

Minutes
Master Plan Sub-Committee Meeting
February 14, 2019

Planning Board/Master Plan Sub-Committee Meeting

February 14, 2019, 9:00 a.m., Room 7C

Attendees: Sue Brown, Christine Delisio, Mary Foley, Andrea Fish (first hour)

Andrea started the discussion of the Draft Master Plan since she had limited time availability.

Design Review Team

This calls for a team of officials (**Design Review Team**) from the Town, to meet with an applicant of a project that requires a Site Plan Review Special Permit *prior to* submitting an application to the Planning Board.

- Concerned that this is a shift in control from how it is currently done. This would take public reaction out and limit neighbors input. Neighbors should be the main consideration.
- At a time when Transparency is being pushed, this does the opposite.
- Andrea thinks technical review should be done *after* Public Hearing.
- Sue thinks that this idea makes the process more efficient. Everyone looking at an application at once – it is a technical review intended to produce a better application. It is not an iterative process between the TRT and the potential Applicant, as they meet only once. The Team identifies potential problems with the design, and it is up to the Applicant to decide if they want to make a change before submitting the application to the Planning Board. The Applicant does not go back to the Team with a solution.
- Everyone but the Planning Board.
- Andreas point is that even if there were a DRT, at the end of the process there would still be the same number of meetings.
- If there were a DRT, once it goes to PB it already has momentum to get approved.
- Creates a level of “secrecy”.
- Vetting should be in public, with neighbors.
- Sue – not meant to take away any power. Make it better for everyone. *But better for whom?*
- Sue stated this works well in larger towns with more applications.
- But this is a small town.
- Planning Board should vote whether to keep this in Master Plan or not.

Zoning Changes in General District

Changing zoning in the General District is being proposed to allow for more density, multi-purpose buildings, and more commercial and residential opportunities.

- *How* would this differ from current zoning that is allowed in the General District?
- Residents should have a say.
- If it is in MP, and a priority in MP, it sets Policy for future development.
- Andreas point – there already is higher density allowed in this district and it is not being taken advantage of. How would this be different? What is the Vision?

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- Sue – keep neighborhood feel; take advantage of opportunities; use carriage house as a resident; allow for greater percentage of impervious surface; keep size of houses modest.
- Should change wording in MP – “small changes”.
- Sue – 2nd floor/ mix use capability
- Only 4 units currently allowed. Wants to allow for 6 or more units.
- Example – Dunkin Donuts should not have come in. Elm Street did not start out that way. Things *morph*.
- Need to use language carefully in Master Plan. Language creates a momentum.
- Zoning changes in LCD will be bigger. Downtown incremental changes.
- 2 Districts in downtown...?

Building Inspector Time

- Only here one and a half days a week. Need a Zoning Officer that will enforce Zoning.
- Not responsive to Planning Board.
- Citizen complaints – not responsive.
- What is the purpose of doing all of this (Master Plan) and then no verification? Point is lost if not enforced.
- Need to enforce our current laws.
- More hours needed and a different process.
- Mary – I think PB needs to review Curb Cuts once they are actually in. There are too many inconsistencies with what has been approved and what ends up happening.
- Need Board support – ZBA/PB.
- Need Zoning Enforcement Officer.
- Should DPW perform Curb Cut approval?
- Put in MP to reinforce idea of Enforcement Officer.
- Small lots/small buildings – not enforced.
- Need to go to FAR calculations – get a better sense of bulk.

At this point Andrea needed to leave the meeting.

Communication Problem/Issues

- Christine – PB needs to be kept in the loop. Lack of communication.
- Sue – in the past PB was busy with permitting. She stepped into the PB void. Things need to be clarified who does what.
- Sue - Manchester needs an active Planning Board and an active Town Planner.
- No clear chain of who is responsible for what.
- Economic Developer Role.
- Governance – what are the procedures for Boards?

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Draft Master Plan Discussion

- Community Vision pg. 4, is from the Vision Report.
- Pg. 4 - "...change without harm to shared community values." - needs re-wording.
- Town Character Statement. Use from 2000 MP wording? "Preserve the character of Manchester as exemplified by its scale, density and the inherent charm of its diverse architecture, shops, streets, and natural and historic features."
- Should not always take money just because "available", might not be part of our character. (Complete Streets and MAPC)
- Things happening not for Town of Manchester residents, but for visitors. While we have sidewalks in disrepair.
- Each year set Goals - all Departments and Boards.
- Implement Complete Streets Projects *after* maintain current street and side-walk issues. Complete Streets mostly focusing on intersection improvements right now.
- "Our Story" - needs to be re-worked
- Should "number" items, instead of using bullets. That would be easier to read.
- Pg. 9 - Language regarding expanding downtown. This needs to be clarified.
- Pg. 25 - "Remove barriers" - what does this mean? This needs to be clarified.
- Sewer capacity issues. DPW - water coming in from broken pipes - they fixed pipes.
- There has been a moratorium on bedrooms. Where does this money go, if all has been fixed?
- DPW still fixing pipes. Infrastructure issues. Is the capacity sufficient? We need some type of report to prove that we have the capacity for current infrastructure needs, and then for expanding infrastructure.
- P. 11 - Design Guidelines. Town Character statement needs updating.
- Town land. Why don't we know what land we own? Sue - Family's owned wooded land in the past to harvest wood, then forgot about them. Town has taken over this land over the years - given to, no taxes paid, etc. CPC funded research of land. Most of this land is town owned at this point. Reference pg. 12 - Develop a framework for assessing Town-owned land.
- Parking a big concern. Town is applying for a Grant for a parking study of just downtown - \$25,000-\$30,000.
- Parking, along with water and sewer - these are three big concerns. Pipes should be first priority.

Meeting adjourned at about 11:30 a.m. We will access where we are after vacation and after the February 25th Master Plan Public Hearing. We will then schedule our next Sub-Committee meeting.