

Master Plan Working Group
April 12, 2016, 6:30 pm
Minutes

Committee Members Present: Jeff Lacy, Melissa Warwick, Meryl Mandell, Chair, Mary Anne Antonellis, Al Hanson, Brad Spry, Nancy Dill via telephone.

David Kittredge and Michelle Cunningham arrived late.

Absent: Mike Vinskey and Bob Groves

Mary Anne shared an opinion from Donna MacNicol, Town Counsel regarding Open Meetings Laws. It is attached as appendix 1.

Minutes from previous meeting, Al moved to accept the minutes, Brad seconded, minutes passed unanimously.

Meryl had invited Becky to attend to explain procurement laws. Becky was unable to attend. Becky provided Meryl with the Chapter 30B Manual which covers procuring supplies, services and real property. The rules for securing services for less than \$10,000 are less cumbersome than if we spend more than \$10,000. Meryl made a motion that we keep the contract under \$10,000, Jeff seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

As per Becky, we can determine the criteria we want for the consultant and we will not be tied to the lowest bidder.

Meryl double checked and confirmed that the funds appropriated at Town Meeting last spring will carry forward after the close of the fiscal year.

Jeff shared a history of how the Master Plan Working Group and the idea of a Visioning process manifested. After the heated debate and eventual failure of the debt-excluded override for a new town library in 2012, private citizens came together to encourage civil communication. A group of townspeople began to meet regularly, calling themselves the Group for Civil Communication (GCC). The GCC thought a Visioning process, as the initial step towards a town Master Plan Update, might help the town to move forward in a positive way not just on the library issue, but on other topics of town significance. They approached the Planning Board and Select Board with a plan. It was presented at Town Meeting in May, 2015 and \$10,000 for hiring a consultant to assist in the Visioning process was approved.

The budget approved at Town Meeting only covers the Visioning piece.

Nan made a motion that we create a matrix comparing factors about living in Shutesbury with neighboring towns. Nan and Melissa will brainstorm ideas for this matrix. Melissa suggested it might help us get a sense of why people might choose to live in other communities instead of Shutesbury.

David Kittredge suggested we also compare demographics in the 2004 Master Plan to current demographics and demographic trends. The demographics in the 2004 plan were based on a period of growth which has not come to fruition.

Scope of Services

Nan asked for an explanation of our end goal. The end product must be a document that can be used to help shape the future direction of the town. We need to articulate our expectations and the level of detail needed. Our scope of services doesn't yet clarify what decisions we will be able to make based on information from the plan. We might consider more stringent qualifications.

Jeff explained that the aspects of a Master Plan are detailed in MGL, chapter 41, section 81(D). The Visioning process this committee is charged with will satisfy the first element of a Master Plan update.

Our task is to determine, with extensive community input, what is important to the town and how we implement what is most important. A consultant will help us reach out in effective ways.

The end product we expect from the consultant is the first element of a master plan which can be included in a comprehensive Master Plan if the town decides to proceed with one.

Logistics of how a consultant will be hired: MPWG recommends a consultant to the Planning Board and Select Board. Town Administrator will use the Scope that the MPWG creates and expand it into a contract which the Select Board signs.

Nan suggested some strategies for approaching the hiring process.

- Clarify desired outcome with level of detail and structure desired.
- List desired qualifications.
- Determine how we source the candidates
- Develop RFP.
- Post RFP to appropriate platforms and send to individuals identified by the group as potential candidates for the position.
- Review RFPs submitted.
- Design interview questions.
- Request and review work samples.

Jeff and Brad will search for examples of RFPs for this kind of work and send them to the group prior to the next meeting. Committee members should review before next meeting and come prepared to discuss RFP.

Nan suggested the qualifications include organizational development, facilitation experience with both small and large groups, public policy experience, and experience working with small, rural towns.

Next meeting, Wednesday, May 11th at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Anne Antonellis

Appendix 1.

Becky -

I believe there answer is in the definition of public body. "While there is no comprehensive list of public bodies, any multi-member board commission, council, authority, committee or subcommittee within the Executive branch of state government, or within any county, district, city region or town, which has been established to serve a public purpose, is subject to the law. **The law includes any multi-member body created to advise or make recommendations to a public body ...**"

It is my legal opinion that a working group of a public body would constitute a multi-member body created to make recommendations to a public body.

Thus, I would recommend that the working group comply with the open meeting law by posting their meetings and taking minutes etc.

Call if you wish to discuss further.

Donna
Donna MacNicol