

1 **LONDONDERRY, NH MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE**  
2 **SEPTEMBER 26, 2012 MEETING IN THE MOOSE HILL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
3

4 Members Present: Leitha Reilly, Chair and Planning Board Representative; Marty Srugis,  
5 Vice Chair and Heritage Commission Representative; Joe Green, Town Council  
6 Representative; Lisa Whittemore, Budget Committee Representative; Larry O'Sullivan,  
7 Zoning Board of Adjustment Representative; Mike Speltz, Conservation Commission  
8 Representative; Mary Soares, Alternate Planning Board Representative; Bob Saur,  
9 Londonderry Trailways Representative; Deb Paul, Business Community Representative;  
10 Barbara Mee, At Large Representative (Central); and Russ Lagueux, At Large  
11 Representative (South)

12  
13 Also Present: Community Development Director André Garron, AICP; Town Planner  
14 Cynthia May, ASLA; GIS Manager John Vogl; Planning and Economic Development  
15 Department Secretary Jaye Trottier; and Brian Wright and Matt Noonkester of Town  
16 Planning and Urban Design Collaborative (TPUDC) via Skype.

17  
18 **I. Call to Order**

19  
20 Leitha Reilly called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

21  
22 **II. Approval of Minutes – July 25, 2012 and August 2, 2012**

23  
24 **Larry O'Sullivan made a motion to approve and sign the minutes from the**  
25 **July 25, 2012 meeting. M. Srugis seconded the motion.** No discussion. **Vote**  
26 **on the motion: 9-0-1.** (B. Mee abstained as she had not attended the meeting).  
27

28 **Larry O'Sullivan made a motion to approve and sign the minutes from the**  
29 **August 2, 2012 meeting. D. Paul seconded the motion.** No discussion. **Vote**  
30 **on the motion: 9-0-1.** (D. Paul abstained as she had not attended the meeting).  
31

32 **III. Review of the Interim (Presentation) Master Plan Draft**

33  
34 L. Reilly reported to Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) members on the Policy  
35 Maker Briefing presented by B. Wright and M. Noonkester at a joint meeting of the  
36 Planning Board and Town Council on September 12. J. Green reiterated his and  
37 Councilor Tom Freda's reactions to the draft Master Plan developed by TPUDC,  
38 saying it is not only engaging but accurately reflects the input given by residents  
39 throughout the process. Commentary from his fellow Councilors, he said, will be  
40 forthcoming. B. Saur asked J. Green to gauge in particular the Council's feedback on  
41 whether they believe the implementation matrix will provide them with sufficient  
42 direction for the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) process. T. Freda had asked at  
43 the September 12 meeting whether TPUDC reviewed the 2004 Master Plan and  
44 determined if any of those goals have been achieved. Planning Board Chair A. Rugg  
45 had answered that while not every goal had been realized, some of the larger points  
46 were accomplished. He and M. Soares also commented on how the economic  
47 downturn has not only impacted the ability to fund some of the goals but has also  
48 altered perceptions that will influence this Master Plan. M. Speltz asked A. Garron if

49 it was possible to quantify the accomplishments of the 2004 plan. A. Garron replied  
50 that it could be done and shared M. Speltz's opinion that quite a few of the goals set  
51 in 2004 have been met. Those not executed were likely victims of timing and/or a  
52 lack of funding, such as the choice made by the Town Council to form the Historic  
53 Preservation Task Force versus choosing not to charter a Town Center task force.

54  
55 [L. Whittemore arrived at 7:13 PM].

56  
57 L. Reilly asked for comments from the public on the interim draft. Resident Ann  
58 Chiampa asked if she could speak after hearing input from the Steering Committee.

59  
60 L. Reilly prefaced her request for Committee input by pointing out that the majority  
61 of the 362 comments received regarding the first draft have been incorporated into  
62 the document and the +/-70 that have not yet been addressed are small in nature,  
63 including typographical errors. The most significant addition, she said, is the  
64 implementation matrix requested previously by the Committee. L. O'Sullivan cited  
65 the "Budget Allowance" and "Funding Source" columns of the matrix as the most  
66 valuable because they will provide the Town Council, CIP Committee, land use  
67 boards, and others with guidance that will enhance their decision making efforts that  
68 so often hampered by budgetary constraints. L. Reilly noted that the generous  
69 ranges in some of the budgetary allowances will be further refined once execution of  
70 the document begins, but added that they provide a good starting point for any  
71 implementation committee. B. Saur relayed his experience with TPUDC when they  
72 amended their anticipated financial sources for the estimated \$1.8 million rail trail  
73 based on his knowledge of local funding opportunities. M. Soares pointed out that it  
74 is still useful to retain the \$1.8 million figure in the matrix. It was decided to add  
75 comments to the Budget Allowance column where appropriate to identify not only  
76 the total estimated cost but whether the action in question involves a one-time  
77 expense and/or long term maintenance. L. Reilly added it is also worthwhile to note  
78 when a project is achieved in part or whole through volunteers and donations to  
79 show how much was saved in tax dollars as well as to demonstrate the level of  
80 interest residents have in their community.

