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NORTON PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 13, 2021

The Planning Board Meeting of July 13, 2021 was called to order at the Norton Media Center 184 West Main Street, Second Floor via Hybrid Participation on ZOOM and in person at 7:15 p.m. by Mr. Scott Bichan, Planning Board Clerk. Members present were, Mr. Allen Bouley, Mr. Wayne Graf, and Mr. Steven Hornsby. Mr. Kevin O'Neil participated remotely via ZOOM also in attendance was Paul DiGiuseppe.

Mr. Bichan explained what a Hybrid meeting was and how it was going to be used in this meeting.

General Business

Mr. Bichan asked the board if there were any nominations for chair pro temp for the day.

Mr. Bouley nominates Mr. Hornsby and Mr. Graf seconds the motion. Roll Call; Mr. O'Neil Yes, Mr. Bouley Yes, Mr. Hornsby Yes, Mr. Graf Yes, and Mr. Bichan Yes.

SP-494: 0 Rear Eddy Street. Application for a Special Permit for a common driveway, duplexes, and development in Wetland Protection District. Owner/Applicant: Sharlene Widak-Smith. Continued from July 14, 2020, July 28, August 25, 2020, September 15, 2020, September 29, 2020, October 6, 2020, October 27, 2020, November 17, 2020, December 1, 2020, December 15, 2020, January 5, 2021, February 2, 2021, February 23, 2021, March 23, 2021, April 6, 2021, April 27, 2021 & June 8, 2021

Mr. Widak and Mr. Craig Cygawnoski are present. Mr. DiGiuseppe states that the applicant has proved new material and that this material has not been presented to the conservation commission and are not scheduled to go until the conservation's meeting on July 28, 2021. Mr. Hornsby recommends having the applicant ask for a continuance to August 10, 2021 so Conservation can review the new material. There was no objection from the applicant and owner.

Roll call; Mr. Bouley, Yes Mr. Graf, Yes Mr. Bichan, Yes, Mr. O'Neil Yes, and Mr. Hornsby Yes. Motion passes.

Discussion-Master Plan

Mr. DiGiuseppe starts up the discussion stating that the Master Plan is still a work in progress and a revised version was sent in yesterday by SEPRED. Mr. DiGiuseppe wanted to go over the elements of the plan, doing a deeper dive into the implementation of the plan, and ending

with a starter discussion about how do you want this plan to be adopted as there are a few options and Mr. DiGiuseppe wanted to go over the options. An overview of the Master Plan is that this is a blueprint of where the town wants to go to and are a general plan and then will have more detailed plans within certain aspects of the community development and stating the Planning Board will have a large involvement in most of the strategies. Topics that will be covered include how land will be used, housing, natural resources, economic development, transportation, services and facilities, and water and sewer. The Master Plan tries to add infrastructure which will organize the topics. Mr. DiGiuseppe explains that the plan will focus on initiating strategies and enhancing other strategies. Norton has many environmentally sensitive areas and has a 40% wetland floodplain. This plan seeks to not only to preserve what Norton already has but to purchase and acquire more environmentally sensitive land and make it better interconnected with other projects such as the bike trail. This also affects the neighborhoods and several older members of the community is looking for smaller housing and for younger people they might be looking for garage apartments both are affected by bylaw restrictions that the Master Plan is hoping to relax on. Other neighborhood examples include sidewalks and bike lanes that are safe for pedestrian travel. Norton will be getting a new town hall and a new senior center as well as new infrastructure for services, police, library, and fire. The Economic component will help out with jobs and investments that help our tax base but also these could be where are more intensive residential. Work on our Village Center that will enhance and expand the Village Center corridors of where they have had some historical, commercial, and development. The Key part is implementing the plan and working with the parties responsible to get the plan in motion. The plan will be implemented in five different ways. One way is you need to make sure the bylaws match up with what you want done with the Master Plan and to update bylaws if needed. The second way the budget will be used as a tool to implement the plan so the Master Plan should be seen as a guide as to what to invest in. The third way is to build partnerships internally and reaching out to the parties involved in the Master Plan. The last aspect is the Master Plan implements other plans that go into more detail on specific aspects that will be implemented around town.

Mr. Bichan inquires as to whether or not there is a set guideline that Massachusetts towns follow when writing up a Master Plan. Mr. DiGiuseppe states Mass General Law has specific criteria for elements but what the town does within the elements is up to the town itself. What the spreadsheet does in general is it identifies a general overall goal that other sections of the plan bring up and then strategies within the goal such as actions that need to be taken. Related actions are mentioned in the plan which show actions and goals that are needed for the goal to be implemented and then prioritize the order in which the goals are achieved. The goals are ordered by high and low priority and immediate and flexible. Mr. DiGiuseppe starts going through the Master Plan and the first goal is to modernize the town zoning bylaw to meet the town's priorities on growth and preservation. Strategy 1.1.4 is to encourage accessory dwelling units and smaller housing typologies, which will require some things to change. One step to achieve this is to have conversations with the public about what accessory dwelling units are and the benefits of them and get feedback from them then in 2025 approve the changes made. Then determine if it would be something the parties responsible could handle without help or would need the help of a consultant to help work on the goal. Since it is a bylaw change Planning Board would have to make a recommendation to Town Council about it and would possibly make a subcommittee to organize the goal. Mr. Bichan asks how many town meetings it would take to achieve all the

