



Office of
THE PLANNING BOARD
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RECEIVED
 AUG 24 2021
**TOWN OF TOWNSEND
 TOWN CLERK**

Lance J. McNally, Chairman
 Carol Hoffses, Member

Michael Virostko, Clerk

Laura Shifrin, Vice Chairman
 Julie Byars, Associate Member

**Planning Board Meeting Minutes
 REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY
 Monday August 2, 2021, at 6:30 PM**

VIRTUAL MEETING

VIA: ZOOM PER GOVERNOR'S ORDER SUSPENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS
 OF THE OPEN MEETNIG LAW, G.L. c. 30A, § 20†

PUBLIC ACCESS ZOOM MEETING LINK: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85095883847?pwd=OWVaSmwwT0d0bUtjTWVvZWVraZuQT09>

Meeting ID: 850 9588 3847 Passcode: 180055

1 Preliminaries: votes may be taken.

- 1.1 Call the meeting to order and roll call. Lance Mc Nally, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm and announced the meeting is being recorded. Present: Laura Shifrin, Vice Chair, Julie Byars, Associate Member, Carol Hoffses, Member. Absent: Michael Virostko. L. Shifrin made a motion to appoint Julie Byars as a full voting member for the meeting. C. Hoffses seconded. Roll call vote as follows: YES – L.S., C.H., L.M., J.B. The motion carried. Others Present: Elizabeth Faxon, Planning Board Admin, Andrea Wood, Master Plan Committee,
- 1.2 Chairman's additions or deletions. None noted.

2 Worksession: votes may be taken.

- 2.1 Review document: *Townsend Master Plan 2021 Final Draft version 1*. The Board Members met for the purpose of commenting on the document which was received at their meeting on 07-26-2021. Initial comments – the Committee did a good job in pulling together a lot of statistics on Townsend. In the section About *the Town of Townsend* the distance of Townsend to Boston was thought to be 42 miles. Meaning of an uninsured person on page 11 was questioned, medical, mortgage. J. Byars asked for page numbers to be added to the document to aid in review. She asked why the document doesn't appear to follow the state requirements for a Master Plan

† Per the Governor's Order, and during the State of Emergency now-in-effect or until sooner rescinded, public bodies are relieved from the requirement that they conduct their meetings in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public; provided, however, that all public bodies shall ensure public access to deliberations through adequate, alternative means, which include (but are not limited to) telephone, internet or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body while they are occurring. The Order also allows remote participation by all members of a public body; and waives the requirements that a quorum and the chair be physically present at the meeting location.

in terms of the format and the elements. Master Plans from surrounding communities follow the requirements and general overlay of these requirements. She commented that when the Town applies for grant funding, the State and other grant funding reviewers will look at the 2021 Townsend Master Plan and they would like to see it in the format that is set forth in the MGL Chapter 41 Section 81D. She noted that a good about of the document focused on the history of Townsend and would recommend that the document be reordered and inclusive of the nine required elements. Chairman Lance McNally echoed the observations and encouraged the Master Plan committee to follow the same format at Pepperell Master Plan. Other Board Members agreed. Planning Board admin wrote notes and comments into the "comment" box and made in text spelling and grammar edits for the following chapters: *About the Town of Massachusetts, Housing, Historic and Cultural resources, Economic Development*, document as the Board Members commented. L. Shifrin commented that she did not edit for spelling grammar and other minor edits and that those would be done at a later point. The role of MRPC (Montachusett Regional Planning Commission) was discussed and the technical assistance they are providing for this Mater Plan. The District Local Technical services grant scope of services was referenced and noted. MRPC has provided mapping services and is providing compliance review and editing of the draft. J. Byars commented that with numerous spelling and grammatical errors, the document was difficult to read. Inconsistency with notation was noted throughout the document and formatting errors were noted. Areas where the text was not supported by data were noted throughout the chapters reviewed at the meeting. Noted under the recommendations that community assets for example, the Hart Library and the Rec Center need repair which conflicts with the statement that all buildings are in good condition. Confusion was discussed over the source of the highlighted sections. It was surmised that these were statistics from the Master Plan survey. Board Members asked about the difference between the Historic District Commission and the Historical Commission and why does Townsend need two? **Economic Development** - Board Members wanted to note that a local property tax levy is required for a community to adopt the Community Preservation Act. The Board would like more substantive details on the Community Preservation Act in the text for readers. Recommended that the Committee note how many of the comparison Towns adopted CPA. J. Byars noted that the first time an acronym is used in the document it should be spelled out, then later in the document the acronym should be used throughout consistently. A question arose about the use of a dated study for *Home Sales Near Two MA Trails*. 2006. A comment was made for confirmation that most current data should be used for the entire document and all the sources appropriately cited. Lack of sources cited was noted throughout the document. A question about relevance to Townsend was asked regarding the study in the economic development section titled "*Strategies for Economic Improvement in Appalachia's Distressed Counties...*" The comment was made that there is inconsistent font format throughout the document. a comment was made that enabling air B and Bs as is written in the Economic development section will require a lot of thought and potential regulations, and this should be further explained. In the economic development section, the sources of the data referenced in the text of the ED section must be specifically cited. Suggested that the Master Plan survey be included in the appendix. *Figure 1. Changes in Employment* was not referenced in the text of the ED section. Statement was made that the recommendations at the end of the ED