81  
82 Adoption of the style of zoning known as "Form Based Code" was discussed several  
83 times during the meeting in relation to the implementation matrix. (Rather than  
84 being based on specific uses as Londonderry's zoning ordinance is, form based  
85 zoning relies on standards of character for a given zone). B. Wright explained that  
86 the process to move from the current ordinance to a form-based code could take  
87 anywhere from 12 to 18 months, depending on whether the town chooses to simply  
88 add a form based component or perform an overhaul of the entire ordinance. To  
89 clarify for those who are tempted to link the concept of form based code strictly with  
90 the new urbanism associated with the proposed Woodmont Commons project, B.  
91 Wright explained that the code applies to all forms of development, from existing  
92 single family subdivisions, to undeveloped areas that are preserved in their natural

93 state, to the proposed activity centers of the Master Plan draft. It can also provide  
94 more options to a landowner for any given development. Current zoning regulations  
95 need not be abandoned if form based code is adopted. Character will simply act as  
96 the primary basis for zoning. While use will still be considered, it will no longer act  
97 as the principal foundation for the ordinance. D. Paul expressed concerns that even  
98 when a consensus is reached, expectations for a given character zone can still vary  
99 from person to person unless it is defined very explicitly. B. Wright explained that  
100 since it is highly visual in nature, standards in form based zoning can actually be  
101 more exact than in use zoning while still accommodating procedural and dimensional  
102 requirements. L. Reilly used the booklet being designed by the Heritage Commission  
103 as an example (although that document would not be an actual ordinance), as it  
104 provides a written guide as well as a visual one for developers regarding building  
105 design. J. Green remarked that this Master Plan attempts to satisfy the range of  
106 views in town which fluctuate from those who do not want the character of the town  
107 to change to those who would like significant changes in such areas as housing  
108 density and walkability.

109  
110 The discussion then turned to that of the Committee's desire to have a sequence  
111 identified within the matrix. J. Green asked whether the introduction of form based  
112 code must be addressed first. M. Noonkester began his response by noting that if  
113 the town chooses to adopt form based zoning, it is more cost effective to do so in  
114 one undertaking rather than introducing it piecemeal. Once in place as a  
115 comprehensive ordinance, it will serve to maximize opportunities to fund  
116 developments through such outside sources as developers or grants and will make it  
117 clear to developers at the outset how their proposals will need to be fashioned to  
118 meet Town requirements. A. Garron agreed, explaining the importance of deciding  
119 on a zoning ordinance in its entirety since it will in turn determine site and  
120 subdivision regulations, as well as all subsequent guidelines that will ultimately  
121 realize the vision of the Master Plan. An added benefit is that as development  
122 created with form based zoning takes place, the results will become evident to  
123 residents faster than it would if form based zoning was introduced gradually.  
124 Adopting form based code, B. Wright added, will make implementation of the matrix  
125 items that much easier. He cautioned against focusing on the establishment of  
126 precedence since opportunities are often spontaneous and should not go unused  
127 simply because they are not high on the list. It was noted that any implementation  
128 committee will have some sense of progression because of the inclusion of the time  
129 frames and funding sources identified in the matrix. While suggestions such as  
130 creating a flow chart, listing dependencies, color coding the matrix, sorting it by  
131 timeframe, or illustrating precedence through an infographic were discussed, M.  
132 Noonkester proposed creating a playbook that would provide guidance but would not  
133 be so scripted that the unforeseen would render it useless. Following further  
134 discussion, L. Reilly offered to meet with staff to create some a draft visual that  
135 addresses the concerns expressed by the Steering Committee while considering the  
136 recommendations from TPUDC. Once the Committee approves the draft concept,

137 TPUDC can then add their expertise to it before the Committee gives their final  
138 approval. It was also decided that this would become a supplemental document to  
139 the Master Plan since it is likely to be impermanent whereas the overall plan is  
140 designed to remain useful for an extended period of time.

141  
142 Other requests by the Committee were:

- 143  
144 1. To ensure generic pictures in the draft are replaced with those specific to  
145 Londonderry (M. Soares). It was decided, however, that in those cases where an  
146 example could conceivably exist in Londonderry but does not currently, or where  
147 an existing example is lacking in some way, a picture from another part of the  
148 country will be used because it is more likely to inspire and educate;
- 149  
150 2. To include the neighborhoods west of North School (on "Old" Mammoth Road)  
151 in the description of the Rail Trail on pages 176 and 177 since the intent is to link  
152 the school with both east and west residential areas (B. Saur, who offered to draft  
153 a description for TPUDC);
- 154  
155 3. To cite sources for all graphics in the document to maintain their validity (D.  
156 Paul);
- 157  
158 4. To add more consideration to historical preservation in Londonderry (e.g.  
159 stonewalls, barns, landmarks, architecture, etc.) within both the document and  
160 the implementation matrix (D. Paul, who volunteered to draft language for  
161 TPUDC). C. May stated that Heritage Commission Chair Art Rugg had already  
162 conveyed similar concerns and that the topic will be integrated into the plan;
- 163  
164 4. To amend the observation on page seven ("Why Plan?") that the town's  
165 demographics lack the age group who are more likely to volunteer time to the  
166 community (M. Soares). In spite of that fact, M. Soares stated that Londonderry  
167 has a high degree of volunteerism and that point should be included. B. Wright  
168 explained that while the wording can be fine tuned, the intent of the comment and  
169 others was not to denigrate Londonderry but to use factual examples to convey  
170 why planning is important. In the same light, B. Mee advised that comments  
171 about residents with school aged children are skewed and should be prefaced with  
172 their origin (i.e. Planapalooza in this case) since the high commitment level of  
173 many parents left them unable to participate in such public outreach efforts. L.  
174 Reilly suggested that if Committee members have factual data that varies from  
175 the points made in that section, they be expressed to TPUDC.

