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By Karen Wilber at 8:49 am, Aug 23, 2022

TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH

Master Plan Implementation Committee
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Master Plan Implementation Committee Meeting

July 21, 2022

Zoom Meeting Minutes

Approved Unanimously by Members on August 18, 2022

7:00pm—Chairman's Introduction to Remote Meeting

Mr. Leif, Chairman, opened the remote meeting. Mr. Leif stated that this Open Meeting of the Master Plan Implementation Committee was being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of July 16, 2022, an Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency and that all members of the Master Plan Implementation Committee are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. Mr. Leif noted that the Order allows the MPIC to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. He added that ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. Mr. Leif noted that this meeting will not allow for Public Comment. He indicated that the public may view the meeting via the link as listed on the posted agenda.

Members Present, Remotely: Rick Leif, Chair; Ashley Davies, Vice-Chair; Amy Poretzky, Millie Milton, Julianne Hirsch, Fran Bakstran, Gene Kennedy, Jeanne Cahill, Dario DeMare, John Campbell

Others Present, Remotely: Laurie Connors, Town Planner

The meeting opened at 7:00pm.

Status of RFP for Downtown Study

Ms. Connors said she'd received responses from the BSC Group, McCabe Enterprises, VHB Group and Weston and Sampson. She had experience working with two of those. She'd created a report card for use by the Selection Committee, members will need to refer to the RFP while going through the proposals in order to determine what would be a highly advantageous proposal. She will need their worksheets after a firm has been selected, it is a requirement in the event the procurement process is contested.

Ms. Connors had issued an addendum in response to questions received from the consultants. One consultant asked what the budget was; as a result, she'd responded to all with the amount appropriated.

She asked members of Selection Committee to pick up the proposals at the Planning Office for review. John Coderre and Scott Charpentier will be part of this process. Members tentatively settled on 9am Wednesday via Zoom to meet to review the candidates and determine who to interview.

Mr. Kennedy also felt it was important for committee members that were not on the Selection Committee to be able to listen in on the interview process so that they could provide input. Ms. Connors said they must be sure to adhere to the process set forth in the RFP; the Selection Committee is a subcommittee of this committee that is charged with identifying and selecting the successful candidate.

Update of Complete Streets

Ms. Connors provided an update. She, Scott Charpentier and Fred Litchfield met with Woodward and Curran to brainstorm projects. Dozens of projects were identified which will be represented graphically on a map for a future Complete Streets meeting. Ms. Connors said in order to receive funding from Complete Streets, your projects must be highly ranked on the list. There will be a public, in-person input session where people can vote on those projects.

Ms. Davies asked if those public sessions would have an opportunity for adding projects or if the purpose was to provide feedback for projects that already exist. Ms. Connors envisioned that there would be an opportunity to add projects but the emphasis will be on the prioritization of projects.

Mr. Leif hoped to discuss that prioritization list amongst this committee before going forward with it at a public meeting to see if those projects make sense based on the Downtown plan and if there are things not being considered that this committee feels are worthwhile to address and possibly add.

Ms. Hirsch asked if Complete Streets addresses street trees at all. Ms. Connors said yes although it is not their focus, they are more interested in issues such as addressing gaps in the network where sidewalks don't exist and bicycle facilities. National Grid has a street tree planting program, as well as the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program, which is trying to combat climate change, so that is more appropriate.

Consideration of May Minutes

Ms. Hirsch asked if the directive read by the Chair at the beginning of the meeting is supposed to be included in the minutes. Mr. Leif didn't think so. Ms. Milton said those are included in the Planning Board's minutes. Mr. Leif said it was up to the Planning Director as to whether or not she wanted that included, he didn't know if it is a requirement for an elected board versus an appointed board.

Minor edits were made. Ms. Poretsky made a motion to accept the minutes as amended. Ms. Hirsch seconded. Roll call followed, all in favor.

Consideration of June Minutes

Mr. Leif noted that because the June minutes were released shortly before the meeting, committee members did not have time to review them, so they will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Leif had one edit, he will email that to Ms. Connors.

Other Business

Mr. Kennedy, noting the lack of public parking downtown, asked if there are plans for public parking around the area of the future Fire Department on Main Street. Ms. Connors said an analysis will be done of the existing parking to determine whether it is sufficient and what can be done. She said there is more municipal parking that exists that people are unaware of because it is not marked; it isn't as bad as it may appear. Mr. DiMare commented that the parking doesn't work if those spots aren't convenient, street parking is what amounts to success. Mr. Kennedy thought the Gale Street parking area should be considered for a Complete Streets improvement project. Ms. Cahill said in looking at the landlocked parking lots throughout the Downtown, she thought if they were interconnected, metered, and striped for convenience, perhaps municipal parking could be created out of that which would fulfill the function of getting people to multiple choices of places and make it a pleasant experience to walk around the Downtown.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.

Respectfully Submitted By
Michelle Cilley, Board Secretary