



TOWN OF BOXBOROUGH
SELECT & PLANNING BOARD JOINT MEETING
29 Middle Road, Boxborough, Massachusetts 01719
Phone (978) 264-1723 • Fax (978) 264-3127
www.boxborough-ma.gov

Select Board: Maria Neyland, Chair Wes Fowlks, Clerk Susan Bak Leslie Fox Robert Stemple
Planning Board: Cindy Markowitz, Chair Mark White, Clerk Nancy Fillmore Abby Reip Rebecca Verner

Approved on March 3, 2020

Meeting Minutes
January 13, 2020
7:00PM
Grange Room - Town Hall, 29 Middle Road

Select Board Members Present: Maria Neyland, Wes Fowlks, Susan Bak, Leslie Fox, Robert Stemple

Planning Board Members Present: Cindy Markowitz, Nancy Fillmore, Rebecca Verner

Not Present: Abby Reip (Planning Board), Mark White (Planning Board)

Also Present: Ryan Ferrara (Town Administrator)

Call to Order

Ms. Neyland called the Select Board meeting to order and Ms. Markowitz called the Planning Board meeting to order at 7:02PM.

Statements from the Chairs

Ms. Neyland shared that this meeting will focus on the Master Plan. Such meetings are scheduled bi-annually and are used to catch up with Boards, Commissions and Committees to review progress made regarding the Master Plan and its goals. There was also a focus on how to maintain the Master Plan as a living document.

Ms. Markowitz shared that because the Master Plan is a living document, a goal was to make the status updates accessible to the public.

Discussion of Aspirations 1, 2 and 3 & Updates from Town Committees

Ms. Neyland shared that Mr. Corson will work to record updates on a spreadsheet. The Boards will then decide if it makes sense to continue using this format or if further improvements should be made moving forward.

Ms. Markowitz explained that at this meeting, the Boards plan to review Aspirations 1, 2, and 3 from the Master Plan. The intent is to review Aspirations 4, 5, 6, and 7 at a future joint meeting.

Aspiration 1: Maintain its rural character and celebrates its heritage.

Goal 1.1 - Protect the Town's heritage and character through the preservation of both natural and historical scenic areas, roadways, and landscape features.

Strategy 1.1.1

Action 1.1.1.1 – Lead Responsibility – Historical Commission
Update - No update.

Action 1.1.1.2 – Lead Responsibility – Conservation Commission
Update – Conservation Commission reported that recommendations have been implemented and this is an ongoing effort. Flerra Meadow and Patch Hill have been managed as grasslands since July 15 to provide habitat to ground nesting birds. Rolling Meadow, Beaver Brook Meadow, Have Not Pond, and a portion of Flagg Hill are being managed as meadows. Hager Meadow is being managed as a pasture to diversify successional habitat types.

Action 1.1.1.3 – Lead Responsibility – Steele Farm Advisory Committee
Mr. Fox asked if Steele Farm Advisory Committee has produced specific recommendations regarding this action item and is there anything the Board’s should be looking out for or seeking to add or change.
Ms. Neyland suggested the Board ask for a specific report on the management plan.
Update – 1 – Trees and brush has been cleared on the eastern boarder of the hayfield to attract more ground nesting birds. 2 – Have improved handicap access to trails from the parking area.

Action 1.1.1.4 & 1.1.1.5 – Lead Responsibility – Historical Commission
Update – Marked for future update.

Strategy 1.1.2

Action 1.1.2.1 – Lead Responsibility – Planning Board
Update – There have been changes to Town Center zoning. The Planning Board will continue to monitor Town Center guidelines. There is currently no specific activity underway, as this is a short to medium term action item.

Action 1.1.2.2 – Lead Responsibility – Historical Commission
Update – No update.

Strategy 1.1.3

Action 1.1.3.1 – Lead Responsibility – Recreation Commission
Update – No update.
Mr. Fox shared that Land Stewards and the Conservation Commission have created maps developed in applications to guide individuals through the Town trail systems. He suggested that the maps could include historical locations within the Town.

Action 1.1.3.2 – Lead Responsibility – Land Stewards
Update – Land Stewards have conducted four themed walks in FY19 and one themed walk in FY20 with the intent to continue throughout the year.

Action 1.1.3.3 – Lead Responsibility – Town Planner
Update – Town Planner explained that there is an open space plan, but it does not encompass the elements of the action. It is not completed but is a starting point. Updating the plan is not a mandate to exist, only to qualify for funding.
Public Input – The key is to update this prior to expiration.

