



## Planning Board Meeting Minutes Tuesday, July 19, 2022, at 7:00 pm – Winchester Room

Members Present:	Diab Jerius, Chair	Sally Dale, Vice Chair/Clerk	
	I-Ching Scott	Nicholas Rossettos	
Members Absent:	Kurt Spring		
Also Present:	Brian Szekely, Town Planner	Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary	
	Bryan Manter, Assistant Town Engineer		
Others Attending:	Richard Leaf	John Rufo	Michael Wang
	Ben Albiani	Lance Grenzeback	Carol Savage
	Shukong Ou	Tara Hughes	

A quorum being in attendance, Chair Jerius calls the Winchester Planning Board (PB) meeting to order at 7:02 pm, noting that the meeting is being recorded via zoom. Roll call of PB members: Dale, Scott, Rossettos, Jerius in attendance, Spring absent.

### 1. Updates:

- a. **Chair Jerius:** Two groups have participated in the Town’s Farmers Market: the Tree Working Group and the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) Working Group. In addition to the Chair, those attending included Sally Dale (PB), David Miller (Conservation Commission), Ruth Trimarchi (Board of Health and Climate Action), and Mike Bettencourt (Select Board). Shared information with residents and received feedback. Most interest focused on the trees. Some had concerns with the ADU’s.
- b. **Mr. Szekely:** Need to decide tonight for future meetings whether to meet in person or remote. The Governor extended the option to meet remote through March 2023.

### 2. Joint Meeting of PB and CSC:

**Chair Jerius:** Welcomed the Communications Study Committee (CSC) for the first joint discussion regarding communications. Introduced the PB members and the Chair of the CSC, Lance Grenzeback.  
**Chair Grenzeback:** Introduced the CSC members attending (Carol Savage, Shukong Ou, Tara Hughes). He presented several slides outlining their purpose, activities accomplished to date, current recommendations and proposed schedule. The following summarizes his presentation:

- Fall 2021 Town Meeting appointed the CSC to “establish robust and effective communication between residents and town government – and within town government – to increase community participation in town decisions with elevated awareness of town issues and initiatives”. They were to present findings in Spring 2022 and make recommendations in Fall 2022.
- Based on their research since Fall 2021, they divided the issues into 4 categories: Town Government, Town Outreach, Town Website, Town Meeting.
- Their proposed recommendations fall into 4 areas: Enhance government communications; Improve Town website; Expand Town government outreach; Strengthen Town Meeting communications.
- One action item is to propose a bylaw for a Town Government Communication Plan.

- This Plan would include improvements to the website, tools to disseminate information (such as expanding the Town Manager’s newsletter), and guidelines and content for presenting a warrant at Town Meeting.

Chair Jerius: The PB has identified the need for improving communications with residents, including Town Meeting members, and wanted to discuss with the CSC. Some specific ideas include using the Town Manager’s newsletter, having a separate PB newsletter, and using outreach events like Town Day and the Farmers Market. The recent discussion with the Historical Commission about homeowners wanting to renovate their historic homes also raised communication concerns. To address, PB has considered having brochures to communicate the issues. Want to move forward and coordinate with the CSC.

PB and CSC Discussion:

- How to condense and distribute the information effectively and extensively so people can respond and react?
- There are 2 current PB projects (North Main Street and Holton/Swanton Streets) where it is hard for the general public to engage and participate but critical that they do. Maybe seek the technical help of high school students, engaging youth in this process.
- Today people can be overwhelmed with too much information. It is condensing the details and getting it into the hands of the right people; need to make it compelling and understandable for people to read and respond. There are innovative software packages that can accomplish this.
- Need to make people aware; we are civically illiterate. A suggestion is to make the PB agenda more specific and clearer, providing it in advance of the meetings.
- We need a document management system; the Town website does not serve this purpose.
- If we expect Town employees to implement some of these communications, we need to make it part of their job description.
- Cambridge has a great PB website. Need to look at other towns for ideas.

Chair Jerius closed the joint meeting of the PB and CSC at 7:59 pm.

### **3. Discussion with Chamber of Commerce (Chamber):**

Chair Jerius: Welcomed Richard Leaf (Chamber of Commerce member) and Ben Albiani (President of the Chamber of Commerce). Several points for discussion include: what does the Chamber do? What is the Chamber’s vision for downtown? What are the common goals? How does the Chamber envision “placemaking”? What might be some joint initiatives?

