

Town of Cohasset
Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC)
March 29, 2021 – Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Minutes

A meeting of the MPIC was held at 6:30 pm on March 29, 2021 virtually on Zoom. In attendance were:

Katie Dugan, Chair, Citizen at Large
Amy Glasmeier, Vice Chair, Liaison from Planning Board
Timothy Davis, Member, Liaison from Harbor Committee
Jennifer Boylan, Member, Citizen at Large
Cassie Malatesta, Member, Citizen at Large
Lauren Lind, Town Planner, Ex-Officio Member

Absent:

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 pm.

Planning Update

Lauren Lind gave a brief update on the Housing Choice Legislation which was passed by the state in January 2021. Katie Dugan & Lauren Lind had both attended a presentation and update on the legislation by the S. Shore Chamber of Commerce. The presentation was included in the MPIC packet along with a summary of the legislation put together by the MAPC. The key highlights that the committee needs to be aware of are as follows:

- Elimination of the 2/3 majority vote for certain zoning changes related to housing production;
- By-right multifamily housing or mixed use development;
- By-right accessory dwelling units;
- By-right open space residential development;
- Multifamily zoning requirement for MBTA municipalities; and
- Other changes to streamline permitting and discourage meritless legal challenges including the voting majority for certain special permits.

There are many aspects of the bill which will require further clarification by the state. There will be additional guidance given to all communities later this year. Importantly, all communities will be held harmless as it relates to grant application compliance with this legislation during calendar 2021. Cohasset will need to work to understand further the multifamily zoning requirements for district within ½ mile of the MBTA train station.

Other MPIC Updates

Town Report

Katie Dugan shared with the committee a short report she wrote regarding MPIC activities in 2020 for inclusion in the Town Report.

Hingham Draft 2021 Master Plan

Katie Dugan shared with the committee a draft of the Hingham Master Plan. This is a further update to the 2014 update. It was interesting to see the common concerns of Hingham aligning with Cohasset community concerns including loss of character, overdevelopment, homes that do not “blend in” with Hingham (e.g., new large single family homes replacing smaller tear-downs), lack of housing diversity and lack of population diversity. The committee discussed that it may be important on certain implementation priorities in Cohasset to leverage lessons and work being done by neighbors to the South and neighbors to the North. Katie Dugan will send the committee Scituate Master Plan for next committee meeting.

Local Revenues

Katie Dugan had shared with the committee a report included a five year history of the Town’s local revenues. This was a follow up to the discussion on additional funding needed to tackle the communities sidewalk priorities. The group review the report which included top five local revenue sources as motor vehicle excise tax (\$1.5 m FY 2020), meals tax (\$150 k FY 2020), room trash bag fees ((\$150 k FY 2020), ambulance fees ((\$400 k FY 2020), and combined building & inspection permit fees ((3150 k FY 2020). The committee discussed various ideas to either raise building & inspection or new home/new construction fees in order to allow the Town to begin to save for funding of sidewalk priorities. The committee discussed that it will likely take a combination of additional fees, grant funding and other community support from Capital Budget Committee in order to make progress against these goals.

MPIC Working Group Updates

Elm Street Corridor

The first public forum for the Elm Street Corridor re-design is Thursday, April 15th at 7:00 pm. A copy of the flyer was included in the committee packet. The goal is to gather information from the community and then Weston & Sampson will begin to work on some specific designs for the corridor and intersection. There will be a second public forum and a survey to further gather public input on specific design elements of the project. The committee discussed the need to integrate in work from the Historical Commission on the Captain’s Walk into the discussion along with the move of the plaque memorializing the Fisherman’s Well into the public forum discussion.

Affordable Housing

Jen Boylan gave brief update on Affordable Housing Steering Committee. The project at 808 Jerusalem is moving forward with gift of land from the Town and \$70,000 in funding from the Affordable Housing Trust. In addition, the trust will be appropriated at Town Meeting another \$400,00 from CPC to support future affordable housing projects. There are additional discussion in progress related to affordable housing which include 1 Pleasant Street (mixed use, multi-family project). which will include 14 units due to local action initiative. CHI project will also produce another 3 units under inclusionary zoning bylaw (300:4.3N). The S. Main & Summer project to restore the commercial property destroyed by fire will potentially include multi-family units in the mixed-use project, but it is unclear if any of the units will be considered for affordable housing production plan. Finally, there is still uncertainty regarding the completion of the 20 units of affordable housing at 380/390 Chief Justice Cushing Highway.

Approval of Minutes

The committee will approve minutes from February 22, 2021 at a future meeting once Katie Dugan completes drafting.

Administrative

The committee agreed to the next meeting date of Monday, May 3rd at 6:30 pm

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm.