



TOWN OF SWAMPSCOTT

MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

ELIHU THOMSON ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
22 MONUMENT AVENUE, SWAMPSCOTT, MA 01907

JUNE 29, 2015 MEETING MINUTES

Time: 7:05– 9:00 pm

Location: Swampscott Senior Center, 200 Essex St. (rear)

Members Present: Sylvia Belkin, Christopher Bibby, Gail Brock, Gino Cresta, Erin DeRoche, Neal Duffy, Angela Ippolito, Brett Laker, Trish Malphrus, Jim Olivetti, Robert Powell, Jackson Schultz, Ralph Souppa, Andrew Steingiser, Sarah Walker, and Mary Webster

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Pete Kane (Town Planner), Matthew Smith (MAPC), Christine Madore (MAPC), Manisha Gadia Bewtra, (MAPC), and Tim Wilkerson (Regulatory Ombudsman, Director of Economic Policy Development, Mass. Exec. Office of Housing and Economic Development and Swampscott resident)

Fourth meeting of the Master Plan Committee opened at 7:05 pm.

A.-APPROVAL OF JUNE 1 MEETING MINUTES

Members of the Swampscott 2025 Master Plan (S25) committee approved the minutes following a brief discussion of items that required modification.

B. PROJECT UPDATE

Matt Smith presented a revised schedule and document review process for the Swampscott 2025 – The Master Plan (S25). Matt indicated that MAPC will need the fall to review the strategies. A draft will be submitted by the end of the year (as originally scheduled). There will be a public meeting in the fall to present the goals and objectives of the Master Plan. The new schedule is as follows:

| Swampscott Master Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|----------|---------|--|
| Schedule - Revised | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task | March | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November | December | Jan/Feb | |
| Elements | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Swampscott Today | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Vision | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| Housing (Production Plan) | | X | X | X | X | X | X | Revisions | | | | |
| Economic Development | | X | X | X | X | X | X | Revisions | | | | |
| Historic & Cultural Resources | | X | X | X | X | X | X | Revisions | | | | |
| Public Facilities & Services | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | Revisions | | | |
| Transportation & Circulation | | | | X | X | X | X | X | Revisions | | | |
| Open Space | | | | X | X | X | X | X | Revisions | | | |
| Sustainability | | | | X | X | X | X | X | Revisions | | | |
| Land Use & Zoning | | | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | |
| MP Committee Mtgs | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting 1: Project Kickoff | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting 2: Vision Meeting | | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting 3: Housing, History, Economic Development | | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting 4: Transportation, Public Services | | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Meeting 5: Open Space, Sustainability | | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Meeting 6: Goals and Strategies | | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Meeting 7: Goals and Strategies | | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| Meeting 8: Draft Land Use Plan | | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Meeting 9: Present Draft Plan | | | | | | | | | | X | | |
| Meeting 10: Present Final Plan | | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Public Forums | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Public Meeting 1: Visioning | | | 21-May | | | | | | | | | |
| Public Meeting 2: Housing & Econ Dev | | | | 18-Jun | | | | | | | | |
| Public Meeting 3: Transportation & Facilities | | | | | 29-Jul | | | | | | | |
| Public Meeting 4: Priorities and Strategies | | | | | | | | | Before Thanksgiving | | | |

C. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC FORUM # 2 – HOUSING, HISTORY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Who attended? MAPC reviewed the demographics of those attending public forum #2. Demographics were similar to those who attended the May 21, 2015 Visioning Forum. There were 70 +/- attendees; 50% male, 50% female. There was a good range of ages: 30-39, 17%; 40-49, 30%; 50-59, 21%; 60+, 19%; and 70+, 2%. Mostly higher-income households attended: \$25k-\$54k, 6%; \$65k-\$84k, 5%; \$85k-\$139k, 33%; \$140k+, 56%. There was also a mix of new comers and long-time residents who attended Public Forum #2: 0-10 years, 43%; 10-20 years, 38%; 20+ years, 17%; and work, 2%.

Housing. In response to the question, ‘Would different household types be able to find existing housing in town?’ respondents said ‘yes’ to young family with or without kids; ‘no’ to senior living alone, single parent with children, and single 20-something. There was a ‘tie’ for couples looking to downside.

