



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
TOWN NEW MARLBOROUGH  
OFFICE OF THE PLANNING BOARD  
807 Mill River Southfield Road, Mill River, MA 01244**

**PLANNING BOARD  
Town Hall  
Wednesday, March 27, 2024  
6:00 pm**

Call to order at 6:05 p.m.

Attendees- Bob Hartt, Jordan Archy, Chair Christian Stovall, Secretary Jennie Wright

Absent- Jon James, Co- Chair, Becky Wilkinson - PB

Others- Larry Burke 5 Village News

Motion to review and approve minutes from 03/13/24- lack of quorum, deferred until next meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**(1) Open Space & Recreation Plan Survey Revisions**

Guest- Seth Jenkins Community Planner Berkshire Regional Planning Commission met with PB and reviewed action items from prior meeting including-

- Umpachene Falls outreached to Chairperson- agrees to promote participation in the survey and plans to attend an upcoming PB meeting at a future date.
- NM Land Trust- outreached to Sylvia Eggenberger and Paula Hatch-agree to promote participation in survey completion. Agreeable to meeting with PB at a future date.
- Review of BP survey recommendations –
  - Questionnaire available on Survey Monkey post-adjustment.
  - Reviewed line elements with PB members who agreed with adjustments. These include addition of greatest threat to rural character, questions specific to development of a NM Community Center and addition of demographic questions.

PB approved All question modifications and additions.

- Question regarding length of link. Discussion with resolution that link will remain as is.
- Review of who should complete the survey- questionnaire is open to year-round, seasonal rental, second homeowners and renters and noted on survey itself.

***Action Items***

- ✓ *Seth will send a QR code and a fresh link for PB Committee final review.*
- ✓ *Seth will make a PDF- so PB can create a paper version.*
- Notification of survey will be available in
  - 5Village news,
  - NM Town email distribution list
  - Berkshire Edge
  - Maggie's list with clarification that you need to live in NM. Awareness by PB that there are residents of other communities on Maggie's List.
  - Farmers Market- as survey will be open from May 1st to June 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Survey presentation- PB discussion about paper versus electronic survey completion. Seth clarified for the group that any print surveys completed need to be transcribed into Survey Monkey which is clerical and time consuming. Plan is to have a limited amount of paper surveys available at the Town Hall and manila folder/envelope so residents can drop off completed print surveys.

*Action items-*

- ✓ *Flyers- Jordan will make and bring to next meeting to be dispersed at Town Hall, Southfield, and Mill River Stores.*
- ✓ *Seth will make a PDF- so PB can create a paper version.*

(2) Review and Updating Open Space and Recreation Plan Content

- Required to update the plan every 7 years to allow participation in grants and state funding.
- Excel Spreadsheet with goals and objective from previous plans- 2009 and 2017 as it is a more flexible way to view and modify the plan.
- Overall Plan Composition-
  - Five Goals, each goal with 3-10 action items
  - Action items assigned to a responsible party- PB noted this is important.
  - Prioritization of goals and items review.
  - Goals should range from achievable to aspirational.
  - PB in agreement- goal is to make items relevant and achievable.
- Goal 1- Character of the Villages to remain intact.
  - Intent of goal is to prevent the overall spreading out of the village with blurring of village edges.
  - Example provided by Chair- Conservation Commissioner identified a 3-acre clear cut space in the Village of Southfield. It is unclear what the goal of the clear cut is- possibilities range from development of multiple homes to single home. BP not aware of the clear cutting of the lot, nor the intent of the owner.

*Action item- learn more about the clear cutting and possible development of the property.*

- Discussion of current requirements for lot clearing and building-
  - Approval Not Required (ANR) – no approval required if property meets frontage, setback requirements.
  - Additional approval required –
    - Over a certain number of acres need to get forestry approval.
    - Impingement on wetlands. Development will continue to occur.
    - ? number of lots developed- ANR means only one lot.
    - ? minimum lot size for village= .5 acre, and rural = 2 acres.

