

**Master Plan Committee  
TOWN OF DUNSTABLE  
TOWN HALL, 511 MAIN STREET  
DUNSTABLE, MA 01827-1313**

**Meeting Minutes - November 21, 2017**

**1. Call to Order**

The Dunstable Master Plan Committee meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Joe Vlcek serving as chair. The following were in attendance:

**Master Plan Committee Members Present:**

Walter Alterisio, Board of Selectmen  
Carol Bacon, Affordable Housing Committee  
Leah Basbanes, Conservation Commission  
Stephanie Cronin, At-large member  
Anne Davis, Historical Commission  
Karl Huber, Water Commissioners  
Mike Martin, Road Commissioners  
Susan Psaledakis, Community Preservation Committee  
Kathy Sniezek, At Large Designee  
Joe Vlcek, Planning Board

**Others:**

Tracey Hutton, Town Administrator  
Beverly Woods, NMCOG

**Absences:**

Paul Dalida, Safe Pathways Committee

**2. Approval of the Minutes of October 17, 2017**

The draft minutes of the October 17, 2017 meeting were distributed and reviewed. Based on a motion made by Carol Bacon and seconded by Leah Basbanes, the minutes were unanimously approved.

**3. Review Discussion Questions on Facilities and Services**

Beverly Woods reviewed the Facilities and Services Discussion Questions with the Committee. The Committee determined that additional collaboration and consultation is needed between the Board of Selectmen, Advisory Committee and the regional school district. Discussion ensued regarding the composition of the regional

school board. Stephanie Cronin noted that, because Dunstable has only two representatives, while Groton has five representatives, the Town is not represented on some of the subcommittees. It was then suggested that perhaps a “Friends of the School Committee” group could be formed to monitor the meetings and report back. The need for more participation from Dunstable residents at the school board meetings and subcommittee meetings was noted. It was also recommended that the Dunstable School Board members participate more actively in the Board of Selectmen meetings and department head meetings, in an effort to ensure that the School Board is well aware of the needs and limitations of the community. It was suggested that the town investigate the possibility of collaborating with the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools Consulting Group to get assistance in undertaking a strategic planning process. The possible future need for an additional school building was discussed, and River Street was identified as a potential location.

In discussing Question 2, the Committee concluded that the Town has adequate cemetery space for the short- and mid-term. The Committee agreed that the Dumont property should be investigated as a possible location for future long-term expansion.

The Committee discussed Question 3 regarding the future fiscal challenges facing the community. It was agreed that there is no one solution to the financial problems and that a multi-tiered approach will be needed to reign in future school costs, control residential development (which adds children to the schools), and develop ways of generating additional revenue, potentially through economic development that is in keeping with the character and desires of the community.

The Town’s responsibilities relative to the new EPA stormwater management permit were discussed under Question 4. Tracey Hutton stated that the Town is now addressing the administrative requirements of the permit and will soon begin assessing the cost of compliance with all permit requirements.

Under Question 5, the Committee discussed the challenge of recruiting additional on-call firefighters. The Committee agreed that there should be additional outreach to the high school and Scouts relative to the Junior Firefighter program. Dunstable could also investigate regionalizing fire protection services with the town of Groton.

Under Question 6, the need for a new fire station was discussed, as the existing station is obsolete and not structurally suitable for expansion. A new public safety building is on the proposed debt schedule for 2019.

Through discussion of Question 7, it was determined that the Town already has a facilities maintenance and management plan.

In discussing Question 8, the Committee determined that there is a need for additional transportation services for seniors. As discussed at previous meetings, there is also a need for senior housing. The Committee identified a need for either a Senior Center/Community Center, or increased access to the Community Room at the Library.

The Committee agreed that the need to upgrade the municipal water system should be a high priority for the Town. Additional voter education on this issue is needed prior to the next town meeting. Karl Huber noted that there is also a demand for expanded service, and that High Street residents would like to be connected to the system.

A rate study will be performed by the Water Department to examine the rate structures of other comparable communities. The Water Department does not have a licensed operator, as noted in Mass DEP's findings. This will need to be rectified going forward. Tracey Hutton informed the Committee that the water enterprise fund may be eliminated, and that the Water Department would then function as a typical town department. It was pointed out that compliance with Mass DEP's regulations and directives is not optional.

In discussing Question 10, Committee opinion was divided as to whether the Town should adopt a charter. Beverly Woods suggested that town officials contact the Department of Revenue and ask that they meet to discuss the charter process and the benefits that a charter might offer to the community. The Committee agreed that the Master Plan should include a recommendation to investigate the possibility of adopting a charter.

Under Question 11, the Committee recommended that the Town investigate the possibility of regionalizing additional public safety services with adjoining communities. Other areas for potential regionalization that should be explored include inspectional services and DPW.

### **3. Draft Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter**

The Draft Natural and Cultural Resources Chapter was distributed for review. The chapter will be discussed in detail at the December meeting.

### **4. Adjourn**

The next regular Master Plan Committee meeting was scheduled for December 19, 2017. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.