Mr. Leaf: Appreciate opening up a dialogue. Noted the Chamber has about 300 members, consisting of retailers and businesspeople in the community. There is no one voice. The Chamber has much overlap and commonality of concerns with the PB. The Chamber holds many events over the year: Town Day, window painting, midnight shopping, Red-Ticket raffle, Citizen of the Year, and more. The Chamber focus is to promote and advocate for the businesses in Winchester.

PB and Chamber Discussion:

- Does the Chamber know the vacancy rate? Is there a business improvement plan?
- The Chamber represents existing businesses and their immediate and near-future concerns. The PB is concerned with the big picture future and long-term goals of infrastructure, visions of Town planning, and imaginary or hoped-for businesses and residents. How do we communicate better and help one another towards these different timelines and goals?
- The Chamber is not a funding source. Companies join to help support their businesses; the Chamber gives them a voice and advocate within the Town.
- Winchester has many one-of-a-kind retailers.

- Chamber supports development but is concerned with parking. It's the #1 problem.
- The PB is focusing on North Main Street and Holton/Cross/Swanton Streets for development. What does the Chamber see as reason for development not happening in these areas? There is not much turnover in the properties (personal observation).
- How can the PB get input from Chamber members? Critical for the work being done on these 2 projects.
- The Chamber represents existing businesses. But there are no existing retailers in the Holton/Cross/Swanton Streets area. Need specifically the Chamber retailers to provide their opinion for this project.
- Chamber requested the PB provide specific questions and they will canvass their members.
- PB added: wants to work with developers, make the Town safe for bicycles, improve transportation, and create "15 minute neighborhoods" where a resident could walk 15 minutes for food and other necessities.
- Suggestion to create a working group with members from Chamber and PB.

#### 4. North Main Street Project (NMSP) Update:

Chair Jerius: Welcomed John Rufo and Michael Wang of Form + Place, to continue discussing the NMSP.

Mr. Rufo: Provided a review of the last phase. He summarized the 3 critical components needed to enhance the corridor: create a framework that incentivizes the desired approach for future development; enhance the public realm; implement the complete streets concept/neighborhood connector, designing for all modes to coexist safely. He noted there are 4 steps for the next phase: visualizations, design of complete streets, community dialogue, and developing design guidelines/zoning language.

Mr. Szekely: Proposed having an executed contract for this next phase within the next few weeks. Currently have \$30,000 in the budget. He also noted that the MBTA zoning guidelines are not yet available; currently anticipate a State decision by October.

Chair Jerius: Need to review the deliverables and scheduling.

Mr. Manter: The Engineering Department can review the street design and provide comment. Another option is to have a third party peer review.

Mr. Szekely: Noted that Toole Design can also participate as part of the Transportation Plan.

Mr. Rossettos moved to allocate \$30,000 from the PB consultants budget for this next phase of the North Main Street Project. Ms. Scott second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Rossettos, Scott, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 4-0-0 with Spring absent.

#### 5. Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Bylaw Update:

Chair Jerius: The ADU Working Group is moving to have a bylaw available for next spring that will focus on people with disabilities and residents over 62 years old. Plan to use the ADU legislation that is currently before the State House. The PB would present the bylaw (main proponent since it is a zoning article) with support from the Housing Partnership Board and Select Board. Do not yet have actual language but can use base language of the legislature guideline. Will the PB support?

Discussion:

- In Boston, can do an ADU by right if the footprint or the outside of the house does not change.
- What is the timeline for the House? By the end of July and if it doesn't pass, it would start over.

- Goal to present the concept with the Fall Town Meeting with the final warrant in the Spring.

**6. Upcoming Meeting Format:**

Mr. Szekely: How does the PB want to meet for future meetings? In person with using the current technology to allow for remote participation.

After discussion, decision made to continue remote meetings through September.

**7. Adjourn:**

Ms. Scott moved to adjourn the PB meeting of July 19, 2022. Mr. Rossettos second the Motion. Vote: Dale, Rossettos, Scott, Jerius in favor. Motion passes 4-0-0 with Spring absent. Meeting adjourned at 9:42 pm.

---

Sally Dale, Clerk

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary