

Minutes

Planning Board Work Session

Location: Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

Date & Time: July 13, 2022 7:00PM

Voting Members Present:

Charlie Moreno – Chairman
Phil Auger – Vice Chairman
Terry Hyland
Tim Reed

Non-Voting Members Present:

Donald Coker – Alternate

Others Present:

James Burdin, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Senior Regional Planner
Autumn Scott, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Regional Planner
Robert Fletcher, Minutes Recorder

The Chairman, Charlie Moreno, called the work session to order at 7:00PM, recognized Board members Phil Auger, Terry Hyland, Tim Reed and Donald Coker as present. He also recognized as present James Burdin, Autumn Scott and Robert Fletcher.

The Chairman stated that the Town of Strafford contracted with Strafford Regional Planning Commission to facilitate and assist in updating the Town's Master Plan. The Master Plan, which hasn't been updated since 2002, is based on the community's ideas and vision for the Town's future. The Chairman indicated that James Burdin is the lead project manager for the update, serves as the contract Town Planner for Northwood, specializes in land use and economic development, and has previously managed Master Plan updates for Durham's future land use and Barrington's economic development. Autumn Scott will assist Mr. Burdin on this project and is currently the contract Town Planner for Strafford's Zoning Board of Adjustments.

The Chairman noted that community participation was critical for the Master Plan update, recognized at least fifteen Town residents who were present, and expressed his appreciation for their involvement during the early stages of the update process. He then asked Mr. Burdin to provide an overview of the Master Plan process.

Mr. Burdin began by recognizing the meeting as being the first opportunity for public involvement in the Master Plan process, which will take more than a year to complete. He emphasized the importance of community input and the need for all participants to understand what a Master Plan is and how it effects the future of the community. He stated that a Master Plan is a document that tells a story about the community, describes how it became what it is today, and lays out a vision of what it can be in the future - usually ten to fifteen years. It acts as a guide to the overall growth and development of the community and should reflect the vision of the Town residents with respect to

natural resource conservation, land use, historical preservation, economical and residential development, and community services. It is a living and dynamic document that provides a guide for Town Boards and Commissions when addressing zoning ordinances, site plan/subdivision regulations, and capital improvements. The Master Plan does not, however, guarantee funding or project implementation.

Planning Board Work Sessions with public participation will convene for several months to address the beginning stages of the Master Plan update. This process will specifically address public outreach, which includes online engagement with short informative videos and social media postings, online surveys to capture community vision for the Town's future, and a community workshop or charrette to further address and formalize Master Plan sections or chapters to support the community vision.

Mr. Burdin reviewed the Master Plan update timeline, which included the following tasks:

- Review current Master Plan and outline Master Plan update. July-August 2022.
- Outreach – Online engagement. August-November 2022.
- Outreach – Online survey. August-November 2022.
- Outreach – Community charrette. November 2022.
- Plan writing. December 2022-May 2023.
- Town Meeting presentation. March 2023
- Final production and adoption. May-June 2023.

Prior to opening the Work Session for public comment, the Chairman announced that the next Work Session would be held on August 16, 2022, at 7:00PM. He asked Phil Auger to describe the community charrette. Mr. Auger indicated the charrette or workshop would be held at the Strafford School. Each section or topic of the Master Plan will be assigned a leader and addressed separately in school classrooms. Sessions are timed to allow community members the opportunity to participate in multiple sessions. Topic leaders will address prior outreach input and record charrette attendee input to reach a community consensus. The Chairman mentioned that around 120 residents attended the charrette in 2002, and it appeared that attendees were pleased with the opportunity to participate.

The Chairman opened the Work Session for public comments or questions and several attendees had questions.

- How many Master Plans did the Town have? The first Town Plan was completed in 1978 and followed by the current Master Plan in 2002.
- Is the 2002 Plan available to view? It is posted on the Town website along with the 1978 Plan.
- How much of the 2002 Plan was implemented? Some recommendations were implemented, while others were not. Having a Town Recycling Center in place of the dump was one recommendation that was instituted.
- Other towns establish committees to work on implementation. Could Strafford do the same? This is a good recommendation to be considered.
- Can some of the recommendations in the 2002 Plan be omitted from the Plan update? Any item the community believes is no longer appropriate can be omitted.
- Was the Master Plan a statement of vision for the future or a plan for project implementation? It is really both. In order to obtain a vision, it would be expected to complete significant tasks.

However, most tasks would require Town support and funding through the Town approval process.

