

# Planning Board Work Session Minutes

**Location:** Strafford Town Hall Conference Room

**Date & Time:** May 9, 2023 6:30PM

**Voting Members Present:**

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

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Don Clifford – Alternate  
Susan Arnold – Alternate

**Others Present:**

Autumn Scott, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Regional Planner  
Ashley Wright, Strafford County Public Health Network Manager  
Lisa Murphy, Strafford Regional Planning Commission, Senior Regional Planner

The Chairman, Phil Auger, called the Work Session to order at 6:33PM. Robert Fletcher, Minutes Recorder, was not present and the audio recorder was not available; therefore, Tim Reed took notes for the minutes. Phil asked everyone to state their name for the record. The primary purpose for the Work Session was to review the Action Items for each section of the draft master plan; however, members can review the narratives and send their comments to Susan to be compiled. These minutes highlight some of the major items that came up during the meeting and do not represent a list of everything that was discussed.

**Work Session – Master Plan Action Items Review**

Autumn led the discussion and read aloud the goals and associated action items for each section. The group then provided their comments as Ashley typed comments into an electronic version of the master plan that was presented on the conference room television screen.

**Land Use**

The first section to be reviewed was Land Use, which did not yet include action items. This section was new to all the members, so time was provided for everyone to read through it. Susan indicated that Land Use shouldn't be the first section in the plan and suggested that it could be merged with other sections. Charlie stated that he felt that the Land Use section was important, especially in regard to zoning. He mentioned that the Town has had only one zone (Residential/Agricultural) for many years now, and feedback from the town forum suggests that it may be time to change that. Changes to zoning are mentioned throughout the master plan. Charlie suggested pulling those scattered references together into the Land Use section.

### Community Character

Building criteria were discussed. Feedback received at the town forum indicated that townhouses should be discouraged, but with the right design features, duplexes and townhouses can be attractive and made to fit in with the rural character of the Town.

The wording “historic markers” should be changed to “historic features.” Phil suggested “buildings with historical significance.”

Charlie liked the idea of a “welcome committee” and suggested that this should be a separate goal.

A more generic statement regarding sidewalks was suggested.

### Natural Resources

The action items associated with natural resources all seem to focus on water resources. The group would like to see other resources mentioned, such as post-development tree planting and landscaping requirements, invasive species, and insect pests. Other suggestions included revised mining regulations (gravel pits and quarries) and minerals.

### Economic Development

Under the goal to promote local agribusiness, the action item to “review land use regulations” was discussed. The action item seems to suggest that the restrictions on structural requirements and setbacks should be removed to allow farm stands.

The goal of exploring creative financing options and actions like Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) were discussed. Phil and Charlie indicated that these would be very difficult for the Town and aren’t necessary based on the town profile statistics. Autumn indicated that feedback at the town forum indicated that people think living in Strafford is too expensive. Terry indicated that the comment was directed primarily to housing costs, so the goal should be to provide more affordable housing. The goal to explore creative financing options was removed.

### Housing

The action item requiring developers to provide trails was discussed. Phil felt that requiring trails would not be possible, and the action item was reworded. Tim indicated that the intent to provide connectivity between developments should be maintained.

The action item to explore the use of architectural standards for residential development was removed.

Affordable housing was discussed, which led to a discussion of cluster development and low-income housing. Charlie indicated that Whig Hill has a variety of different types and sizes of houses and suggested that this approach would be better than having designated areas for low-income housing. Many of the lots on Whig Hill were sold as undeveloped lots; therefore, many of the homes were constructed by different contractors or the owners.

### Community Services

The major comment associated with the community services action items was that the goals were too specific and mentioned a community center. Tim suggested combining goals A and C into a single goal of strengthening community cohesion with all of the associated action items.

### Implementation

The next Work Session for master planning is scheduled for May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30PM. Autumn indicated that the details for implementation (what parties should be brought in) should be worked out during that work session. Autumn will send out a draft of the implementation guide on Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup> for discussion at the May 23<sup>rd</sup> Work Session.

### Organization of the Sections

Based on comments received, the sections were reorganized and will be sequenced as follows:

- Introduction and Vision
- Community Profile (data)
- Community Character
- Natural Resources
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Community Services
- Infrastructure
- Age-Friendliness
- Land Use
- Implementation Guide

The goal is to update the draft version of the Master Plan by the next Work Session. Autumn will update and distribute the draft version with edits based on tonight's discussions on Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Board members were asked to review the draft version over the weekend and provide comments to Susan by the morning of Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. Susan will compile the comments and provide the compiled version to Autumn by Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

There being no further business before the Board, the Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn, which was made by Charlie Moreno. Tim Reed seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:04PM.