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TOWN OF WESTBOROUGH

**Master Plan Implementation Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2023
7:04 PM- 9:16 PM**

Committee Present: Chairperson Mark Silverberg, Vice Chairperson Wendy Mickel, Patrick Welch, Kristi Williams, Jack Haagensen, Ding Han, Kris Allen, Tom Bleier, Dan Schur, Stephanie Doyle, Christina Kelleher

Also present: Kristen Belanger-Planning Dept. Administrative Assistant

Not present: Maria Barney, Hank Rauch, Catherine Nourse

The meeting of the Westborough Master Plan Implementation Committee was held in the Fire Dept. Training Room on Milk St in Westborough, MA. on Monday, April 10, 2023. The meeting was convened by Mark Silverberg at 7:04 PM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Member Schur made a motion to approve the minutes from the 3/27/2023 meeting. Member Bleier seconded.

Vote: 11-0

Department of Public Works and the Master Plan

Chris Payant, Director of DPW gave a presentation.

Guidance he has received is that there is an interest in pedestrian and bike mobility, connectivity and congestion mitigation.

TC 2-1 Prepare corridor plans for 135 and 30 to identify options for transportation improvements and coordinate future investment.

TC 4-2 Building upon this Master Plan, prepare a sustainable transportation plan that provides next steps for projects, programs, and policies for Westborough's transportation system.

DPW role is the implementation of the identified actions. Planning Board, town staff, etc are looking for funding sources and DPW puts it in place.

The Master Plan has focused on downtown for transportation for a variety of reasons. Transportation effects Economic Development, safety, etc. The problems we see in the rotary are symptoms of what is going on outside of this area.

Entry ways into town:

- Fisher, Milk and Church St intersection
- East Main and West Main
- Mill Rd and West Main St
- South St Hopkinton and Upton Rd

Projects:

- Otis St has a plan to build a 10' wide shared use path, and redo the intersection. \$4M has been raised out of the \$6M needed, he would characterize this project as in motion.

- BWALT- the connection between Milk and Otis, in motion.
- Fisher St Bridge is funded by MassDOT.
- Fisher St- Gibbons/Armstrong schools received a grant to replace sidewalks, grant wants to do bikes and people. Connection would go from Arrive down Otis, along Fisher and potentially to downtown. Grant has to do with Safe Routes to School program.
- East side- MassDOT transportation improvement. East Main could be a traffic circle or light and sidewalk down to Uhlmans Ice Cream. Projected 2028.
- Traffic signal on Flanders Rd. MassDOT typically rejects projects based on cost. Only 3-4 are funded per year. Mr. Payant sits on the advisory board that recommends which projects get funded. Another reason for this particular road on Flanders, specific criteria for anything they are going to build, if you can't meet all the requirements, you need to get waivers.
- SW side of town, West Main St, project designed to install sidewalk but unfunded at this time.
- Trucks from transfer station are affecting the traffic in the rotary. Truck access to I-90. There is access to get onto I-90 from the rest stop and there is also an emergency access in this same area. This will require town engagement between Hopkinton, MassDOT, and the transfer station. It will require negotiations and time but it may be possible.
 - Chairperson Silverberg thinks we should tackle this from the environmental aspect. There are probably 100 trucks per day. By allowing the west side access to the Turnpike, they could get to their burn facility. There is a 1 mile dedicated lane going east.
 - Member Schur believes a traffic study needs to happen that understands where the traffic is coming from and going to on the roads.

Mr. Payant wanted to point out that everything he is saying is conceptual. We need to identify the issues to be resolved first otherwise we may begin work that is solving the wrong problem.

If 50% of truck traffic is reduced, this would subsequently change the traffic issues going on in the rotary. Fix the outside things first. Wear and tear on roads is significant from truck traffic. Reducing this could save money. If we don't know how much these trucks are influencing traffic, do we know if solving this is going to help Master Plan goals.

Member Williams pointed out this project was brought forward several years ago. In light of new priorities with the state regarding sustainability, this can possibly be spun differently this time around.

