



**MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE**  
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**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 25, 2015**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Grange Meeting Room, Town Hall, 29 Middle Road**

Members present:

Voting Members Present:

Les Fox, Vice/Acting Chair (Board of Selectmen)  
Bryon Clemence (Agricultural Commission)  
Mitzi Garcia-Weil (Recreation Commission)  
Al Murphy (Housing Board)  
Dennis Reip (Conservation Commission)  
Eduardo Pontoriero (Planning Board)  
Frank Powers (Council on Aging)

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Steven Ballard (Finance Committee)  
Dmitry Bykhovsky (Local Business Owner)  
Adam Duchesneau (Town Planner)  
Kevin Mahoney (Historical Commission)  
Maria Neyland, (School Committee)  
Selina Shaw (Town Administrator)

Others in Attendance:

Manisha Bewtra, Metropolitan Area Planning Council  
Jennifer Campbell  
Rita Grossman  
Jeanne Kangas  
Christine Madore, Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Voting Members Absent:

David Follett (Conservation Commission)  
John Markiewicz, Chair (Planning Board)  
Rebecca Morris (Energy Committee)  
Marie Cannon (Board of Health)

The Acting Chair called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

**Meeting Minutes of January 13, 2015**

Mr. Fox MADE a MOTION to approve the minutes of January 13, 2015. Mr. Powers SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor.

**Updates on Master Plan Deliverables and Project Timeline**

Ms. Bewtra provided a review of the project's deliverables. She noted that the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) was looking for feedback and direction on the assessment of the existing economic development conditions in town. She indicated Ms. Madore had interviewed approximately 20 businesses as of that evening.

Ms. Bewtra then went over the anticipated project schedule for the rest of the year and stated MAPC would like to schedule a meeting in early May where the Transportation Section of the Master Plan could be discussed. Mr. Fox pointed out the Master Plan update process should have a presence at Town Meeting in May and at Fifer's Day in June. Ms. Bewtra encouraged Master

Plan Update Committee (MPUC) members to provide feedback about various components of the Plan in between each MPUC meeting. Mr. Murphy felt discussing high level topics at each MPUC meeting was good, but stressed the details of the Plan were of critical importance and the MPUC should not limit itself to only high level comments. Mr. Fox acknowledged that each MPUC meeting was already a fairly long session, but at some point it would be good to get into the fine details of the Plan. He also suggested that perhaps an additional editing session could be held in order for the MPUC to truly take ownership of the document.

Mr. Clemence asked Ms. Bewtra what MAPC had in mind for the early May meeting focused on transportation. Ms. Bewtra indicated that MAPC's Transportation Planners were hoping to get a lay of the land and to meet with Town Staff and some members of the MPUC regarding transportation options in town.

### **Role-Playing Activity**

Ms. Bewtra then took the MPUC members through an economic development role-playing activity. MPUC members broke into small groups and attempted to problem solve four constructed scenarios where goods and services needed to be provided by those living in Boxborough. After 15 minutes, each group then reported back to the MPUC on how they met the needs for their particular scenario.

### **Economic Development Section Update**

Ms. Madore presented some initial findings for a draft Economic Development: Existing Conditions Section. She noted Boxborough has an aging population but that younger families are still moving into town for the school system. Ms. Madore indicated that scientific and technology companies represent approximately 22% of the businesses in town. However, these same businesses bring in 64% (approximately 2,600 people) of the community's workforce to Boxborough each day. Based upon the interviews she had conducted, Ms. Madore found the businesses in town feel there is no real downtown area. She also presented data which indicated there appeared to be a significant amount of retail leakage from town, but also noted there are a number of opportunities to create a positive business environment.

Mr. Murphy asked Ms. Madore to clarify what she meant by "retail leakage." He wanted to know if, other than the tax base, it is really a problem if people go outside the community for their day to day needs. Mr. Murphy questioned if the MPUC should really even care about this aspect. Ms. Madore noted her research focused on who is spending the money. If more money is spent outside of town, businesses see this and either want to leave or prefer not to locate in the community initially. Mr. Fox wondered if the tax base and residents' quality of life should be two mutually exclusive items. Ms. Bewtra noted the MPUC should focus on answering the question of whether or not the Town wanted to capture some of the current retail leakage.

Ms. Grossman noted there is room for current economic growth within existing vacant spaces in town. She continued on to point out the local wetlands bylaw is so strict because it is intended to protect these very important community resources. Additionally, Ms. Grossman noted the community did not desire to have public water or sewer. Mr. Reip stated the local wetlands bylaw is a barrier to development that residents appreciate, but it could also be viewed as a negative to those who would like to develop other areas in town. Mr. Clemence pointed out the MPUC should consider that the town has a significant amount of land in Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B, which will likely not remain as open space forever. Mr. Pontoriero asked if there was some

sort of modeling tool which could examine some of the variables to help the community make long term decisions. Ms. Neyland noted the services in the transportation slide in the presentation were overstated and felt there were not that many services available to Boxborough residents. Mr. Powers agreed.

Ms. Madore then asked MPUC members for feedback on the draft Economic Development Surveys (one for residents and one for businesses) that had been prepared. Ms. Garcia-Weil noted in the business survey a response of “No Opinion” was an option, but she felt a response of “Neutral” should also be added as a possibility. Mr. Murphy agreed and also felt a “Neutral” response column should be added. Mr. Clemence suggested for the business survey that space be added for respondents to indicate the specific type of business they own, as opposed to just the name, to gather additional information. Ms. Neyland noted the MPUC needed to understand what people in the town think about economic development, but to also hear from those who are less vocal. She pointed out the MPUC needed a better understanding of what having economic development meant, versus having no economic development. Ms. Grossman felt there should be a way to measure how much open land is in town.

#### **Scheduling of Future Meeting Dates**

The MPUC confirmed their March meeting date of Wednesday, March 25, 2015 at 7:00 PM in Town Hall, 29 Middle Road. They also set an April meeting date for Wednesday, April 22, 2015 at 7:00 PM in Town Hall, 29 Middle Road.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM on a MOTION by Mr. Fox, SECONDED by Mr. Clemence, with all members voting in favor.