely important. He had been on the Planning Board for 20 years and 25 years on the Conservation Commission, so he took a lot of things for granted. It was good to have a fresh perspective. The only dumb question was the one that was not asked.

Mr. Wilder was really glad that there were three (3) new members. He thought that a lot got done tonight by going through the RFP. It gave them the opportunity to see what the Committee was trying to accomplish. He encouraged them to continue to provide their perspective on things, especially how the Committee could get the community engaged and how to get people to feel like they own the document. It was a challenge, but that was important.

Mr. Rubbico thanked the Committee for including him. He learned a lot and he enjoyed the group discussion. He agreed that a lot of progress was made on the RFP. He looked forward to working more with the Committee.

Mrs. Sullivan agreed with Mr. Rubbico. She thought it was nice to work with everyone and she appreciated Mr. Hoopes' statement about being open-minded and she looked forward to that. She enjoyed and appreciated the roundtable discussion because it gave the opportunity to listen to people's thoughts and ideas to try and come up with a plan for the better.

Mrs. Terravechia was excited about the process, she thought that the Committee made good progress tonight, and it seemed like the Committee consisted of a solid group of people who were invested in the community.

Mr. LaRochelle thought that the Committee made good progress and that this was a quality group. He shared that he was happy to have the opportunity to work with people that he had not worked with before. He was familiar with some of the new members in town, and was looking forward to working with them on the Master Plan update. He noted that he had never been involved in an update before so he thought it was good to get the perspective as a Selectman to be part of the process. He thought that there was a lot of knowledge between Mr. Wilder and Mr. Hoopes who had been involved in things like this for a long time.

Ms. Call thanked everyone for joining the Committee. She shared that this was a difficult task to undertake for one person. She pointed out that the warrant article had passed in March and it had been busy in the office so it was difficult to get this up off the ground and moving. She thanked Mr.

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Wilder for suggesting to get a Master Plan Committee up and running and she was glad to see so many people involved because it was a huge help. She noted that having Mr. Monziona on the Committee was valuable.

Mr. Regan thanked everyone and thought that the Committee made some good progress tonight. He thought that they were off to a good start. The target for getting the RFP on the street by the second week of January was realistic.

Mr. Wilder asked if a list of Consultants had been put together so they could be sent the RFP. Ms. Call noted that she would get that together for their next meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2021. Ms. Call also wanted to thank Amelia Cate, Planning Secretary, for coming in and assisting with the electronic meeting.

Approval of minutes from October 7 & 28, 2020, were continued until the next meeting. Mr. Rubbico asked if there was anything useful that the members could be doing between now and the next meeting. Mr. Regan noted that Ms. Call would make the changes to the RFP, send it out to everyone, and that they should make any further comments and bring that to the next meeting. He hoped at the end of that meeting, the RFP would be in good form.

**At 7:30 p.m. +/- the meeting adjourned**

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica A. Call  
Town Planner

Minutes approved as amended: April 29, 2021