Chairman Silverberg thinks a Master Plan for downtown that will address historic issues, traffic improvements, ED, etc. is needed.

East Main St. and Flanders Rd. was fully designed but never implemented. He has been working towards keeping this moving since money was already spent to develop it.

It would be great to do a Master Plan study in the Downtown Business District but that is many years of effort down the road. We will need to do things in tandem. Most projects are double digits in cost. How do we get to a plan?

- Years 1-10 create a roadmap, and also year's 10-20. Confirm priorities, identify funding sources. Intent of this committee is to help shape that.

Do shared use paths really reduce traffic? It is recommended by the state so it must have some impact.

The more paths available it will reduce the trips in cars for back and forth items.

Member Welch is curious where the majority of our traffic is coming from and going to? How do we improve things that reduce volume of traffic.

Member Schur asked if we could get a narrower study done on what the traffic is in the town to then make an informed decision on where our time and money would be best spent.

In Mr. Payant's opinion, Fisher/Church and Flanders/East Main St. rise to the top of the list.

- He asked the committee, is the priority the commuter or the resident, these are not the same problem.
- It was pointed out that the town did a safety audit of the rotary recently and recommendations were given that were not implemented because they negatively impacted something else.

Member Allen thinks the issue with walking in downtown is that people don't know where the parking exists.

- Economic Development got money from the state to do wayfinding.

Member Welch said there seems to be 3 buckets for Transportation; Parking, pedestrian/bike travel and traffic. The committee needs to decide where sidewalks would have the most connectivity.

Member Bleier shared that reducing the speed limits on town roads may address the issue of creating a safer feel for bikers and walkers.

Chairperson Silverberg mentioned that we should be discussing a sidewalk improvement fund that developers building in downtown would need to contribute to.

Mr. Payant added that the DPW has stayed out of projects focused on the rotary since he doesn't know what the town wants to do here.

Member Williams said the point of the Dept. head coming in is to point out to the committee what items are already in the works from the Matrix and what is remaining.

Chairperson Silverberg said our first step is hiring a new Town Planner.

Member Welch said it would be good to make sure the MPIC agrees on what the problem is we are trying to solve.

Chairperson Silverberg thinks downtown is a pass thru not a destination.

Member Welch said creating a destination will increase traffic. One idea is creating a bypass around downtown for those not wanting to stop there.

Member Kelleher said now that we see the projects on the horizon with the DPW, our action could be figuring out what next step would be to create a bypass that works around these areas.

There is a sewer capacity study that is ongoing and will not be done until next year. What amount of wastewater flow do we have that we can send to the wastewater treatment plant. We are currently very close to max. Until this is done, residential development is on hold unless they can have private sewage.

There is talk about changing zoning to remove residential in the highway business district.

Member Williams added that the role of the Master Plan Implementation Committee is monitoring and reporting.

Mr. Payant said next steps to move a study forward, would be for some department to own it, figure out how much it would cost, bring it to town meeting to get funding and carry it through. He also added that the bypass idea is not feasible.

Chairperson Silverberg wants to know how the MBTA Community/Housing Choice Act is going to affect downtown due to higher density issues.

Chairperson Silverberg would like to understand how we can change zoning to get funding for DPW needs. He would like to make sure once a sewer study is in that we set aside enough for the downtown area.

Member Welch would like to know how MPIC could assist DPW in making progress.

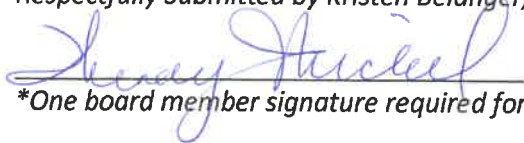
- Mr. Payant said after you've heard from all the Departments, you need to decide what you want to pick to support.

It was mentioned that the committee would like to suggest that each department provide a similar Gantt chart to the one Chris provided. Once collected, all can be laid over each other and compared.

Member Silverberg made a motion to adjourn at 9:16pm. Member Welch seconded.

Vote: 11-0

Respectfully Submitted by Kristen Belanger, Planning Dept. Admin. Assistant



**One board member signature required for approval.*