

Planning Board Work Session Minutes

Location: Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

Date & Time: March 21, 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
Ashley Wright, Strafford County Public Health Network Manager
Robert Fletcher, Minutes Recorder

The Chairman, Charlie Moreno, called the Work Session to order at 6:35PM and recognized Board member Terry Hyland as present. He also recognized as present Autumn Scott, Ashley Wright, and Robert Fletcher.

Work Session – Master Plan Draft Chapter Review

Autumn Scott began with a review of changes to the Master Plan Chapters, Community Character, Community Services and Age Friendliness, discussed at the February 23rd Planning Board Work Session. The Board suggested a few minor corrections to the stated Goals and Actions.

The Board reviewed and allowed public comments on three draft Chapters – Natural Resources, Economic Development, and Housing – 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.

Natural Resources

Strafford residents take pride in the amount and quality of the available natural resources that define the character of the community and are in favor of land conservation to protect these features for future generations. Bow Lake is an important resource in town, and many residents are concerned about lake water quality and other water bodies and waterways in Strafford. Finding the right balance between leveraging the use natural resources in the area and protection and conservation of the land is crucial for maintaining the rural character and ensuring the long-term sustainability of existing resources. Proposed Goals to support Natural Resources are:

- Support existing nature-based recreational opportunities in town.
- Protect designated land areas by preserving them for future generations in an undeveloped state.
- Encourage strengthening of regulatory measures that safeguard the quality of natural resources.

Economic Development

Strafford is primarily residential with few commercial or industrial properties. Residents have expressed a desire to continue promoting small, home-based business. The desire to preserve the Town's natural resources outweighs the desire for additional economic development. However, future development should be located in or near the existing town centers of Bow Lake Village and Center Strafford to allow central access to goods and services. Proposed Goals to support Economic Development are:

- Promote local agribusiness and support economic activity in areas suited for mixed-use development such as Center Strafford and Bow Lake Village.
- Explore creative financing options that reduce financial stress on the Town and its residents.
- Engage in creative placemaking activities that support local artisans, build community character, and enhance economic vibrancy.

Housing

Housing in Strafford is dispersed and scattered throughout the town with some higher density development in various rural neighborhoods. The community identified their desire to protect the rural character and scenic vistas in town as well as natural resources, but recognize growing development pressures. The need for affordable housing in town may require a variety of housing types for a range of family situations. Proposed Goals to support Housing are:

- Encourage development patterns that maintain rural character and environmental protection.
- Guide new housing development to areas with higher housing densities to preserve the town's natural resources.
- Promote strategies that increase affordable housing opportunities.

The Board agreed to conduct the next Master Plan Work Session on Tuesday, April 25, 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 8:35PM.