

Master Plan Update Committee 2023

Meeting Minutes

November 29, 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 8 and Verizon Channel 28.

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; Kenneth Elmore; Joe Halligan; Ginelle Lang; Gino Carlucci; Rick Power; Erin Gallagher; Eric Steltzer; Jennifer Williams; Meghann Hagen;*

Committee Members Absent: *Bruce Hunchard;*

Others in Attendance: *Amy Love, Town Planner; Jill Slankas, Barrett Planning Group LLC; Jeff Maxtutis, BETA Group, Inc.; Stephen Sherlock, Franklin Matters;*

Chair Glenn Jones called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

Meeting Minutes

Member Carlucci motioned to approve the minutes from the meetings on September 13, September 27, and October 25. Seconded by Clerk Hamblen. Member Hagen voted Yes. Member Carlucci voted Yes. Member Power voted Yes. Member Lang voted Yes. Member Steltzer voted Yes. Member Williams voted Yes. Member Halligan voted Yes. Member Gallagher voted Yes. Member Elmore voted Yes. Clerk Hamblen voted Yes. Vice Chair Frongillo voted Yes. Chair Jones voted Yes. Motion passed 12-0-0

Subcommittee Updates

Member Elmore, Chair of the Housing and Economic Development subcommittee, said they would be having their next meeting on December 6. Vice Chair Frongillo, Chair of the CSFC subcommittee, recapped their meeting which had happened earlier in the afternoon. Member Carlucci, Chair of the Sustainability subcommittee, said that their next meeting was scheduled for December 4. Member Hagen, Chair of the OSRP & NCHR subcommittee, said they would be meeting next on December 12. Member Lang, Chair of the Land Use & Zoning subcommittee, recapped their previous meeting from November 27 and said their next meeting is going to be rescheduled from December 11 to instead happen on another date to be determined.

Existing Conditions & Inventory Draft Report

Town Planner Love briefed the Committee on how the inventory reports had been distributed to each of the members so they could review them and suggest edits. Chair Jones explained to the other Committee members how they should organize their edits and recommendations. Member Elmore asked about how there appeared to be an absence of assessment in the

Inventory & Assessment, explaining that he does not find just having the facts to be useful. He added that much of the information calls for conversations about the future that should be addressed in part by assessments. Town Planner Love responded that the report is meant to show what the Town has, but added that Member Elmore is right and the Committee needs to show how the Town can do more with what it has to move forward with the goals and objectives of the Master Plan. Member Elmore added to his earlier comment that the Committee should be having a discussion on what growth and quality of life mean in the context of the goals and objectives, and that both should be discussed in the assessment and not the inventory. Member Hagen and Chair Jones responded to Member Elmore by discussing how the goals and objectives would be addressed in action plans once they are set in each subcommittee and implementation discussions are held.

Member Williams asked about how the conditions of facilities are being determined, which prompted discussion with Vice Chair Frongillo and Town Planner Love about how the consultants are conducting the assessments regarding buildings. Member Lang inquired about data she saw in the inventory being existing data last updated around 2018 and needing to be brought up to date, and commented that it would be helpful to see the data from each year in the past 10 years in a table form that can be used to visualize any possible trends. She also asked in regard to trends about how the data compares to neighboring Towns in Massachusetts for benchmarking. Town Planner Love weighed in to point out that Franklin is the largest community in its surrounding area and the Master Plan is specific to only the Town itself, but they can still ask the State for data to provide context and inform on trends. Vice Chair Frongillo encouraged the Committee to make their recommendations for what trends they would like to learn more about.

Members of the Committee then brought up numerical figures and data they had seen which they believe are inaccurate, with Chair Jones stating that he does not believe it is ready as a final document and will need to be thoroughly reviewed by the Committee before it is. Town Planner Love said that they could work on corrections to the document, but they cannot keep following along with what documents and trends are going to be released in the future and need to settle things with the document soon. Chair Jones asked to confirm that after the December 13 meeting with the Consultants, the Committee Members come up with feedback for the Consultants to answer at the January 2024 meeting, which Town Planner Love said they should be able to expect. Chair Jones asked everyone to take time to review the Existing Conditions & Inventory carefully and note down suggestions to be consolidated into a document that the Consultants can review and prepare feedback for the December 13 meeting.