*Action Item- clarify the amount of acreage needed for village and rural lots.*

- Other items identified in Goal 1-
  - Street walls- shallow setbacks- buildings coming right to the sidewalk and creating village feel. Reducing front setback requirements.
  - Walkability- state program- Complete Streets- to identify fifteen smaller projects- cutbacks, cross walks, stop signs- to make villages safer.
  - PB discussion of Mill River- one dangerous turn, challenging to make it better. Riverbank makes it impossible. Sidewalks unnecessary. PB feels these items may be irrelevant at this time- N/A.
  - Encourage new developments for walking- N/A. PB- not necessary.
  - Scenic Mountain Act and Scenic Mountain by-law- can limit street trees on scenic roads. Might have prevented clear cutting. Number of defining characteristics including- stone walls, vistas, old trees.
  - Discussion of waterways. York Lake not in jurisdiction of town.

*Action Items-*

- ✓ *Seth- define local scenic roads.*
- ✓ *Consult with John Schreiber regarding protection of water ways.*
- ✓ *PB interested in reviewing village specific by-laws to see what items protect rural versus village.*

- Goal 2- 3 items- see Excel. These items were pulled from 2017 plan. Ten action items in Excel, reviewed by Seth. Item specific discussion included-
  - Signage- Jordan PB believes signage has improved and is appropriate.
  - Promoting use of trails- PB discussion creating versus collecting and collating existing trail maps from NM Land Trust, PRPC, Trustees of the Reservations. Consider developing a map of all the trails, making available through town website. Provide information to visitors and public.
- Goal 3- Brief discussion noting that this is the goal with the most action items. New strategy for goal and action item review.

*Action Items –*

- ✓ *PB will review the prior plan, propose modifications and changes, then bring Seth BRPC back for a deeper discussion.*
- ✓ *Starting with Goal 3- PB will review individually and share internally at the April 23d meeting.*
- ✓ *Will bring Seth back to rediscuss in early May. (May 7<sup>th</sup>) in anticipation of upcoming Public Hearing May 18<sup>th</sup>.*
- ✓ *Seth will send the updated Excel Spreadsheet for group to review Goals and Action items.*
- ✓ *Seth will send a reminder about the upcoming event in Monterey should NM PB want to attend.*
- Discussion of May 18<sup>th</sup>-Public Meeting in NM Library-
  - Opening and Overview- to be provided by Seth.  
*Seth will send a draft of his presentation in advance of May 7<sup>th</sup> PB meeting.*
  - Audience participation use -Mentimeter- scripted questions which functions like a survey, mentimeter. Does generate a record of the slides that can be added to the plan and posted on the town's website. Library confirms wi-fi. Needs to bring a wi-fi enabled device to be able to participate in the survey.
  - Open discussion
  - Plan Post Public Hearing – Suggestion for two meetings with Seth to review survey results and incorporate public forum ideas.

(3) Short Term Rental (STR)

- Forms completed.
- Noted to be a Protected by-law.
- Posted publicly.
- Selectboard recommendations include- maximum day limit, noise and parking ordinances, fire safety.

*Action Item- Recommendations from the selectboard from March 25<sup>th</sup> to be circulated to the PB for comment and review.*

(4) DLTA Grant for Affordable Housing approved. DTLA Grant will allow development of a strategy to promote affordability in housing.

(5) Upcoming Meetings- noted by the PB.

Future PB Planning Board Meetings- Moving to first and third Tuesday at 6 p.m. starting in April. Confirmed upcoming meeting dates-

- April 10<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 6 p.m. Public Hearing at NMFD- in preparation to include in the Town Warrant.
- April 23d Tuesday- finalize notification of Open Space Public Meeting
- May 7<sup>th</sup> PB Meeting
- May 18<sup>th</sup>- Saturday Public Meeting in NM Library- 10:30 start to 12 noon.

Meeting adjourned 7:25 p.m.

Submitted- Jennie Wright Secretary Planning Board.

Date: March 28, 2024