Mr. Burdin continued his presentation with an outline of Master Plan content and layout using the Town of Goffstown Master Plan as an example. The Master Plan would have an introduction, community profile and vision statement followed by thematic chapters to address land use, community character, natural resources, economic development, community services, and infrastructure. An implementation guide would provide a summary of actions to support, promote and achieve the Town's vision. The Chairman, in response to one resident's concern, emphasized that the Plan is a guide for the Town. It is not a regulation or rigid document. It should be flexible and updated as conditions in the Town change.

Mr. Burdin addressed the outreach survey by highlighting sample questions and encouraging the Board and public attendees to provide input to add, expand, or change the survey:

- Who am I?
- Why do you choose to live in Strafford?
- What type of housing (if any) do you think is needed in Strafford?
- What type of housing should your town encourage?
- How affordable is housing in Strafford?
- What services/entities are not available in town that you wish were?
- Where do you currently access the following services?
- What is your preference for how future housing development should occur?
- What is your preference for how future commercial development should occur?
- Where would you like future development to occur in Strafford?
- Which of the following recreational resources have you or other members of your household heard of or participated in/visited?
- Prioritize which of the following should be actively encouraged in Strafford.
- Prioritize which of the following aspects of a transportation system the town should invest in.
- Are you more interested in conservation of resources or development in Strafford?

The Board and public attendees provided suggestions regarding the survey:

- Reformat "Employed in Strafford" with check boxes for each category (self-employed, commercial business, home business, working remotely). Also determine number of retired.
- Include question to determine age of respondent.
- Attempt to determine family composition (i.e. number of children, age of all family members).
- Add "What do you like about Strafford?"
- Use "agree/disagree" scale for many of the questions to allow greater response clarity.
- Include question to determine interest in a community gathering facility/area (i.e. recreation or community center).
- Include question to determine interest in environmentally protecting Bow Lake.
- Limited need for transportation system questions; however, need for bike route/paths and sidewalks should be addressed.
- With anticipated growth in Strafford, determine whether to address this with centralized residential development or spread out (rural) development. Likewise, ask this question for

- commercial development and whether or not commercial activity should be restricted to specific locations.
- Expand and reformat question (“important/unimportant”) about prioritizing Strafford events and activities to include water quality at Bow Lake, community/youth center, bike routes, etc.

Survey integrity was questioned, and Mr. Burdin indicated there was no way to ensure its integrity; however, the use of IP address identity and time stamps provide some indication of survey duplication. Conducting the charrette following the survey also provides an opportunity to identify any disconnects with the survey data.

In response to an attendee’s question about additional public input, the Chairman indicated that a number of Planning Board Work Sessions will be scheduled to address the Master Plan, the next being August 16, 2022 at 7:00PM. Public feedback at each of the Work Sessions and individually to any of the Board members or Mr. Burdin is encouraged and very important to the Master Plan upgrade process. Additionally, the latest material and information will be posted on the Town of Strafford website in advance of each meeting. An attendee suggested placing a link on the Strafford Community Facebook page to the Master Plan information on the Town’s website.

Mr. Burdin indicated he would incorporate this meeting’s suggestions/comments into a draft survey to be presented at the August meeting for final Board approval in anticipation of the survey being offered to the public via the Town website before the end of August. He also noted that the timing regarding online engagement with two short videos (one in September and one in November) was going to be too late. One should proceed release of the survey and the other should proceed the charrette. Board member, Terry Hyland, will work with Lynn Sweet and Terri Marsh to produce the videos.

The Chairman asked Mr. Burdin about additional outreach and engagement strategies. Mr. Burdin indicated there were two; 1) develop a website map for art and culture sites in Strafford, such as, historical markers, building murals, agri-tourism, buy-local retail, and restaurants, 2) pictures of Strafford for the Master Plan to make it a highly visual document.

The Chairman referenced the Goffstown Master Plan as an example of the format for the Strafford Master Plan and encouraged the attendees to view the Master Plan on the Goffstown website.

Ken Berry mentioned that a private video about Strafford was complete, had received legal releases, and a viewing was being planned for either September or October.

The Chairman thanked all the public attendees for taking the time to attend the meeting and reminded them of the next meeting to held on August 16, 2022 at 7:00PM.

The Board agreed to a tentative date of September 21, 2022 for that month’s Work Session. There being no further business before the Board, the Chairman made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Tim Reed. The Board voted unanimously in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 9:07PM.