

Master Plan Implementation Committee

June 26, 2023

Members Present: Cheryl Tougias, Chair; Warren Lizio, Dick Burke, Roxanne Musto, Regina Campbell-Malone, Taber Keally, Josh Eckart-Lee Assistant Town Planner

Members Absent: Elaine Benson

Meeting called to order at 7:04. Next meeting date will be Monday, July 24th, and September 18th. Motion to approve the minutes from May 15th made by Warren Lizio, seconded by Roxanne Musto. All in favor.

Citizen's Speak

No citizens elected to speak at this time.

Discussion of The Equity and Justice for All (EJA) Committee's report and recommendations with co-chairs Patricia Latimore and Chris Hart and discussion of the possibility of updates to the Master Plan

Chair Tougias introduced Chris Hart and Patricia Latimore, co-chairs of the Equity and Justice for All Committee, to speak on the work of their committee and then their analysis of opportunities for growth on this subject within the Master Plan. The Committee was established in October 2020 to work with the Select Board to review policies, procedures, and budgets for advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). There were 11 members of the committee representing a wide array of interests and specialties. While there was a focus was on racial diversity and immigrant status, there was a concerted effort to touch on the myriad ways diversity exists. Looking forward for the committee, there is expected to be a renewed focus on other forms of equity and inclusion, such as health equity. The committee conducted a community survey which received almost 600 responses and provided a progress report to the Select Board in April 2021. The committee's final report was issued in April 2022 and can be found at:

https://www.townofmilton.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf911/f/uploads/equity_and_justice_for_all_advisory_committee_report_3-23-22.pdf.

A finding of note was that there was a noticeable divide between how newer vs longer-term residents viewed the state of DEI issues in Milton. Member Keally asked about the statistical significance of the survey; the co-chairs and their survey consultant found the survey results statistically significant and quite representative of the town's demographics. The survey data is available for public access at the Town Clerk's office. The findings of the survey were particularly helpful as being a check on the committee's findings and assumptions, which were largely corroborated. As a result of the work of the committee, the Town has instituted a formal statement on DEI and created a standing DEI committee, which is still waiting to have a quorum of its members be appointed. The Town hired a DEI consultant who is working with the Town closely on DEI trainings, 5 of which have been conducted so far. The charge of that committee is the same as that of the EJA Committee. Members discussed in particular the affordable housing element of the recommendations of the EJA and how they align with the goals of the Master Plan. Co-Chair Latimore noted that the Master Plan's language around preserving Milton's character is often coded as exclusionary language. Co-Chair Hart expanded on that subject and spoke to how "Milton's character" is often understood as code for opposition to multi-family and affordable housing. Member Musto suggested that people not make assumptions of what someone meant by that statement and individuals need to talk to individuals to ascertain what they

meant by “Milton’s character” instead of assuming they know what someone meant by saying that. Committee makeup was a major point of the recommendations of the EJA committee; some of the efforts to have more representative committees have been increasing the amount of advertising of position through the Town Website and local newspapers. One thing that was heard from residents of color was that they do not feel comfortable in town board and committee spaces. One recommendation of the committee was to collect voluntary demographic information from volunteers, which has not been implemented.. Our forms and committee handbook as well as volunteer forms were reviewed by Town Counsel. There is a statement within guide that there is no discrimination based on a multitude of criteria that are standard in anti-discriminatory practices. Due to time limitations, the discussion concluded with the suggestion that Mr. Hart and Ms. Latimore may be invited to a future meeting to further the discussion.

Update on Town Center Parking Needs and Utilization Analysis and status of contracts and work with engineering firms BETA and Bohler

Will Adamczyk, Library Director, presented key data on parking needs and usage of the Library. Parking has been a concern for the library over the past decade, with safety, accessibility, and capacity for growth being the main elements of that concern. Demand for space at the library has increased as the supply of other event spaces, such as the Hoosic Club, has decreased. Three metrics used to track usage were book checkouts and returns, Wi-Fi usage, and event space booking frequencies. Tuesday afternoons and evenings were notably busy times, with most weekday afternoons and Saturday mornings being the peak usage. Because of the limitations on parking, morning programming is unable to be expanded. With additional parking, an additional morning slot would be potentially accommodated. Member Musto asked where employees park, to which Director Adamczyk responded that they are typically in the main lot, Canton Ave, or are carpooling or walking. Tuesday night has become a very popular night for teen programming, building on an already-popular day of the week. Member Burke reiterated how the library’s role as a community hub has grown and so has the demand for it as a space for programming. Library Trustee Kris Hodlin noted that the use of the library for Wi-Fi, including in the parking lot, is a library service and she does not wish to discourage the use of the library as a community space. Director Adamczyk said that the library needs approximately 20-30 additional parking spaces to accommodate the current need and expected growth. Director Adamczyk noted that potentially a teen center (perhaps an alternative location for the Wildcat Den) would be a good usage for the surveyed site at 40 Highland.

Josh Eckart-Lee noted that contracts with BETA and Bohler have been secured for the scope approved at the May 15, 2023, MPIC meeting and work is progressing. A third site plan concept was submitted by Bohler, and their work has been invoiced at the expected cost of \$1,500. BETA conducted sightline analysis and other on-the-ground work for the crosswalk analysis during the week of June 12th. Their analysis is currently in progress and a report is forthcoming. Josh Eckart-Lee was asked to seek a fee amount from Bohler to provide preliminary design and construction budgeting for the third concept.

Planning Staff also conducted their evening parking analysis on 6/14 and a summary will be provided at the next meeting. Josh Eckart-Lee provided a brief update that there is a new Assistant Town Engineer, Sky Berube, who comes to us from UMass Dartmouth. Sky had worked with the town previously as a student, studying green infrastructure and flood mitigation along Milton Landing. Seeking to continue

this tradition, Sky has helped develop a project request form to the UMass Dartmouth Engineering Program for additional parking utilization and additional space analysis in support of MPIC's Town Center work. The study will be conducted in the Fall.

Master Plan key subject area research and outreach updates

Dick Burke will coordinate a presentation or update on the implementation of the Traffic Mitigation Committee Report and broader traffic and parking concerns. There is a desire to use the traffic model with more regularity, particularly for projects that may look to street closures as a part of the traffic mitigation.

Agenda topics for upcoming meetings

During the July meeting, members will each present briefly on the subject areas that have been assigned to them. There is an interest from members in learning more about "Why do people move to Milton?". Members discussed MBTA Communities and how it interfaces with the goals and implementation of the master plan. Members discussed leveraging Milton realtors to help gather anecdotal evidence on this matter.

Motion to adjourn made by Regina Campbell-Malone, seconded by Dick Burke. All Present in favor.
Meeting adjourned at 9:40.

Respectfully submitted,

Josh Eckart-Lee

Assistant Town Planner