176  
177 Other observations made by Committee members included:

- 178  
179 1. Transforming commercial entities such as strip malls to increase their visibility  
180 along Route 102 and in North Londonderry has met with favor from local business  
181 owners who would like to move into town or expand an existing business, but find  
182 it challenging to remain viable under current zoning restrictions. This is a direct  
183 indication that such transformations will positively impact small businesses (B.  
184 Saur);

185

186 2. The "Community Report Card" will fill a useful roll by encouraging policy makers  
187 to review the implementation process on a regular basis (J. Green)  
188

189 C. May stated that the deadline for additional comments and/or photos is Monday,  
190 October 2.  
191

192 L. Reilly entertained comments from the public. A. Chiampa, Wedgewood Drive,  
193 praised the vision for Pettengill Road because of its emphasis on businesses,  
194 particularly those in the high tech industry. She agreed that some kind of flow  
195 chart as discussed earlier will help to educate the public about the plan and its  
196 execution. She also expressed the following concerns:  
197

198 1. The document presents negative characterizations of the town, particularly on  
199 page seven where it is states that "there is a growing lack of desire to invest in the  
200 schools." Residents, she asserted, have been and still are very supportive of the  
201 schools in order to preserve their high quality. Similarly, stating that "Many  
202 residents...overcame misgivings about the suburban character of the town because  
203 enrolling their children in the Londonderry school system was more important..."  
204 contradicts the widespread notion that people choose to live in Londonderry  
205 precisely because of its unique character.  
206

207 2. It is superfluous to have to define such spaces as the town common and an  
208 entrance to the town.  
209

210 3. It appears as though the visions in the plan will be imposed on private  
211 landowners. She asked, for example, if the residents of North Londonderry were  
212 approached about the potential changes to their part of town. B. Wright responded  
213 that input was obtained during Planapalooza directly from those who live there and  
214 use the Senior Center. He explained that private landowners will not be forced to  
215 comply with the proposed visions of the plan because their properties will be  
216 grandfathered until they choose to make improvements to it. If form based code is  
217 adopted, it will actually provide more opportunities to landowners with regard to use  
218 and character, which will in turn increase their property values. L. Whittemore  
219 suggested to A. Chiampa that she view the various depictions and artist's  
220 renderings as an attempt to intelligently design alternatives in the face of the  
221 challenges imposed by impending development.  
222

223 4. Calming traffic along Rte 102 and keeping residences close to the road seems  
224 contrary to the use of that State Road as a thoroughfare. A. Garron stated that the  
225 design is a response to homeowners there who expressed a need to be able to  
226 safely cross Rte 102 in order to access the commercial properties.  
227

228 5. The additional transit opportunities and parks suggested in the plan will burden  
229 residents with increased taxes. L. Whittemore replied that increasing transit  
230 opportunities was a goal carried over from the 2004 Master Plan. Committee  
231 members and staff explained that not only is its inclusion only meant to provide a  
232 possibility for the future, the implementation matrix will identify various potential  
233 funding sources.  
234

235 6. The change in character proposed for the town common, town center recreational  
236 village, and the land behind the Grange on Pillsbury and Mammoth Roads is too  
237 extensive. The attempt should be made to leave those areas as they are.  
238

239

#### 240 **IV. Next Steps**

241

242 C. May reminded the public that the last Citizen Workshop will take place with  
243 TPUDC on October 24, 2012 at the High School Cafeteria. Pizza and salad will be  
244 available starting at 5:30 PM, the workshop will transpire between 6:00 and 7:20,  
245 and the regular monthly MPSC meeting will follow at 7:30.  
246

247

#### 247 **V. Other Business**

248

249 L. Reilly noted that A. Garron will be leaving the Town Offices as he has accepted a  
250 position at UNH. She thanked him for his service not only to the MPSC but to the  
251 community in general and said he will be missed.  
252

253

#### 253 **VI. Adjournment**

254

255 **B. Saur made a motion to adjourn the meeting. R. Lagueux seconded the**  
256 **motion. Vote on the motion: 10-0-0.**  
257

258

258 The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

259

260 Respectfully submitted,

261

262

263

264

265 Jaye Trottier, Planning & Economic Development Department Secretary