

## Planning Board Work Session Minutes

**Location:** Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

**Date & Time:** February 23, 2023 6:30PM

**Voting Members Present:**

Charlie Moreno – Chairman  
Terry Hyland

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

**Others Present:**

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

The Chairman, Charlie Moreno, called the Work Session to order at 6:34PM and recognized Board member Terry Hyland as present. He also recognized as present Autumn Scott and Robert Fletcher.

### **Work Session – Master Plan Draft Chapter Review**

The Chairman asked Autumn Scott to bring the Board up to date on the Master Plan development process. Autumn indicated that the Master Plan Chapters had been drafted. Each Chapter contains three sections; 1) Introduction, 2) Key Trends, Needs, Issues, and 3) Goals and Actions. Chapters may also contain graphs, charts or pictures to provide additional information. The Board suggested replacing “Issues” with “Considerations” in the title of Section Two of each Chapter.

The Board reviewed and allowed public comments on three draft Chapters – Community Character, Community Services, and Age Friendliness – with emphasis on Goals and Actions for each. Both the Board and town resident, Terry Hyland, Jr., provided numerous comments and suggestions regarding Goals and Actions for each Chapter.

### **Community Character**

Overall, the community supports a small town, rural and agricultural atmosphere. Residents would like to see more local vendor outlets, such as farms stands or “cafés”, along with community gathering spaces, such as a central community or recreation center. Areas for social interaction along with ease of access, such as walking or biking, are important to the community. Proposed Goals to support Community Character are:

- Maintain Strafford’s rural character while allowing opportunities for growth.
- Promote development patterns the support walkability and happenstance interactions while maintaining town character.
- Promote small businesses and home occupations and encourage farming and sustainable forestry.

### Community Services

Town residents value the current variety and quality of services offered by the Town. They indicated the need for improved Bow Lake access and parking for both boating and beach use, a central community space, recreation programming for youth and seniors, and expanded library space and services. Proposed Goals to support Community Services are:

- Provide an all-in-one centrally located community center for indoor and outdoor activities and events.
- Continue to maintain and provide high quality municipal services.
- Expand recreational opportunities and promote the significance of historical and cultural resources.

### Age Friendliness

Town residents expressed concern about affordability of real estate and taxes in Strafford for all ages, but specifically for attracting new, younger residents. There was also concern for long-term, aging resident's access to services not available in Strafford, such as healthcare, retail stores, and restaurants. Proposed Goals to support Age Friendliness are:

- Create affordable housing opportunities.
- Develop multi-generational recreation programming.
- Plan town-wide events, activities, and opportunities that bring all segments of the community together.

The Board concluded that separate committees to address specific actions would be needed to achieve stated goals, and suggested the following:

- Bow Lake committee.
- Community Center committee.
- Recreation, welfare and health committee.

Autumn Scott indicated further outreach efforts to engage the Town community and increase awareness of the Master Plan. These include;

- A photo contest for residents to provide appropriate town scenes for the Master Plan and an opportunity to indicate interest in serving on a committee.
- A presentation at the March Town Meeting.
- Additional information in the Town Community Calendar.

Autumn Scott addressed follow-on Planning Board Work Sessions to review additional draft Chapters.

- March – Natural Resources, Housing, and Economic Development Chapters.
- April – Community Profile, Land Use, and Vision Chapters and the Implementation Guide and Master Plan Story-map.
- May – Full draft Master Plan review.
- June – Public hearing on revised draft of the Master Plan.

The Board agreed to conduct the next Work Session on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 6:30PM.

There being no further business before the Board, Terry Hyland made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Charlie Moreno. The Board voted unanimously in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 8:24PM.