

Master Plan Committee

Jessica Porter, Co-Chair
Sarah MacDonald, Co-Chair
Alix O'Connell, Clerk
Josh Donati
Shaw McDermott
Margaret Adams Whitfield
James Antonizick
Dan Hart
Andrew Tittler
Sharna Small Borsellino
Nathan Gauthier
Dieckmann Cogill
Justin A. Humphreys
Jay O'Brien
Scott Steeves



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DEDHAM 2030 MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 17, 2020, Zoom

Present:

Jessica Porter Planning Board Member
Shaw McDermott, Dedham Resident
Andrew Tittler, Dedham Resident
Nathan Gauthier, Sustainability Committee Member
James Antonizick, Dedham Resident
Sharna Small Borsellino, Dedham Resident
Sarah MacDonald, Select Board Member
Alix M. O'Connell, Parks & Recreation Board Member
Josh Donati, School Committee Member
Justin A. Humphreys, Dedham Resident
Dan Hart, Open Space Committee Member

Not Present:

Jay O'Brien, Planning Board Member
Scott Steeves, Zoning Board of Appeals Member
Margaret Adams Whitfield, Dedham Resident
Dieckmann Cogill, Dedham Resident

Jeremy Rosenberger, Planning Director, opens up the 11th Master Plan Committee meeting with a quick overview of the Master Plan process, Zoom meeting protocols, and the agenda for the evening. Josh Fiala, Principal Planner at MAPC, goes over the Committee values and expectations, and an introduction to the Steering Committee. Mr. Fiala shifts the conversation to the Draft One Sheet Summaries. He gave a brief synopsis of the summaries and shared that the summaries would serve as a useful tool that people will be able to

preview prior to the Open Houses. From there, the master plan team will be able to dive into some of the details around strategies and actions. Next, the vision statement, which will be worked on by a subgroup of the Committee, will sit on top of all of these goals and priorities for the individual topic areas. The goals, strategies, and actions, which are part of the implementation tables of the master plan, will flow from there.

Draft One Sheet Summaries: Economic Development & Transportation

Mr. Fiala went over the different components of the one sheet summaries and opened the conversation up for feedback from the Committee.

Justin A. Humphreys asked about Section 3 of the Economic Development summary and whether or not the Committee had a chance to talk about the goals and formulate them as part of the past meetings. Mr. Fiala stated that Part 3 was structured in the conversations that took place within the previous Committee meetings. At the end of each of the topic presentations, MAPC highlighted what they thought were the results of the analysis and feedback from the community. This meeting was the first time the Committee would be seeing the written version of what was previously discussed at other meetings.

Alix O. Connell shared her comments about the form of the one sheet summaries, such as the colors used and the length of the summaries themselves. Mr. Fiala shared that a lot of detailed information is being communicated in the summaries, however, if the information is moved to being too high level, in terms of information, people will feel like they were surprised by things later on. The purpose of the information is to give people enough content to get a hold of where they think this is headed. Mr. Fiala also stated that the color orange that is being used in the Economic Development one sheet is associated with the color spectrum that has been being used for the master plan process.

Andrew Tittler stated that the master plan team needs to be very explicit that they are soliciting input on the one sheet summaries.

Jessica Porter commented that the area containing the goals should include the experts, MAPC, as one aspect. She also asked about how granular the goals will be. Mr. Fiala stated that some of the goals within the one sheet may make it through the entire process, but some of them might change and there might be new ones that show up along the way in the conversation. The goals will get more detailed and granular in terms of the strategies and actions that are articulated to make the goals actionable.

Dan Hart stated that there is no mention of an arts overlay district for East Dedham and that the previous Economic Development Director had a vision on how the creative arts could be an economic engine. Mother Brook Arts and Community Center was only a small portion of it. Mr. Hart shared that maybe MAPC and others in the town could provide some thought to this. Ms. Porter added that it may be worth flagging the East Dedham Arts Overlay District as one potential local business district to be invested in.

Shaw McDermott believed that there is a repository of things that have been done that are not fully reflected in the one sheet summaries. There have been analyses done, specifically by MAPC, about transit oriented development around the corridor on Rustcraft Road. Within one sheeters, there's also no mention of the Dedham Corporate Center. The one sheeters should make reference to the fact that the quasi industrial warehouse type facilities are areas where there is significant economic development job growth opportunities oriented around a transit nodes.

Sarah MacDonald shared that it would be helpful to have context on the Committee's process of decision making. Mr. Fiala responded that the one sheeters will be used to gather as much information as MAPC and the Committee can. Updates will then be made to the one sheeters so they can be distributed to the public to get them up to speed. MAPC and the Committee will be collecting all the feedback that they receive during the open house and comments that come from the Committee members themselves between now and March. The next step would be to do a final revision to make sure that the goals are mutually agreed upon.

Ms. Porter brought up that there is a struggle with transportation because Town Hall does not have an individual who is specifically responsible for transportation, and there are two different committees that work on transportation in different ways with different levels of support and authority. Ms. Porter wondered how much governance and staffing needs should be embedded into some of these goals shown on the one sheeters. Mr. Rosenberger stated that an action item would include increasing capacity for transportation related initiatives.

Sharna Borsellino agreed with Ms. Porter and Mr. Rosenberger. She mentioned that the way the goals are worded in a way that make it appear as though transportation projects would fall under the guise of the DPW, which is not necessarily the case. Ms. Borsellino stated that Dedham is facing some real issues with traffic congestion and that she does not see where any of these goals in the transportation one sheeters are addressing that. She also mentioned that we should be looking at removing single occupancy vehicles from our roads, looking at micro transit options, solving first mile and last mile commutes between Routes 1 and 1A, and also coordinating our efforts for grant funding with our neighboring communities who are up and down the Route 1 Corridor as well. We should be referencing the Neponset Valley TMA, the need to coordinate with our neighboring communities as well, and we need to pinpoint where transportation will lie within town governance because currently, it doesn't seem to lie anywhere, so there's no ownership.