Strategy 1.1.4

Action 1.1.4.1 – Lead Responsibility – Select Board & Board of Health
Update – Completed, but no written update.

Action 1.1.4.2 – Lead Responsibility – water Resources Committee
Update – Water Resource Committee reviewed previous planning completed by the Town, the ownership and status of the test well sites, water quality issues and regulatory requirements, creating a GIS map of Town water resources. Have Town meeting approval to monitor ground water resources.

Action 1.1.4.3 – Lead Responsibility – Water Resources Committee, Board of Health & Planning Board
Update – Water Resources Committee reviewed Zone II's and well sites in Boxborough's neighboring towns and state regulatory requirements. Have not reached a point of discussion on what zoning changes might be needed. UMass students have digitized a 1978 map and created shape files and GIS layers. The goal is to incorporate it into the Town GIS dataset so the public can view the Aquifer Overlay District.

Goal 1.2 – New development and redevelopment will be physically designed to blend into the town's rural development.

Strategy 1.2.1

Action 1.2.1.1 – Lead Responsibility – Design Review Board
Update – No update.

Action 1.2.1.2 – Lead Responsibility – Design Review Board
Update – No update.

Goal 1.3 – Protect and/or acquire additional funds for conservation, water resource protection, wildlife habitat, agricultural land preservation, recreation, trails, and wildlife corridors.

Strategy 1.3.1

Action 1.3.1.1 – Lead Responsibility – Planning Board
Update – Planning Board reported that as parcels come available, they will be reviewed. Currently, no additional lands have been identified and prioritized.

Action 1.3.1.2 – Lead Responsibility – Planning Board & Select Board
Update – Planning Board reported it is not aware of any new land parcels available. Mr. Fox shared that he is unsure of the order of this process and that it would be a collective/scattered effort by boards to collaborate prior to taking action. Lead Responsibility has been revised, now it includes both the Planning Board and the Select Board.

Action 1.3.1.3 – Lead Responsibility – Conservation Commission & Agricultural Commission

Update – Conservation Commission reported it continues to work closely with the Boxborough Conservation Trust to identify land conservation opportunities other than acquisition. Over the last 2 years it has accepted new conservation restrictions for Inches Woods for approximately 25 acres and for Elizabeth Brook Knoll for approximately 15 acres. Agricultural Commission explained that it has worked to clarify the authority of agricultural commissions under amendments to MA law. The amendments gave agricultural commissions the authority to hold land. Have entered into a memorandum with the understanding from the Conservation Commission and Select Board to assume oversight for the agricultural parcel at Paddock Estates.

Action 1.3.1.5 – Lead Responsibility - Conservation Commission

Update – Conservation Commission reported a \$10,000 warrant article request to fund the Conservation Trust Fund was prepared, presented and passed at the 2019 Annual Town Meeting marking the ninth consecutive year of approved funding for the Fund.

Action 1.3.1.6 – Lead Responsibility – Finance Committee

Update – Community Preservation Committee (CPC) has a policy of not using their money to pay for debt and bonds.

Ms. Neyland suggested that the Finance Committee and CPC should have a conversation for the Finance Committee provide its own input and understanding of the matter.

Aspiration 2 – Is engaged and welcoming.

Goal 2.1 – Support diversity by valuing, respecting, appreciating, and welcoming individuals – those who reside, visit, work, or pass through Boxborough – of all ages, genders, socioeconomic levels, cultural heritages, racial/ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, religions and ability levels.

Strategy 2.1.1

Action 2.1.1.1 – Lead Responsibility – Select Board

Update – Report was that there was an eight-hour curriculum developed for employees during summer of 2016. There are continuing “small bites” which are a type of training undertaken by the police department. The Community Service Director is working on additional training modules.

Action 2.1.1.2 – Lead Responsibility – Community Services Coordinator

Update – Fostering Racial Justice Group (FRJG) held the following workshops to date: *Exploring Race* (three-part workshop), *What does the Confederate Flag Mean to You*, *Islamophobia: Rumor or Reality*.

Strategy 2.1.2

Action 2.1.2.1 – Lead Responsibility – Community Services Coordinator

Update – Received an eighteen-month \$20,000 grant for additional training. Received a \$30,000 grant for 2018-2019 and have used funds for training on diversity focused across socioeconomic backgrounds, quarterly wellness newsletters, and translation of the New Resident Letter.

Ms. Neyland shared that the New Resident Letter is very informational but difficult to locate on the current website.

It was also noted that the schools have a major program on diversity and that there are programs run at the school during the evenings for the public to attend as well.

Goal 2.2 – Increase resident participation in town-wide events, programs, and government.

Strategy 2.2.1

Action 2.2.1.1 – Lead Responsibility – Public Celebrations and Ceremonies Committee

Update – No update.

Action 2.2.1.2 – Lead Responsibility - Public Celebrations and Ceremonies Committee

Update – No update.

Action 2.2.1.3 – Lead Responsibility – Library Board of Trustees & Public Celebrations and Ceremonies Committee

Update – No update.

Action 2.2.1.4 – Lead Responsibility – Agricultural Commission

Update – Agricultural Commission reported discussions of a community garden at Paddock Estates. There was interest in the project but also questions and hesitancy over the needed management.

Goal 2.3 – Increase resident participation in Town government.

Strategy 2.3.1

Action 2.3.1.1 – Lead Responsibility – Select Board

Update – Select Board Member, Wes Fowlks, developed Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube pages for the Town. The Town is in the process of implementing a new updated website. It is also voluntarily collecting community member contact information to send out updates and announcements.

Action 2.3.1.2 – Lead Responsibility - Select Board

Update – [see update for Action 2.3.1.1 above] The Boxborough Bee is sent to households quarterly within the Action Unlimited paper and is online.

Action 2.3.1.3 – Lead Responsibility - Select Board

Update – Currently in progress coinciding with the new Town website.

Action 2.3.1.4 – Lead Responsibility - Select Board

Update – The New Resident Welcome Packet has been translated into 4 languages.

Mr. Fowlks suggested that packet online would make translation capabilities simpler and more accessible to users.

Action 2.3.1.5 – Lead Responsibility - Select Board

Update – There is an ongoing effort to increase diversity within the Town’s boards and committees, in addition to event planning.

Strategy 2.3.2

Action 2.3.2.1 – Lead Responsibility - Select Board

Update – The Select Board has liaisons to most boards and committees, and all meetings are public.

Action 2.3.2.2 – Lead Responsibility - Select Board

Update – Welcome Packets are mailed to all new residents, not just those with students.

Action 2.3.2.3 – Lead Responsibility - Select Board & Town Administrator

Update – There is an interest form for the Citizens Skills Bank. Ms. Neyland suggested that a committee may be a way to promote and capture the benefits of this action better.

Action 2.3.2.4 – Lead Responsibility - Select Board

Update – The Select Board reported it announces Town events and opportunities at all meetings, the social media sites are also being used as a method to advertise, as well as word of mouth.

Aspiration 3 – Is thoughtfully developed.

Goal 3.1 – Guide and concentrate commercial growth in Business, Office Park, and Town Center districts.

Strategy 3.1.1

Action 3.1.1.1 – Lead Responsibility - Select Board

Update – Economic Development Committee (EDC) has been created.

Action 3.1.1.2 – Lead Responsibility – Economic Development Committee

Update – EDC reported that it has worked with UMass on phase I which includes a baseline study of the Town and is currently working on Phase II, completion in 2020.

Action 3.1.1.3 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee

Update – EDC reported that the focus is on the current Town Center district and adjacent lands for multi-use small scale green-type development. Adam’s Place and Beaver Brook are sites apt to larger development opportunities. The results of the study will provide further insight into larger scale development. Will also work with Water Resources Commission when considering these opportunities.

Action 3.1.1.4 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee
Update – Part of UMass Phase II Study.

Strategy 3.1.2

Action 3.1.2.1 – Lead Responsibility -
Update – Water Resources Commission reported that it is working to resolve water supply issues identified in Town.

Strategy 3.1.3

Action 3.1.3.1 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee
Update – EDC reported that, from the UMass study, the Town Center district and Adam’s Place are optimal locations to explore deeper with respect to landmass, physical constraints, market analysis and infrastructure constraints. Also received input through a Town business breakfast.

Action 3.1.3.2 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee
Update – EDC reported the focus in on completing Phase II of the UMass Study to determine longer term regulatory challenges. For short term regulatory changes, proposals are currently being brought to the appropriate boards.