Tabling and Outreach for Survey

Town Planner Love thanked Member Gallagher for drafting the flyers, and said that posterboards have been created and distributed with those flyers along with social media posts. She added that they have decided to keep the survey available to be completed for the rest of the year, and social media posts encouraging residents to fill out the survey will continue to be sent out throughout December. Member Power asked if there is a goal for how many

responses to the survey they are trying to achieve. Chair Jones answered that they want as many survey as they can get. He added that 232 responses had been received in the past week, but noted the challenge of constantly reposting the survey on a weekly basis as social media sites will not bring it up again on their own. Chair Jones then asked how much time was needed to correlate the data from the survey once collection of it is closed, to which Town Planner Love answered that it gets correlated daily because of the software capabilities. The Committee then agreed that January 3, 2024 would be the last day of collection for the survey before they prepared the results for the January 10, 2024 meeting.

Member Williams then raised concerns that method of electronically sending the survey link to people who signed up to be emailed it appeared like it could be interpreted as fraudulent or a phishing link. She recommended having a way for it the sender to be Town Administrator Jamie Hellen or another trusted public figure. Chair Jones responded that the concerns are understandable, but said that the link to the survey was too buried in different webpages and should be more directly accessible. There was discussion about the answers for survey questions not using a consistent scale of what 1-5 mean for each question, followed by discussion of making the survey available in multiple languages. Member Gallagher noted that the survey is a Google Form, and thus has the feature of Google Translate available for participants, but the page with the survey should have a note about language translation in multiple languages added in.

Member Steltzer remarked that there might be people who do not participate in digital or social media and are not aware of the survey or the Master Plan Committee as a result, and he then asked if there is anything the Committee could do any direct type of outreach to those community leaders in Franklin to welcome their participation in the survey.

Member Williams then presented a type of Map-Based surveying program called Maptionnaire that she believed would be useful for the Committee to work with. Town Planner Love noted that there was a cost of \$4500 for three surveys to be done using that platform, and they have not yet found any other boards, committees, or projects that have said they would use the platform for a survey and justify the cost. Member Halligan commented that the type of survey seemed conducive to people who already live in the area but not people who would like to live in the area in the future, and thus the results might show a general reluctance to new housing in the Downtown Area. Chair Jones said that the opinions on new housing might very well differ between people for reasons such as their age, and for that reason they need to keep in mind how large of a breadth of input they are going to be able to collect as older residents might have a different opinion on housing than younger residents, yet not be as able to engage in a Maptionnaire survey as the younger people. Member Williams, responded that the map-based survey could be printed onto paper forms for those who have trouble taking online surveys. The Committee then discussed and deliberated over paying to utilize the Maptionnaire along with non-electronic map-based community feedback sessions. Chair Jones explained that the first open public meeting would be an opportunity to work with the public on map-based feedback, which the Consultants had recommended that they do at some point, but they should have a timeline of meetings and public sessions firmly planned first.

2024 Meeting Dates

Chair Jones stated he chose the dates for 2024 meetings to be off-Wednesdays on weeks opposite those of the Town Council. They decided to reschedule a meeting planned for May 1, 2024 to May 8, 2024. The first public meeting was scheduled for February 21, 2024.

Vice Chair Frongillo motioned to approve the schedule of meetings for 2024, with the change of the May 1 meeting to May 8, 2024. Seconded by Member Carlucci. Member Hagen voted Yes. Member Carlucci voted Yes. Member Lang voted Yes. Member Power voted Yes. Member Steltzer voted yes. Member Williams voted Yes. Member Halligan voted Yes. Member Gallagher voted Yes. Member Elmore voted Yes. Clerk Hamblen voted Yes. Vice Chair Frongillo voted Yes. Chair Jones voted Yes. Motion passed 12-0-0.

Chair Jones then explained how the Consultants had told him in a meeting earlier in the day that the Committee should start planning a venue for the first public hearing. Locations such as the Franklin Public Library, Dean College's Golden Room, and the Senior Center were thrown around, and Chair Jones encouraged the Committee to think of other locations that would be good for facilitating public engagement.

The Committee discussed setting the dates for its implementation process, with April 10 being the time that Chair Jones believes the Committee should start planning implementation by. Subcommittee Chairs were also encouraged to conduct and complete their own public outreach initiatives between January 1 and March 20 of 2024, prior to the second public hearing.

Next Meetings (Main Committee)

December 13, 2023 at 6:30PM

Next Meetings (subcommittees)

Open Space & Recreation, Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources: December 12 at 7:00PM

Community Service, Facilities & Circulation: December 13, 2023 at 5:00PM

Land Use and Zoning: November 27, 2023 at 7:00PM

Housing & Economic Development: December 6 at 5:00PM

Sustainability: December 4, 2023 at 7:00PM

Additional Comments

Adjourn Meeting

Clerk Hamblen motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Member Hagen. There was a unanimous vote in favor of adjourning. Meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tyler Paslaski

Administrative Assistant

--Master Plan Update Committee approved minutes at January 10, 2024 meeting