section need to be supported by data and fact based. Considering the tax revenue generated from small businesses, where is the evidence that hiring a town economic development planner would create adequate return on investment? More effort is needed to illustrate the reasons that the recommendations are substantive and defensible. The suggestion was made to consider formulating an economic development committee as an alternative. Andrea Wood stated that these recommendations were made with some discussion of obtaining a grant to hire a planner to which the Board Member would like that explicitly expressed in the text for clarification of the funding source for this recommendation. L. Shifrin noted that the tax rate is currently the same for residents as it is for commercial businesses and industrial operations. The question was asked about the percentage of the Towns' total annual tax revenue that comes from businesses. Discussion ensued as to the need for mechanisms for local businesses to advertise regionally through a local business association or chamber of commerce. Confusion was expressed over the sentence "*the Town needs to evaluate its current open space and devise a plan that will encourage business uses consistent with the rural character and needs of the Town.*" Listing of the businesses that the citizens want to see from the survey data was included in Pepperell's Master Plan and is a useful reference. L. Shifrin shared those antiques were a draw for Townsend. Andrea Wood updated that many of the antique businesses are no longer open. Comment on this paragraph was to clarify the relationship of the statement and planning suggestions to the Town's Open Space and rural character. Comment was added to add a subtitle for "recommendations" in the ED section and be consistent with the way recommendations are formatted throughout the document. **Circulation and Transportation section comments** – Questioned as to why Ayer MBTA station was not included in the draft as many of Townsend residents use it and it has ample parking. Correct Map 9 Traffic Count locations and Figure 2 in the Traffic and Safety section. The traffic crash data is dated in this section. MRPC will review and update the data as is available. Missing words and confusion over the meaning of the paragraph under Figure CT5 about pedestrian and bicycle safety. Complete Streets paragraph could use a re-write for clarity, grammar, and polish. The Board was not familiar with the term "gig-worker". Board member asked what a RRFB is in the recommendations for placement at route 119 & the Post office. Assuming it is a lighted sidewalk sign, there was a suggestion to add one at the crosswalk at Sterlite for safety. Question about the source of the paving on rt. 119 under TIP projects.

Overall closing comment was that the format of the document needs to be compatible with the State requirements and the Master Plan committee is strongly urged to look at the Pepperell Master Plan and model our Master Plan on it.

- 2.2 Reappointment of Master Plan Committee Members: Kym Craven, Karen Clement, Bill Rideout, Cynthia Donovan-Schuster, Don Hayes, Todd Melanson, Andrea Wood. L. Shifrin made a motion to reappoint the Master Plan Committee Members consisting of Kym Craven, Karen Clement, Bill Rideout, Cynthia Donovan-Schuster, Don Hayes, Todd Melanson, Andrea Wood. C. Hoffses seconded. Roll call vote

was taken as follows. YES – L. Shifrin, C. Hoffses, J. Byars, L. McNally. The motion carried.

- 2.3 Review maps: *Townsend bike lane and rail trails & Townsend sidewalks provided by MRPC.* Comment period closes 8/6/2021. Action deferred to the next scheduled meeting on August 6, 2021.
- 3 **Adjourn: votes may be taken.** L. Shifrin recommends that the Planning Board update the 2021 Townsend Master Plan every year. She recommends that each year a Master Plan Committee is appointed to review and update a few of the Chapters of the 2021 Townsend Master Plan and bring any changes or recommendations to the Planning Board for approval and incorporation. She noted that every year some sections of the plan will be refreshed as this would be beneficial to grant funding efforts. She noted that the Master Plan Committee reappointment is on the agenda and that the term is to expire at the next Town election in April 2022. She recommends accepting the plan as soon as possible to pass to MRPC for their review. She would like the Final Master Plan to be available for the Fall Town meeting.
 - 3.1 Next Planning Board meetings tentatively scheduled **August 16, 2021.** The Board agreed to schedule a meeting for Friday August 6, 2021, at 4:00 pm to reconvene to continue their review of the housing, climate adaptation and zoning chapters of the Townsend Master Plan 2021 v1. C. Hoffses made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. J. Byars seconded. Roll call vote was taken as follows. YES – L. Shifrin, C. Hoffses, J. Byars, L. McNally. The motion carried.

Items on file:

1. Townsend Master Plan 2021 final draft v1.
2. Volunteer response forms: K. Craven, B. Rideout, D. Hayes, A. Wood, K. Clement, C. Donovan, T. Melanson.
3. Townsend sidewalks and Townsend Bike trails maps drafted by MRPC.
4. Town of Townsend You Tube link: Townsend, MA Planning Board August 2nd, 2021 - YouTube

Respectfully submitted,

Approved on: August 23, 2021

Elizabeth Faxon, Planning Board Admin.

TCAM Inc. is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

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