

PLYMOUTH MASTER TASK GROUP

Master Plan Task Force

Meeting: Meeting: via Zoom 8:30 a.m. – February 9, 2023

Attendees:

Members: Steve Bolotin - Chair, Kathy Castagna, Darice Wareham, Evelyn Strawn, Glenn MacGregor, Lorenzo Pizarro, Carl Donaldson and David Peck.
Staff: Lee Hartmann

Guest:

Consultant Interview
Larissa Brown, PhD, FAICP
Larissa Brown & Associates LLC

Peter Flinker
Dodson & Flinker

Mr. Bolotin opened the meeting.

Minutes:

Mr. Peck moved to approve the minutes of January 19, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Wareham. The vote was unanimous 8-0.

Master Plan Scope of Work

Mr. Bolotin welcomed the guests.

Ms. Brown noted that Plymouth's Strategic Action Plan from 2004 is a planning document that is visual and concise.

Mr. Bolotin said that the Task Group is looking for a different approach to master planning. The typical master plan categories need to be addressed but we want to create a balanced plan. What compromises are needed between conflicting goals and priorities? We are also looking for a robust community outreach process to inform the planning process.

Ms. Brown said that there is value to looking at the current plan and update the information included in the plan. The new master plan could focus on trade-offs, strategies and compromises. It could illustrate possible options to balance competing needs and suggested strategies to accomplish those options.

The Town could hold one or two big community meetings or work with smaller groups with a strategy of looking at the big picture and not looking at the issues on a topic by topic basis.

Mr. Flinker said that the master plan budget will be the biggest constraint. He agreed that scenario-based planning is a great approach. Graphically showing scenarios and their trade-offs is a very useful approach. Options include “planning games” and town wide visioning to illustrate how you could reorganize density and growth. Looking at larger systems is also useful. For example, show how individual resource areas link into a larger community system.

Ms. Brown noted that another option is to use a computer-based scenario builder.

Mr. Bolotin said that the master plan should serve as a guidance/implementation document and not completely focus on aspirational goals.

Ms. Brown agreed, a robust implementation plan is needed.

Ms. Brown said that recommendations can still be difficult to adopt and implement. For example, in theory, Transfer of Development Rights is a great land use tool, but implementation is often very difficult.

Mr. Hartmann asked if the guest could forward example scopes from other communities.

Mr. Peck noted that to fund the update, a phased approach to funding might be necessary. What is a good approach?

Ms. Brown suggested:

Phase 1: Existing Conditions – where are we today?, where were we?, what could the future look like under current conditions?

Visioning and a public outreach process. This is our current vision. What is working and what isn't?

Phase 2: Look at scenarios to show how the vision could be achieved as well as the required trade-offs.

Mr. Peck noted that Braintree's master plan process is following the process outlined by Mr. Flinker.

Ms. Wareham noted Plymouth's size and asked how can we get more people involved?

Ms. Brown said support and participation within government is needed. In addition, for a master plan to be effective a critical mass of people is needed to provide guidance. Web based options and websites can be effective. The key is to provide as many different communication options as possible.

Mr. Flinker said it pays to get the right people involved in the process and have as many constituent groups represented. It may be important to have separate meetings in individual villages or neighborhoods.

Ms. Strawn said that we need to identify groups or individuals that do not typically participate in these processes.

Ms. Brown suggested going where the people are, churches, clubs, senior centers, festivals. Breakfast meetings are a good way to engage the business community.

Mr. Hartmann noted that public outreach is labor intensive and can be very expensive.

Mr. Bolotin noted that Plymouth is a large community and getting a good cross-section of representation will be a challenge.

Ms. Brown said Plymouth should try to have people with different focuses in a position to talk to each other about Plymouth's issues. Plymouth could even hold a lecture series with professionals speaking on key topics.

Look at the successes achieved from the last master plan and identify why they were successful.

Mr. Peck noted that focus topics like the 1,000 acres, Holtec Property and 40Bs should also be discussed in the master plan.

Ms. Brown said that there could be a broader master plan with future phases that provide greater detail on focus areas.

Having a robust outline of the economic realities of implementation is very important.

Surveys can also be useful, but they can also be complicated to draft and expensive. On-line surveys are less expensive and can still be useful.

Mr. Peck said that during phase 1, existing conditions, it will be important to look at things like the 2006 school projections versus what has actually occurred as well as the impact of all of the recent multi-family development.

He asked the guests if the form of government has an impact on implementation.

Ms. Brown noted that having a strong town manager and town council or a mayor and city council does help.

Mr. Flicker said that town governance is both a blessing and a curse.

Mr. Bolotin thanked the guests for attending.

Mr. Bolotin said that at our next meeting on February 23rd we will continue to focus on the scope of work by looking at, Master Plan Phasing, Options for Engagement and Funding Options to Support Master Plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 a.m.

Approved: