

## Master Plan Steering Committee Meeting Minutes – August 22, 2013

Members Present: Joe Hutchinson (Chair), Didi Chadran, Victor Normand, Lucy Wallace  
Member Absent: SusanMary Redinger  
Liaisons: Jaye Waldron, Conservation Commission  
Planning Board: Kara Minar

Joe Hutchinson opened the meeting at 7:35 PM

**MPSC Administrative Work** - Joe reported that he spoke to Rachel Holcomb about the possibility of doing admin work for the MSPC. Reasons for hiring someone in an admin capacity include efficiency, help with meeting minutes, and access to minutes as close to real-time as possible. The rate Rachel agreed to for this service was \$12 per hour. Lucy moved to approve Rachel for MPSC admin services and the motion carried. After some discussion about the likely admin workload in question, and assuming 3 hours per meeting multiplied by 2 meetings per month, Victor moved to authorize Joe to approve up to \$250 per month in payments to Rachel for MPSC admin work; the motion carried.

**August 1 Meeting Minutes** – Joe reported receiving an email from Joe Theriault, Historical Commission, requesting clarification of the intended role of Town Committee liaisons. Victor moved to add both Joe Theriault’s request email and Joe Hutchinson’s email response to the minutes; the motion carried. The meeting minutes were approved as amended.

**Consultant Proposal Selection Criteria** – Joe led the discussion about the process by which bidding consultants’ proposals would be evaluated and ranked, and from which the winner ultimately selected. To explain his process, Joe referenced two documents distributed to MPSC members prior to the meeting, one of which graphically depicted the consultant selection process at an overview level, the second which listed 7 selection criteria, as well as a rating scheme that MPSC members are to use to score submitted proposals, criterion by criterion. Discussion ensued about the fact that only 2 bidders showed up to the RFP meeting on August 12, and Joe advised that certain winnowing steps could be skipped where warranted if we are to receive a smaller number of proposals than anticipated. Lucy mentioned that Liz Allard reported a total of 5 prospective consultants who came forward to request copies of the RFP.

Jaye asked whether liaisons get a vote, and Joe and Lucy both replied “no.” Jaye then added that she brings personal experience in evaluating bids of this type, and Joe welcomed her input in the discussion and throughout the process as a nonvoting participant.

Victor asked how we are to evaluate the merits of, and the costs associated with, each proposal. Joe answered that we would apply our evaluation criteria first, to narrow the contender field to the top 3, and then visit cost afterward. Jaye added that the MassDEP refers to this as the “Best Value Approach.”

Lucy asked whether the plan involved inviting liaisons and committees who may have never even expressed interest in MPSC affairs to attend the proposal evaluation meeting. Victor asked whether the liaison role wouldn’t be more important once an MPSC consultant already selected, and the planning work begun. After a few ideas were floated for liaison participation either before or after the consultant is selected, Kara offered a compromise procedure, by which liaisons can submit specific questions to the

MPSC board, who would then present these to prospective Master Plan consultants. The group agreed to this approach.

Didi asked how the MPSC would strive to avoid any conflicts of interest, or apparent conflicts of interest, among consultant bidders. Were somebody to charge at some later date that the selection process was somehow biased, how would our selection process help to demonstrate that the process was actually objective and methodical? Joe and Lucy responded that the very process we had discussed would help ensure that the process is in fact objective and methodical, and protect the MPSC from any such charges.

Jaye asked how the MPSC proposed to rank the firms. What if, for example, more than one bidder scored equally high on the evaluation criteria? Further, what if two firms scored equally high in the aggregate, but with different rankings on different criteria? This question led to a discussion about the need not only to rank the criteria from the RFP in order of importance, but then to assign weights to each, based upon their relative importance to our Master Planning process. The MPSC took an action item to develop a proposed ranking and weighting system for all these criteria, and then submit them to others on the board via email in advance of the next meeting.

**Process Summary** – The group agreed that upon receipt of the consultant proposals on Friday 8/23 each of us will read and review them, evaluate them on the relative advantageousness of each of the evaluation criteria discussed earlier, and make individual determinations as to the top 3 submissions. Joe will propose a weighting system based on the group’s collective input, and then fine-tune and approve the system at the next meeting, which was determined to be on Wednesday, 8/28 at 7:00. The MPSC board will then proceed to collectively select the top 3 proposals. Reference checks will take place during the week of September 3, and interviews will be done on September 12<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM to Noon. An admittedly very aggressive timetable.

**Communications Activities** – Didi reported the formation of a small communications team, consisting of Ames Hardyman and Maria Kauffman, with Bob Eiland agreeing to support on an “emeritus” basis, as needed and as his limited availability permits. Didi has also entered into discussions with Leslie Bunnell to design and implement an MPSC Web site; these discussions remain ongoing. Joe advised the group that Didi distributed a Press Announcement about the bidders’ meeting to all 3 local newspapers, and Didi remarked that the Harvard Hillside – the sole paper that covered the item – ran the release *verbatim*. Didi took an action to send a copy of the Press Announcement, along with a link to the Harvard Hillside article, to the group.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Didi Chadran