

Master Plan 2023
Sustainability Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
August 21, 2023, 7:00 PM
Room 205, 2nd Floor
355 East Central Street

This meeting was available to be attended in person by all citizens and citizens were able to participate remotely via phone and Zoom.

Committee Members in Attendance: Chair Gino Carlucci, Melanie Hamblen, Eric Stelzer
Others in Attendance: Master Plan Chair Glenn Jones

Meeting called to order by Chair Carlucci at 7:00 PM.

Review of 2013 Sustainability Goals

Chairman Carlucci commented that a big accomplishment of the 2013 master plan was Franklin becoming a Green Community in 2018.

The group then discussed the fact that sustainability goals and actions involve all Master Plan elements. Sustainability should include climate resiliency and connections to open space would be a part of that serving as green infrastructure. It was also noted that there needs to be a public outreach program in addition to town efforts to effectively impact and respond to climate change. The state has prepared a list of 10 Sustainable Development Principles that the subcommittee can use as a guide as it develops the Sustainability element..

Among the other elements that would need to address sustainability are:

- The Land Use element could be restated to emphasize growth compatible with the state Sustainable Development Principles. Also, a goal could be to establish the town as a center for sustainable growth.
- The Natural Resources update should note the town's Green Community status and include agriculture among the valued resources. Discussion included promotion of rain gardens as well as requiring rain detectors on lawn sprinklers. The Committee should provide education on the Town's Water Program in the Master Plan booth at the Harvest Fest.
- Change wording from specifying areas for workforce housing to encouraging diverse housing choices for all.
- Benefits of higher density, especially downtown, should be considered. Chairman Carlucci mentioned the Charles River Water Association which created a model of impervious surface areas as a percentage by town. He recalculated the figures on a per capita basis which illustrated that much greater impervious surface is needed to accommodate population at lower densities. Franklin is roughly in the middle in both calculations.

- Member Hamblen brought up form-based code, and need to have a poster about it at the Harvest Fest booth. The booth should also advertise Rain Garden awareness .especially on how to reduce run-off and get discounts on the new stormwater utility fee.
- The group discussed the energy component and whether to consider the new opt-in energy building code, to promote net-zero buildings. Also discussed was the fact that what used to be tax credits for solar projects which towns are not eligible for are now rebates that can be applied to public buildings. Member Stelzer spoke of a Solar Siting Toolkit that is available from the state that came out of Cape Cod; and the group talked about Agricultural solar being added to the new Master Plan. Also clearing of forests issues with solar. New Opt-In code discussion.
- It was noted that the Open Space and Recreation subcommittee discussed the storm water program is doing well. Also discussed were the MS4 permit, the need for evaluating culvert size to accommodate larger storms; public education should be increased. Review of septic system control to keep storm water out of sewer was also discussed.
- There needs to be a program to remove/reduce “heat islands” in town.

Review of Progress since 2013

The group discussed EV growth as a step towards zero-emission. There are Town charging stations but perhaps they should be at all public areas. There are now multiple Town vehicles that are EV's and state grants are available where for both charging stations (including Level 3 DC fast charging stations.

Electric bike safety and e-bike charging stations in public areas was also discussed along with the need for safer bikeways for all bikes. Also bike sensors where there are not traffic lights in busy areas are needed to cross a street, especially when SNETT is extended to Union Street. And, in general, there needs to be more connections among trails and potential destinations.

It was suggested to provide a poster for Harvest Fest to highlight accessibility areas [**for open space?**] throughout town. Member Hamblen brought up that access to Riverbend toff Lincoln Street to Riverbend past Skyline Drive is needed. In the future, we need to identify how to get people to Schmitt Farm. The group discussed small hubs in neighborhoods for easier access to stores. There is also a need for connections to downtown from Union Street in the Crossing as it grows. Chairman Carlucci noted that what is now called Downtown was traditionally called Uptown in the past.

Next Meetings: Monday Sept. 18, 2023 7:00 PM

Adjourn Meeting

Chairman Carlucci motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Member Hamblen. There was a unanimous vote in favor of adjourning. Meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM.