

Westminster Master Plan – Meeting Minutes for June 19, 2013

Committee: Steve Wallace, Mike Fortin, Linda Wiest, Ted Fiffy, Scott Ryder, Heather Billings, Richelle Brown

Others: Bud Taylor, Joe Flanagan, John Fairbanks, Janet Morrison

Meeting called to order at 7:02

Presentation by Jeffrey R. Lacy, Regional Planner, DCR Division of Water Supply Protection, Topic: natural resource protection zoning.

Jeff covers 14 Watershed towns of Quabbin drain into Ware River. Jeff provides TA work & planning assistance for watershed communities as part of the Watershed Protection Act.

Jeff presented an overview of Natural Resource Protection Zoning (NRPZ) - (he has reviewed the Town's existing cluster housing bylaw- he can come back to discuss in the fall).

Differences in current subdivision lot sizes, uses, preservation of open space, with proposed NRPZ

To adopt cluster bylaw- special permit needed

NRPZ- cluster zoning results in permanent conservation land. (Area based formula, Low density). Large lot zoning, fixed-Area-Ratio Zoning. (How much land do you have?)

Common elements in NRPZ

By right- special permit possible for being different.

Calculation sheet

Substantial open space preserved.

No frontage requirements

No yard setbacks (10' to property line)

Diversity of housing types

Extensive use of shared driveways (up to 6)

Density Bonus options (donating extra open space)

Transfer development rights option (make a deal to preserve land elsewhere)

Planning is calculated by provided formulas & allowed by right. This approach offers greater design flexibility for the land. Owner may retain resource lands (agricultural or forestry).

Jeff.lacy@state.ma.us

413-323-6921x501

Questions & comments: There is a conservation restriction on rest of the land. Owner will pay less tax on conserved area. Will other rates in town have to go up? Other houses will be paying that have been stripped off the conservation land.

Janet Morrison –N Country Land Trust- guidance. Aggressive forestry, or creating farmland is possible. Not much different from what's happening in rural lands now. Not creating a pristine park, its rural lands and a working landscape.

Shared driveways can be problematic - recommended to allow by special permit. Want to be in control of them. Legal document reviewed ahead of time, by town counsel. Jeff is confident it will work into the future.

Continuing with the Master Plan agenda----

Motion to approve minutes from 5-15-13, Scott motion, Linda seconded, AIF

Progress report on updating the Open Space & Recreation Plan

Not much for updates. Expect the Plan to be 2/3 complete by August. Sections 1 & 2 done, 3 demographics, 4 environment analysis, 5 inventory needs text, finalizing G&O when meet with OS in August. Section 9 is action plan. OSC homework is to figure out which old action plan items are finished or still open. August 21st is the joint meeting. May not finish at August meeting. Might want a public meeting in the fall for input. May be working concurrently with land use chapter.

Review our options for hosting a Main Street Design Charrette in the fall

Dr John Mullen- in touch with the landscape architecture program at UMass Amherst. Project description submitted 1 month, heard from one student but no teacher involvement yet. Conway School of Design- likes to host big semester projects, also do targeted day long projects. Sent description and will follow up next week. Half dozen students for a day and professor is the goal.

Discuss potential revisions to the Town Government Chapter

Finished in March 2012. Larger departments pressed on per capita expenditure figures during budget season. Back and forth on figures, and now it has become a distraction. Review possible metrics for inclusion of replacement table(s).

Of the new metrics offered, Planner will use the tables 2 & 3 and amend the chapter accordingly.

Another amendment has been suggested. DPW would like to mention the in-line sewer system specifically as an option to open up sewer capacity.

Town government chapter and Economic Development Chapter changes to be sent to group.

Discuss the need to publicize the Master Plan

Hitting the home stretch, take stock of where we're at and start spreading the word. Don't want to roll into March 2014 with full draft and get dud feedback. Reach out to committees for support. Assign each Master Plan Committee member a committee/commission or board to reach out to - spend 15 min with talking points: "Hey folks, we're working on plan, here's why we need it, all on line on master plan page, please go read it and focus on the goals objectives and recommendations, which is the meat of the plan. Want input sooner than later, we'll travel or they can visit us. Want you on board."

Richelle-Conservation Commission sometime between now and September
Mike F-Advisory Board
Heather B- BOS
Dean- Ag commission
Scott-DPW
Linda-Parks & Rec
Ted-Capital Planning

Brief group on how conversation went at our September meeting

Revised chapters, assignments before SW goes on vacation

August 21 is next meeting date: joint with OSC

Motion to adjourn: Ted, Richelle, AIF

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.