Action 3.1.3.3 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee
Update – EDC reported that it hopes to understand the Town’s vision for growth with respect to longer term changes.

Strategy 3.1.4

Action 3.1.4.1 – Lead Responsibility – Planning Board
Update – Planning Board reported that it is working with the EDC and UMass Study to identify opportunities for changes to the dimensional requirements, and other potential zoning changes to address barriers of growth for appropriately scaled development. It has also received approval from Special Town Meeting and \$10,000 for a zoning bylaw audit which will help clean up the bylaws and better position them for future changes.

Action 3.1.4.2 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee
Update – EDC reported that the UMass study is a tool to leverage development once the Study is complete.

Strategy 3.1.5

Action 3.1.5.1 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee
Update – EDC reported it is planning to have the Water Resources Commission and Board of Health at a meeting. The group will review how to develop areas with and without infrastructure development. Action has been revised to medium-long term. Finance Committee was added to coordinating.

Action 3.1.5.2 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee

Update – EDC reported that will need to understand the Town’s desires prior to action.

Action 3.1.5.3 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee
Update – EDC noted local incentives but cited that first the Town should decide what business types are desirable.

Goal 3.2 – Attract and maintain businesses in key existing and emerging industries.

Strategy 3.2.1

Action 3.2.1.1 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee
Update – EDC reported that there needs to be clarity on the types of development desires before acting on marketing development.

Action 3.2.1.2 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee
Update – EDC reported a Boxborough Business Breakfast was held. Also considering creating a local chamber of commerce.

Action 3.2.1.3 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee
Update – No update, waiting for completion of UMass Study.

Action 3.2.1.4 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee
Update – No update, waiting for completion of UMass Study.
Mr. Fox asked about financial tools the Board has in order to incentivize business.

Strategy 3.2.2

Action 3.2.2.1 – Lead Responsibility – Agricultural Commission
Update – No update.

Action 3.2.2.2 – Lead Responsibility - Agricultural Commission
Update – Agricultural Commission reported that it worked to clarify regulatory requirements and exemptions for agriculture. It had also advocated for earlier involvement on issues that involve agriculture.

Action 3.2.2.3 – Lead Responsibility - Agricultural Commission
Update – No update.

Action 3.2.2.4 – Lead Responsibility - Agricultural Commission
Update – Agricultural Commission reported it is finalizing a licensing agreement for one parcel of Town conservation land. They have communicated with at least one farmer who may be interested.

Action 3.2.2.5 – Lead Responsibility - Agricultural Commission
Update – No update.

Action 3.2.2.6 – Lead Responsibility - Agricultural Commission
Update – No update.

Action 3.2.2.7 – Lead Responsibility - Agricultural Commission

Update – Agricultural Commission reported it reviewed this action with the previous town planner in 2016 and drafted a memo for review. They are working with the EDC and Planning Board to determine feasibility.

Strategy 3.2.3

Action 3.2.3.1 – Lead Responsibility - Agricultural Commission

Update – Agricultural Commission reported that it evaluated two sites in the *Open Space and Recreation Plan* that were either for sale of on the tax title list. One was not suitable farmland and one requires further evaluation for forestry potential. An “ongoing” timeframe may be more appropriate.

Action 3.2.3.2 – Lead Responsibility - Agricultural Commission

Update – No update. An “ongoing” timeframe may be more appropriate.

Action 3.2.3.3 – Lead Responsibility - Agricultural Commission

Update – Agricultural Commission reported that it has a representative on CPC who can advocate using CPA funds for agricultural land, as needed.

Goal 3.3

Strategy 3.3.1

Action 3.3.1.1 – Lead Responsibility – Building Department

Update – No update.

Action 3.3.1.2 – Lead Responsibility -Economic Development Committee

Update – EDC reported that there are two people assigned. In the process of creating a guidebook for doing business in Town.

Action 3.3.1.3 – Lead Responsibility - Economic Development Committee

Update – EDC reported that there have been informal meetings with business owners to understand needs, in addition to events such as the Business Breakfast.

Goal 3.4

Strategy 3.4.1

Action 3.4.1.1 – Lead Responsibility – Conservation Commission

Update – Conservation Commission reported that it ensures conformance with best practices of stormwater management in cases of development and redevelopment for applicants filing notice of intent under the Wetlands Protection Act and/or Town Wetlands Bylaw. Existing nonconforming and/or problematic runoff locations are typically unknown until identified through wetlands filing. The Commission has very limited ability to address existing non-conforming conditions unless prompted by a new and/or closed activity.