In response to the question, ‘What type of housing is most needed?’ the most popular responses were as follows: 23% said single family alternatives; 22% senior accessible units; and 18% mixed use.

Some of the perceived housing challenges facing Swampscott, which are verified by data, include the following:

- Housing costs are high and low inventory for smaller units, especially for elderly and younger households.
- Cost of living is high, especially for seniors looking to downsize.
- Little turnover for single family homes that are most appealing to couples and young families.
- Smaller units are located in area that is not pedestrian friendly: Vinnin Square

According to MAPC, what those attending the Public Forum #2 value most about Swampscott with respect to its housing is location, beaches, proximity to Boston, neighborhoods with character and charm. Those attending Public Forum #2 regard Swampscott as “worth the investment.”

Economic development. MAPC presented its overview of what they heard at Public Forum with respect to Swampscott’s economic development.

In response to the question, ‘Where would you take a visitor?’ 47% said neighboring downtowns (Salem, Marblehead, Lynn); 14%, regional malls; 11%, downtown Boston; 10%, Vinnin Sq.; 9%, Cape Ann; and 8%, Humphrey St.

Those attending said they would take visitors to neighboring downtowns and Humphrey St. to eat; regional malls and neighboring downtowns to shop; and neighboring downtowns, other places, and Boston to stay.

Here’s how the types of economic activity were prioritized by those attending the Public Forum No. 2: 45% retail and dining; 40% tourism; 9% health care; and 6% housing. In terms of targeted areas, those attending Public Forum No. 2 noted Humphrey St., Vinnin Sq., and the RR station area for retail and dining; Vinnin Sq. for medical or professional offices; and Humphrey St and the RR station area for mixed use.

Those attending the public forum No. 2 also described the types of businesses and economic activity they would like to see in town. The top responses were: More restaurants and cafes, especially those that leverage the seaside environment; Addition of hotels, inns, or bed & breakfasts; Streetscape improvements along Humphrey Street, and Movie theatre. Expanding the existing health care did not get a high number of responses. Matt indicated that one of the questions that the Master Plan will address is, “What are the small steps that can be done to attract businesses?”

History. Those attending Public Forum No. 2 said the following are historic and cultural sites they would take a visitor to: Olmsted District, Local beaches, Fish House, M.B. Eddy House, Downtown Salem and PEM, and Old Town Marblehead.

As for what needs to be preserved in town, those attending Public Forum No. 2 said local beaches and historic neighborhoods and architecture. Those attending said those assets could be promoted in the following manner: Increased marketing of cultural and scenic assets through different media outlets and local events; Improve connectivity with bike paths and walkability; Encourage development of hotels and inns; and Development of Swampscott Train Station.

The group discussed the status and history of the Swampscott Train Station regarding retail development. The building is owned by the MBTA and leased to the Town of Swampscott (99 year lease). Three parking spaces immediately in front of the Station are owned by the Town; the remaining parking spaces are owned by the MBTA.

D.-DRAFT VISION STATEMENT

MAPC presented a draft vision statement for comment and feedback.

Below is the June 29, 2015 version (the original) of that statement:

In 2025, Swampscott is a flourishing community that offers residents a high quality of life by taking full advantage of, and emphasizing, its many unique assets - beautiful beaches, a unique history, excellent and diverse residential neighborhoods, strong public transportation and access to Boston, a robust business mix, and beautiful connected open spaces. Swampscott's rich maritime history and pristine, well-maintained beaches draw residents and visitors to its waterfront. Residential neighborhoods offer a welcoming, safe and enriching environment with a variety of housing options - market rate and affordable - for families, seniors and young adults. Humphrey Street serves as the vibrant cultural and social center of the community, drawing people from all walks of life, including tourists, to its historic setting and unique selection of shops, restaurants, and views of the Atlantic. Redevelopment around the MBTA train station has created a transit village with shops and residences in a walkable environment attractive to young and old residents alike. A reimagined, revitalized Vinnin Square serves as a regional destination for North Shore shoppers and workers with improved multi-modal transportation access and appropriately scaled mixed use retail, residential and office space that attracts much needed business, jobs and increased consumer spending to town. Swampscott's excellent public education and modern town facilities continue to attract families, but also provide excellent services and recreational options for residents of all ages. A connected system of well-maintained parks, open spaces and beaches with strong pedestrian and bicycle amenities further contributes to Swampscott's high quality of life by improving residents' overall health and making the community among the "greenest" on the North Shore. Finally, through this Master Plan process and other community endeavors, Swampscott is an informed, engaged and productive community, with a shared vision and commitment to achieving a prosperous, sustainable future.