Ms. O'Connell asked if the transportation person belongs in transportation or if it could be in governance with a reference to transportation. Mr. Fiala stated that MAPC will keep track of all the ideas that come out of this process and will do a sorting later in terms of knowing what will end up in each topic. That process will be easier to do once all ten topics have one sheeters in order to see how that sorting looks.

Nate Gauthier brought up that in order for each of the goals within the topic areas to be successful, there needs to be someone that is responsible. He asked if this would be part of

this document and exactly how much of this would be baked in now. Mr. Gauthier shared that there needs to be a plan that is laid out if we are to be successful in anything. Mr. Fiala stated that we need to narrow down to get to that level of detail so that we have confidence in these higher level ideas and goals. From there, we'll move down in detail level to the strategies and actions and ultimately populate the implementation table with responsible parties' timelines. We will only want to undertake that effort to get all the information together when we feel very confidence that we have a set of goals and strategies that the Committee is on board with.

Andrew Tittler shared that the overall goal is maybe increasing ease of travel, reducing congestion, and improving biking/pedestrian infrastructure, increasing transit reliability and our tools to get to that broader goal. Travis Pollack, of MAPC, agreed with Mr. Tittler's comments and that maybe we should think of it as larger goals and should consider the tools and different ways of addressing those goals.

Mr. McDermott stated that in the last mater plan, there was a separate chapter devoted to implementation and actually referred some of the tougher problems about implementing goals that were set up in the plan to an implementation committee, which then followed up with various town boards and commissions. That effort was more or less successful and was an effective way to keep on the radar any number of points without having to actually resolve them definitively with directive from the plan itself.

Community Open House

Mr. Fiala went over the agenda and format of the open house meeting. The presentations on Economic Development and Transportation will be consolidated at the open house. Mr. Fiala shared that MAPC will be taking all the discussion that they receive at the open house and they will be looking for patterns that they see from multiple voices in the community where there's consensus showing or where people are zeroing in on a specific goal or topic as being off or needing revision in some way. MAPC will use those voices from the community as a guide in refining all of the information.

Community Engagement

Carolina Prieto, of MAPC, shared the different initiatives that have taken place leading up to the open house. These initiatives included flyers, social media promotions, press releases, a newsletter, presentations to boards and committees, and promoting the event via multiple different networks.

Mr. Humphreys asked if there was a listing of when the Master Plan team would be appearing before the different boards and committees. Mr. Rosenberger shared that that information can be found on the different agendas. These meetings would consist of an update on the master plan, as well as an invitation to the master plan events.

Ms. O’Connell asked about the possibility of changing the March Open House to a different date that may work for private schools’ vacation schedules as well since vacation week is at the same time as the Open House date that is set.

Open Committee Discussion

Ms. Porter opened the conversation by asking the Committee members if they had any thoughts about Housing or Public Health in regards to the one pagers and the goals within them and if there is anything that should also be incorporated in those. No Committee member had additional comments, so Ms. Porter moved on asking Committee members to think about process. Ms. Porter asked if there are groups that have not been reached that should be thought about and if there are opportunities that need to be addressed.

James Antonizick asked about the number of people that have responded to the lawn sign questions. Ms. Porter responded that the posters have been creating buzz, however, there haven’t been too many responses. Mr. Gauthier mentioned that the lawn signs do not allow for anonymous responses and how that may be a factor that deters people from responding. Josh Donati also agreed that by not allowing anonymous responses, we may be preventing people from wanting to complete and submit their responses. Mr. Rosenberger asked Mr. Fiala if it was possible to change this on the back end so that people may respond to these questions without having to give their information. Committee members also shared that some groups that are missing include churches, youth and post-college ages people, and the organized labor community.

Ms. Porter moved on to talking about the meetings and how those have been working and asked what can be done to make them better. Mr. Humphreys shared that one of the things he’s been struggling with is the fact that Committee members didn’t really get a chance to get to know each other and had to abruptly switch to meeting via Zoom due to the pandemic. Mr. Rosenberger offered the possibility of doing breakout rooms at the next meeting.

Next Steps

- Finalize feedback on one sheet summaries by 11/20
- Post one sheet summaries for community by 12/11/20 Promote open house on 12/7
- RSVP for the open house on 12/7
- Topic Area presentation on Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources on 12/15/20 at 7pm

Chat Messages

Andrew Tittler: This was my comment as well, plus some additional comment on it.

Carolina Prieto: Keeping my video off due to low bandwidth. I am here however.

Carolina Prieto: We are also going to be reviewing the content and information at the open house so there will be other opportunities for that.

Andrew Tittler: Creating a chamber of commerce sounds like a strategy to achieve a goal of promoting small business, so later, I guess? But that's just one example, and Jess's point holds.

Alix O'Connell: Per Jessica's point - could we make the electronic copy include links to some of the "higher level" data and leave only the larger bullet points as an easily-consumable option?

Andrew Tittler: Seems reasonable

Andrew Tittler: How do we feed the discussions back into the process - is there a note taker for each break-out group?

Carolina Prieto: Thank you all! please email me any ideas if you need have any :) cprieto@mapc.org.

Alix O'Connell: The Spring break for private schools is scheduled for the weeks of March 14th and March 21st

Andrew Tittler: 6:45 OK

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 15, at 6:45pm.