Water Resources reported that there has been coordination regarding Interstate 495 road salt run-off and the MS4 Stormwater Permit.

Action 3.4.1.2 – Lead Responsibility – Planning Board

Update – Town Planner has been working with an outside consultant to update the Stormwater Bylaw to align with the latest requirements of the MS4 Permit. The Planning Board will review and provide additional comments on the proposed Stormwater Bylaw in anticipation of a presentation at the Annual Town Meeting. The Board will continue to identify and encourage opportunities for reduced water consumption in new development projects.

Action 3.4.1.3 – Lead Responsibility – Planning Board

Update – Planning Board reported that the roadway and subdivision regulations relate to traffic and public safety needs. Any modification of the roadway widths will need to be discussed with public safety officials. The Board will further investigate the use of more pervious roadway materials with Town staff, noting impacts such as that to snow plowing. The Town has applied for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning grant and was awarded \$15,000 in early 2020.

Strategy 3.4.2

Action 3.4.2.1 – Lead Responsibility – Town Planner

Update – Town Planner reported that initial efforts are focused on the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Planning grant which was received in early 2020 and the current MAPC grant for work related to water quality.

Action 3.4.2.2 – Lead Responsibility – Town Planner

Update – Related to Action 3.4.2.1 and requires additional time to study and will be considered in the spring. Town Planner suggested reinstating the Complete Streets Committee.

Mr. Fox noted that the ideas and actions require work from Town staff. Suggested that this action item may not need further study.

Ms. Neyland responded that this is to determine a baseline.

Ms. Markowitz responded that this would align with outcomes from the UMass study and would be beneficial in the future to have the baseline.

Mr. Corson noted that initially for the action item, it is good to understand how the DOT connects to local roadways and evaluate that using existing data.

Consensus is to keep the action item as is.

Strategy 3.4.3

Action 3.4.3.1 – Lead Responsibility – Planning Board

Update – Planning Board reported a balanced approach is necessary with respect to the EDC studies. The studies are to be used as available tools for the Town.

Action 3.4.3.2 – Lead Responsibility – Planning Board

Update – Planning Board reported that this is a medium-term objective for determining what the Town is seeking to achieve. Town would receive a better

consensus following the completion of the UMass Study, whereas the Board will then be able to make proposed recommendations.

Action 3.4.3.3 – Lead Responsibility – Sustainability Committee (formerly, Energy Committee)

Update – Sustainability Committee reported that over the past 2-3 years it has been convinced that the Building Code was stringent enough to achieve positive energy efficiency results. Since then, the Committee has closely reviewed code which focuses on performance based rather than prescriptive based requirements. Builders now have more flexibility when building energy efficient homes leading to overall cost savings. Goal is to work with the Building Commissioner and work to propose at Annual Town Meeting an Article for the Town to adopt the 2017 Stretch Code. Mr. Stemple noted that the Sustainability Committee cannot modify the Stretch Code, this would have to be changed.

Wording in Action Item will be changed from modify to review.

Action 3.4.3.4 – Lead Responsibility - Sustainability Committee (formerly, Energy Committee)

Update – Sustainability Committee reported that closer study is required on this matter.

Ms. Neyland noted that this item should be coordinated with the Planning Board.

Discussion of Next Steps

Ms. Neyland stated that the goal is to post the updates reported on the Town website. Spreadsheet style reporting would be a good structure to follow. The concern is that the recommendations and Implementation Plan documents are separate files. A goal would be to link the documents to each other.

Mr. Corson offered that the feedback should be stored using a spreadsheet, but that it may be good to develop a multimedia presentation or guided document for the public to view.

Ms. Neyland noted that the meeting minutes will be used as a means to read the updates provided tonight.

Future Joint Meeting Date

Next joint meeting will be scheduled in early June and will review Aspirations 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Mr. Fowlks motioned for the Select Board to adjourn at 9:09PM. Seconded by Ms. Bak. Approved unanimously, 6-0.

Ms. Verner motioned for the Planning Board to adjourn at 9:09PM. Seconded by Ms. Fillmore. Approved unanimously, 3-0.

Meeting Documents

Boxborough 2030: Recommendations & Implementation Plan
Master Plan Update Mtg. Jan. 13, 2020 (packet including all reports and updates)