Committee members were invited to provide feedback to that statement. One member suggested that the statement should reflect Swampscott's relationship to other communities on the North Shore.

E.-PUBLIC FORUM NO. 3 – TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

MAPC reviewed aspects of S25 that would be addressed in Public Forum No. 3; transportation and circulation and public facilities and services.

Transportation. Swampscott's workers commute throughout the region; 80% drive, 12% take public transit, 3% walk, 3% work from home, and 2% other. Swampscott has strong public transportation connections: Those include commuter rail (25 inbound/daily and 25 outbound/daily) and MBTA bus routes. Swampscott, however, is disconnected from highway networks. Pedestrian and bicycle options vary. There are strong pedestrian areas, but crossing issues at Humphrey and Burrill streets. Weak pedestrian areas include Vinnin Sq. And there are limited bicycle amenities: no bike lanes, paths, and the like.

During the Open House, MAPC heard the following with respect to transportation improvements needed:

- Bike Improvements: The Rail Trail / Bike Path was the most common;
- Pedestrian Improvements: Sidewalks/Schools; walking trails, and making Vinnin Square Walkable
- MBTA: Blue Line service to Swampscott; Upgrade Station / Parking; and Shuttle to T

Public facilities and services. MAPC defined public facilities as buildings, land, and equipment owned or operated by the Town or School District and public services as operations and amenities provided by the Town or School District. The S25 will identify facilities needs and how well they will continue to accommodate local services. It will not address school quality, except to the extent that facility quality has an effect on it. Neal Duffy is on a task force looking at the whole school issue, trying to determine what people really want. The task force is developing a survey. Matt pointed out the Town will need to address the fact that there are two vacant schools in the . MAPC reviewed Swampscott's public facilities, including its Dept. of Public Works and responsibilities, and town buildings with town services, and school facilities. A Facilities Director position has recently been created for the Town.

F.-NEXT STEPS

Next public forum: The third Swampscott 2025: The Master Plan public forum is Thursday, July 23rd at the Swampscott Senior Center (200 Essex Street - rear of the building). This forum will focus on Transportation, Public Facilities and Services, and Open Space..

The meeting will kick off with an Open House at 6:30pm where participants can view materials and findings from previous forums. The formal program will kick off with a presentation at 7pm. Group exercises will follow on each topic - transportation, public facilities and services, and open space. At these interactive stations, participants will learn more about each topic and provide their thoughts and ideas to inform the planning process. The group discussed ways to get Town leadership to come to the forum

As part of an effort to increase attendance at the forum, Pete Kane sent out a follow up email with the following directions:

1. Posting the Flyer @ Local Businesses

Print off copies and ask local businesses and institutions (like your church or synagogue) if you can have the flyer posted. Many of these groups in town have special community boards or window areas that they allow these to be posted.

If you're able to get one posted in a local business, let me know and I'll update the list we've already posted at. Feel free to check this list before heading out to make sure they don't already have a flyer

up: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SztON49TWhpe3ZXWLrrCagQ_IWqj81-cR4ed5T9To/edit?usp=sharing

2. Phone Tree

We're adding in a new communication method for committee members this time. We'd like each committee member to call (not email or text) 10 friends in town to ask them to come to the forum. You all have your own social circles which is great. So the phone tree should help to create that personal connection while also really encouraging your friends to come. There's no problem if two (or more) committee members happen to call the same person. Just make an effort to actually call your friends.

3. Email Invite to Your Board/Committee

If you serve on a board or committee in town, please be sure to send an email invite to that board regarding the forum and provide the flyer.

4. Post on Your Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn Accounts

This is your opportunity to utilize your social media skills. Post a link to the event (<http://swampscott2025.mapc.org/calendar/>) and state the forum date/time/location on your accounts.

Next Meeting. The next S25 meeting is set for July 27, 2015. The topic will be open space, sustainability (energy and hazard mitigation)

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.

Robert Powell

Clerk, Swampscott 2025 Master Plan Committee

With assistance from Sarah Walker