

Master Plan Update Committee 2023

Meeting Minutes

June 28, 2023, 6:30 PM

Third Floor Training Room

355 East Central Street

This meeting was available to be attended in person by all citizens. The meeting was also live-streamed by Franklin TV and shown on Comcast Channel 11 and Verizon Channel 29.

Recordings have been made available on Franklin TV's "Franklin Town Hall TV" YouTube channel. Additionally, citizens were able to participate remotely via phone and Zoom.

Committee Members in Attendance: Chair Glenn Jones; Vice Chair Cobi Frongillo; Clerk Melanie Hamblen; Meghann Hagen; Jennifer Williams; Kenneth Elmore; Joe Halligan; Ginelle Lang; Eric Steltzer; Gino Carlucci

Committee Members Absent: Bruce Hunchard; Rick Power; Erin Gallagher

Others in Attendance: Bryan Taberner, Director of Planning and Community Development; Amy Love, Town Planner; Jeff Maxtutis, BETA Group, Inc.; Jill Slankas, Barrett Consulting; Mark Cerel, Town Attorney; Stephen Sherlock, Franklin Matters

Chair Glenn Jones called the meeting to order at 6:42 PM.

Public Meeting Law Overview

Town Attorney Mark Cerel gave a brief explanation of public meeting law to the Committee. Member Elmore asked if subcommittee meetings would adhere to the same public access requirements as the main Committee, as well as the possibility to hold subcommittee meetings in places besides the Municipal Building. Attorney Cerel answered that subcommittees do need to follow the same process as the main Committee, and they always need to ensure physical access to the public.

Attorney Cerel then continued explaining the obligations of subcommittee chairs. Chair Jones asked for more detail about what needs to be recorded at subcommittee meetings, which Attorney Cerel answered before continuing his explanation of quorum and public meeting law. Member Williams asked how the quorum requirement applies to subcommittees, given their small numbers of members. Attorney Cerel answered that subcommittees could converse if not enough members are present for quorum, but they cannot decide on anything binding. Member Lang asked to confirm that quorum for a 6-member subcommittee would be 4 members, and for a 3-member subcommittee would be 2 members, which Attorney Cerel confirmed.

Attorney Cerel also noted the matter of having main Committee members attend meetings of subcommittees which they are not members of, and how it may possibly constitute quorum for the main Committee. He explained that non-subcommittee members of the main Committee can sit and listen without causing a violation, but allowing them to speak moves the matter into a legal grey area.

Member Steltzer asked about the approval process of subcommittee meeting minutes. Attorney Cerel responded that each subcommittee does need to have an approval process, but there's no legal requirement for them to be voted upon and they must be provided to anyone who requests them once they have been drafted. Member Steltzer followed up with a question confirming that minutes would be stored on the Google Drive.

Member Lang asked about the possibility of joint-subcommittee meetings to address overlap that is noticed by the subcommittee Chairs, to which Attorney Cerel and Chair Jones answered that the Chairs would serve as co-Chairs for such meetings.

Member Hagen asked about documents that members may want to share with the rest of the Committee or subcommittee, which Attorney Cerel and Planning Director Bryan Taberner clarified.

Member Halligan inquired about attending the public meetings of different Boards and Committees and giving his input as a citizen, and whether or not that would risk the possibility of an ethics violation. Attorney Cerel responded by explaining where and when such situations that risk an ethics violation could occur.

Subcommittees

After reiterating the subcommittees and Chairs decided upon at the previous meeting, Chair Jones discussed the 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan with member Hagen and Planning Director Taberner.

Chair Jones asked how the members of the Sustainability subcommittee could find a clear direction when they will be asking questions in relation to all of the other subcommittees, which led to discussion about the possibility of later on changing the focus of Sustainability from being its own goal to being a component of every other goal.

Master Plan Draft Timeline

The Committee went into extensive discussion about its Mission Statement. Chair Jones instructed members to send their suggestions or edits to him so he can direct them to Planning Director Taberner and Town Planner Amy Love to make any revisions and bring them back to the Committee.

Member Steltzer inquired about making sure that the Community Engagement Plan has enough time to incorporate any statements on diversity that are made by the Committee in drafting its Mission Statement. Chair Jones said that it is logical that the Committee establish its Mission Statement prior to any public forums with subcommittees. A deadline of July 19 was established for the last day that suggestions to the Mission Statement could be sent to the Planning Department by.

Planning Director Taberner explained the timeline of sending comments and determining the Committee's mission, including that the July 26 Committee Meeting would be when the Committee debates and decides on its Mission Statement. He added that the public input period would last at least a month.

Member Williams asked to know more about how the community engagement process would work, and whether the Planning Department would develop a plan for it or be leaving it to the Committee to develop. Chair Jones replied that the Committee would be having its own level of engagement with the public to acquire that feedback, while subcommittees would have their own specific means of community engagement.

Vice Chair Frongillo asked when the Committee would need to respond to data requests by. Planning Director Taberner answered that they will hopefully have a better idea next month of what their timeline will look like.

Chair Jones asked Planning Director Taberner if he thought they would have the public engagement process set up as soon as August, to which Planning Director Taberner responded that he thinks by September the Committee will have at least some components of the process working, but added that it really is up to the Committee to decide what they want to do and when with regards to public hearings and other public input.

Master Plan PR/Messaging discussion

Chair Jones asked that the matter of PR and messaging be postponed to the next meeting as Franklin Marketing and Communications Specialist Lily Rivera could not attend this meeting. The Committee members agreed to table the discussion to the July 26 meeting.

Next Meetings

July 26, 2023 at 6:30PM

Adjourn Meeting

Vice Chair Frongillo motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Member Williams. There was a unanimous vote in favor of adjourning. Meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tyler Paslaski
Administrative Assistant

--Master Plan Update Committee approved minutes at October 25, 2023 meeting