

Town of Cohasset
Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC)
May 3, 2021 – Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Minutes

A meeting of the MPIC was held at 6:30 pm on May 3, 2021 virtually on Zoom. In attendance were:

Katie Dugan, Chair, Citizen at Large
Timothy Davis, Member, Liaison from Harbor Committee
Jennifer Boylan, Member, Citizen at Large
Cassie Malatesta, Member, Citizen at Large
Julia Gleason, Liaison from Cohasset Historical Commission
Peter Hobson, Member, Liaison from Affordable Housing Steering Committee
Tom Callahan, Member, Liaison from Open Space & Recreation Committee

Absent:

Lauren Lind, Town Planner, Ex-Officio Member
Amy Glasmeier, Vice Chair, Liaison from Planning Board

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm.

Planning Update

Pre-Grant Applications

Katie Dugan gave a brief overview of the Community One Stop for Growth pre-grant application which was submitted to the State by the Planning Department at the beginning of April. The Town applied for guidance and as a notice of intent related to up to five potential grants for Fiscal 2021.

- **Elm Street Corridor Revitalization** - The Elm Street corridor connects two vital districts in Cohasset: Cohasset Harbor and the downtown Village Business District. Elm Street revitalization is identified as a high priority in both the 2019 Cohasset Master Plan and the State Approved 2020 Cohasset Municipal Harbor Plan. The proposal is to coordinate utility, streetscape, and transportation corridor improvements to align with economic development goals and support new commercial and housing development. There is opportunity to improve safety for all users, connect the Harbor and the Village through wayfinding and enhanced connection, and reconfigure intersections for better traffic circulation. The circulation improvements may allow for improved public safety response from the Fire/Police headquarters on Elm Street. The project will be a phased approach. There is currently a dedicated working group of the Cohasset Master Plan Implementation Committee embarking on Phase 1: Public Engagement and Preliminary Design this spring.
- **Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw Recodification** - The Zoning Bylaws were first adopted circa 1955 & underwent major rewrites in 1969, 1978 & 1984. In between and since the

major rewrites, there have been piecemeal revisions/new sections introduced throughout the years. Some of the bylaws are outdated/are inconsistent with current best practices relative to smart community growth & planning. In addition, the fragmentary nature of the updates over the years have resulted in inconsistencies across sections of the bylaws. The Town has identified opportunities and challenges related to existing bylaws and has tasked a Zoning Bylaw Working Group of the Master Plan Implementation Committee to further explore priority zoning issues. The working group has identified the following two paths: 1) continue to revise and “operate on an old patient” by targeting both clean-up of identified issue items while also adopting new updates to be consistent with the Town’s our future development goals or 2) undertake a major recodification to start anew. The Town recognizes that to be successful in such a major undertaking will require consultant expertise to vet and help professionalize the work of the Zoning Bylaw Working Group.

- **Downtown Village Revitalization** - The Downtown Village Business District contains a mix of small businesses, stores and services in a compact and walkable setting typical of pre-twentieth century development. The Village is rich in potential for future redevelopment but requires infrastructure improvements critical for these initiatives to progress. One parcel in the center of the district is a defunct gas station that could benefit from brownfield remediation that would unlock potential of a sizable piece of land. The property owner of another centrally located parcel has indicated interested in redevelopment of the existing structure to make way for a mixed-use housing development with potential for either affordable or veteran housing – however, in order to do so, the James Brook culvert that runs beneath the property will need to be rechanneled into an adjacent right-of-way. In addition to these parcels that are ripe for redevelopment, there is the opportunity to promote economic development by rebranding the village through wayfinding and corridor improvements to tie into the Elm Street corridor that could provide for enhanced vitality and connectivity between these districts.
- **MBTA Connectivity Improvements** - The Town seeks to provide expanded connectivity to the existing MBTA Commuter Rail station along the Route 3A corridor to fill in gaps of sidewalks between several of our affordable housing developments and commercial centers along the corridor. The Town would like to develop preliminary engineering/design concepts to aide in getting this project into the queue for the State’s Transportation Improvement Program.
- **Crocker Lane Green Depot** - Brief Description of Project/Initiative. Indicate if project is phased and progress made to date: The intent of the Crocker Lane Green Depot is to establish an energy-efficient facilities center for the Town. The site would include a solar array and battery storage in line with our alternative energy goals. Intended goals also include a bus depot for the entire Cohasset School bus fleet which may transition to an electric fleet housed at the facility when not in use.

The Town will likely hear back from the State regarding overall fit of grant applications with existing state programs in May. The Town will then have to formally apply for grants during normal cycle which is June 1st with grant awards in the fall of 2021. The pre-grant application

process gives the Town a chance to understand how strong the grant applications are and what areas might be improved or strengthened prior to the formal submission for grant funding.

Other MPIC Updates

Town Email Policy

Katie Dugan briefly reviewed the new Town email policy with the committee. All members have been asked to set up a Town email account for committee related correspondence. Lauren Lind can help members contact the IT team to begin the process.

US Census Update

Jen Boylan had circulated to the committee an update to the Town census by the US Census. Katie Dugan had circulated to the committee work prepared by the Long Range Planning Group that was discussed at Master Plan committee meeting in 2017.

The committee discussed the materials and will follow up with Lauren Lind to understand when the final 2020 US Census results will be available later in 2021 or early 2022. The committee agree that once the 2020 census materials were available that it would make sense to work with the MAPC to create a new 2030 and 2040 census forecast for the Town of Cohasset.

Scituate 2019 Master Plan

The committee briefly reviewed the status of the Scituate Master Plan which had begun its work pre-pandemic with public forums in late 2019 and early 2020. The issues that they appeared to be looking for community input on included: managing change/changing community and climate impact/resilience. Tim Davis agreed to follow up with Town Manager in Scituate to learn more about timing of final report and conclusions.

MPIC Working Group Update

Harbor Plan

Tim Davis gave a brief update on the work underway by the Harbor Infrastructure Working Group which included Captain's Walk, Breakwater, sea walls, Government Island pier, Town dock conveyor system, and dredging. Tim will provide a more detailed update at the June MPIC meeting.

Elm Street Working Group

Katie Dugan and Tim Davis gave a brief recap of the April 15th Elm Street Public Forum which was led by Weston & Sampson. The public forum was well attending and was the first of three public forums meant to solicit community feedback in the overall design & priorities for the corridor and intersection reconfiguration. Katie Dugan emphasized that there is a public survey which has been circulated to the committee which is due on May 14th. Finally, the next public forum will be scheduled for June and details will be forward to the MPIC as soon as possible.

Select Board Update – July 2021

The Committee briefly discussed the July update to the Select Board regarding the Master Plan implementation. The update will include information on five top priorities identified in July 2020 and a look at the next set of priorities for implementation. The committee briefly discussed what those next priorities would include: land use, transportation & circulation (3A and sidewalks), public facilities & services (Town Hall and school buildings), and open space land acquisition. Katie Dugan will draft a detailed outline for discussion at the June meeting.

Approval of Minutes

The committee will approve minutes from February 22, 2021 and March 29, 2021. Katie Dugan will forward to Town Clerk's office to post on the Town website.

Administrative

The committee agreed to the next meeting date of Monday, June 14th.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.