steps in the Master Plan. Mr. DiGiuseppe isn't sure as two options are available to achieve the Master Plan, one is to each strategy at a time and the other would be all at once. Mr. Bichan inquires if we should bring the Master Plan to Town Meeting. Mr. DiGiuseppe states the Planning Board does have the authority to adopt a Master Plan under Massachusetts law but the guidebook states if the Planning Board does that the board can't make recommendations on land use decisions based on the plan but it can be referred to at a Town Meeting. Mr. Graf asks if Mr. DiGiuseppe is recommending the entire plan to a town meeting as Mr. Graf believes it might be too complicated for everyone to understand everything that is being put into the Master Plan. Mr. DiGiuseppe states that Town Meetings have had complicated material approved there before and the tradeoff for when going to the town hall meeting would be a lead up with some public events. Mr. Graf suggests having multiple events one for each area so members of the public can fully grasp the information. Mr. Bichan inquires the when the Master Plan is put in place that executing the strategy with the action plan would allow the board to then modify bylaws at will. Mr. Hornsby adds that each modification would also have to go to town meeting as well. Mr. DiGiuseppe states that they would have to go to Town Meetings. Mr. Bichan asks what would happen if the strategy were to get rejected at Town Meeting, would there be an alternative. Mr. DiGiuseppe responds that it can be accepted or not as the Master Plan does not need everything to pass and if it doesn't pass then it can become something else or it can be attempted again at Town Meeting. Mr. DiGiuseppe states that the board will have the ability to decide on how many strategies are happening at once and the Town should be trying to build up its capacity then implementing some of the goals might not get done or take a long time. Some of the parties are concentrated on day-to-day operations and would most likely need outside help to enact the strategies. Mr. Bouley asks Mr. DiGiuseppe what the negative aspect about Planning Board just adopting the Master Plan. Mr. DiGiuseppe reads from the handbook that the Board would not be able to use the plan as part of a recommendation on a decision. Under the planning board it says pursuant to mgl4181d the Planning Board may prepare and submit for Town Meeting approval a master plan for the town, town meeting is not necessary for adoption as a Master Plan but is necessary for set plan to be used as a basis for recommendation on town growth and development. Mr. Bouley asks if 1.1.6 Zoning Diagnosis could be brought up and if it could get a grant to start up. Mr. DiGiuseppe states it would be and the reasoning behind the inclusion of it in the Master Plan is the town needs updates on bylaw aspects that would need to be changed to become more efficient. Mr. Bouley asks if a CPA is being worked on. Mr. DiGiuseppe states there isn't one being worked on as it had been discussed a year prior for the Community Preservation Act and it didn't get support. It would have been additional costs to property taxes and would go for things like historic preservation and purchasing of open space recreational facilities. Mr. Graf asks about transportation and if anything in the Master Plan brought up North and South Worcester Street. Mr. DiGiuseppe states it is a funded project and it is not a direct action taken in the Master Plan but it is already in the transportation improvement program and is supposed to be funded in 2025. They'll realign a portion of the road to align the North and South sides of the street, a light, and a left turn lane. The same funding will be going towards the work being done on East Main Street. Mr. Graf asks if there was a plan more options on the Main Street plan or was there only option B and C. Mr. DiGiuseppe says there were options a through d but options b and c were the most liked by the public when the options were presented. Mr. DiGiuseppe gets the Board's opinion on how the Master Plan should be moved forward. Mr. Hornsby suggests that it should go through another meeting while the whole Board is present. The current edition of the Master Plan has comment made by Mr. DiGiuseppe and the board has

final say as to when the Master Plan has gone through enough changes. The public will be able to make edits as well on the draft such as Mr. Chris Keyes. Mr. Hornsby inquires if the board is hoping to get the Master Plan ready for the October Town Meeting. Mr. DiGiuseppe states that that would be ideal if the board decides to take the Master Plan to Town Meeting. Mr. Bichan asks in regards to the responsibly parties if they have been contacted and agreed to take part in being responsible in the making of the Master Plan. Mr. DiGiuseppe answers that he has contacted most and they have agreed and will be contacting the rest over the Summer. Mr. Bichan questions what the intent of the performance measure for every strategy. Mr. DiGiuseppe states it would be giving the board target to aim for so you can measure how successful the board was in achieving the goal. Mr. Bouley asks how many people attended the last public information session on the Master Plan. Mr. DiGiuseppe states that there was around 15 to 20 members of the public who attended over Zoom. Mr. Bouley suggests letting people know that the Master Plan will be discussed through the same means as the last information session. Members of the public had been consistent in attending the meetings on the topic of the Master Plan especially in the beginning in person which was around 30 or 40 people in attendance when the information sessions first started. Mr. Bichan asks if the board should make the final draft and then endorse the Master Plan. Mr. Hornsby answers it would be drafted and amended by the Board before going off to endorse so the Master Plan wouldn't have to be amended post endorsement. Mr. Chris Keyes recommends brining the Master Plan to the town meetings annually to update and keep the document relevant. Mr. Bichan states the bylaw changes should follow the Master Plan as a guidebook. Mr. O'Neil suggests putting the Master Plan more vocally on the town website. Mr. Bichan states that the next meeting should discuss the first three goals of the Master Plan.

Adjournment

The motion to adjourn the July 13, 2021 meeting was done by Mr. Graf and seconded by Mr. Bichan. Roll call; Mr. O'Neil, Mr. Bouley, Yes Mr. Graf, Yes Mr. Bichan, Yes, and Mr. Hornsby Yes. Motion passes. The Planning board Meeting from July 13, 2021 was adjourned at 8:23pm.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Bryan Carmichael, Department of Planning and Economic Development Administrative Assistant.

Minutes Approved on: 2/15/22

Signature Paul DiGiuseppe