

Minutes: Master Plan Steering Committee – August 26, 2020 – Virtual Meeting

Committee Members attending: Janne Corneil (Chair), Stacy Lennon, Barbara (Barney) Arnold, Kerry Kissinger, Madeleine Blake, Bob Zogg, John Ballantine, Lynne Lipinsky, Tanya White.

Absent: Angie Verge, Eva Mostoufi, Jason Molten, Jessica Nierenberg.

Also in Attendance: George Mansfield, Gretchen Caywood, Christina Christodoulopoulos (Hemlock Hill Rd), Mary-Lynn Bohn (Westford St), and Carren Panico (Mosquito).

Janne called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Update on MPSC presentation to Planning Board

Madeleine gave a brief overview of Janne’s presentation to the PB on the MP work to date, and she explained that the PB would like to garner a more in-depth understanding, and so has requested a Status Report. Madeleine further explained that on behalf of the MPSC, they agreed to provide the Status Report, and to provide additional input from an MPSC advisory subgroup, as well as an organized table of contents of all MP-related materials for the PB’s October 5 meeting.

Janne explained that Bob, Stacy and John have agreed to be part of the working group, which will be led by George. This group will review the scope and schedule of the MP process, look at the organization of the MPSC, and come back with clear recommendations on how the MPSC should move forward with the MP work, identifying tasks for an outside consultant. George explained that with Bob, Stacy and John having accepted the role, the next step is for the PB to appoint these advisory group members at its next meeting. George explained that as it is not a formal committee, the group must provide him its recommendations, which he then will take forward to the MPSC and PB.

Update on student intern role

Barney explained that the interns have now concluded their work, and Committee members agreed that their contributions have been substantive and will be important for the MP. Barney explained that a resident has raised funds for a small stipend for each of the students as a ‘thank you’ for their work, with an equitable allotment of these funds to be determined based on the approximate hours of work each student contributed. Barney further explained that some of the interns would like to continue with the MP work, but that schedule wise, it would be in lieu of an on-campus job, and therefore she and other MPSC members would like to make sure the students are adequately compensated. Barney suggested delineating specific tasks and putting forward a proposal to the PB to set aside a matching amount of MP funds as a stipend for the continuing students.

Janne explained that there are two major tasks the interns could continue with: furthering the interactive MP website they designed including uploading our MP content and conducting data checks on all GIS maps and other maps that are planned for inclusion in the MP. With this planned continuing work, Janne agreed that a more formal arrangement for a stipend is appropriate. Madeleine also noted that they are providing substantial letters of recommendation for each of the students. Janne, Barney and Madeleine planned to prepare a brief proposal for submission to the PB.

Survey regarding impact of Covid-19

Barney explained that she, Tanya and Stacy (survey working group) would like to prepare a survey for residents addressing the impact of Covid-19 on their lives, noting that this could be developed and carried out while the content of the second directly MP-related survey is being determined. Barney suggested that it will be important to learn the impact of the pandemic on our town by learning the impact on the residents with respect to their work life, home life, and any ways they have been affected. Barney said this would be an opportunity to reconnect with the residents as well as to test out the survey software and programs they plan to use. Janne agreed that this work could go on while George's advisory group develops their input, and while the GIS database is further developed. John pointed out that the MP should consider any long-term changes/effects due to Covid-19 which may have a financial impact. It was noted that any significant increase in work-from-home roles (beyond the %35 that was learned pre-Covid) would certainly impact transportation, and that the work-from-home increase could last for several years.

Janne agreed with doing a Covid-19 impact survey and asked Committee members for their opinion. Lynne felt that a short, 10-13 question survey would be appropriate to gather information and test out the survey process and response. Janne asked the survey group (which will now be Barney, Lynne and John) to come to the next MPSC meeting with proposed /covid-19 survey content.

Stacy pointed out that racial justice movement now at the forefront of American society should also be addressed in the MP process. The Committee members agreed and decided to form a focus group on this matter. Janne asked the survey group to prepare for a discussion on this matter for a discussion at a September MPSC meeting. Kerry pointed out that we had decided to form a discussion group on the issue of "diversity" also and Janne agreed that this would be part of the focus group. A citizen has emailed the Committee expressing her interest in being included in the focus group.

MPSC membership

Janne introduced Mary-Lynn Bohn to the group, explaining that she is interested in becoming a Committee member, and has a background in graphic design. Mary-Lynn explained that she volunteers for the Town through the school and on the Pathways Committee and would like to start here by helping develop the surveys. Madeleine explained that the PB will need to appoint Mary-Lynn to the MPSC, and that this will be address at the PB's next meeting on 9/14/20.

Janne reported that Jason and Jessica have now forwarded emails of resignation, having previously informed her of the inability to continue due to time and schedule commitments. Madeleine said that this will be reported to the PB as well, as required.

Discussion of planning analysis tools/financial model

Janne explained that Kerry, Lynne and John have been developing financial projections out to 2030 for the Town budget. This financial model has been developed by the MPSC but with significant coordination with FinCom and Carlisle's Finance Director. Lynne explained that the model would be discussed further with FinCom who are in the process of developing internal processes to create long term financial modeling.

Kerry presented the comprehensive financial spreadsheet, which he video-shared with the Committee and attendees, noting that the spreadsheet mirrors the structure of budgets as they are presented at Town Meeting. Kerry explained that they had first developed a “base budget” projecting from the current budget and adding no debt service, assuming no additional expenditures and no added staff or hours but including only a 2% COLA annually for each functional department. This a “No Spending” budget that provides a “floor” on spending increases.

Janne pointed out that the number of new homes built is one of the variables that the Town’s MP can address with possibilities for future development.

Kerry illustrated that the spreadsheet can be used to test how different assumptions/variables can affect the overall operating budget and average individual property taxes going forward. Kerry noted that housing and debt are major budget factors, adding that the school debt will be gone after 2030.

The financial analysis included budget projections based on several additional scenarios:

- Base case plus estimated insurance and retirement increases
- Base case plus an estimated amount of Capital Spending and Facilities Maintenance, both increasing 2% annually
- Base case plus \$15 million of new debt scattered over the next decade
- A view of the budget if each department spent what they had spent on average for the past 10 years.
- The residential tax increases by 2030 for these projections ranged from 13% to 29%.

Janne pointed out two variables for investigation: engaging with the Municipal Facilities Committee to discuss options for facilities improvement, and analysis of housing possibilities. Scenarios for these can then be factored into budget projections. The Committee further discussed the effect of different variables on the overall budget projections, and what decisions might be required. Janne pointed out that furthering the MP will provide the input for many of these variables. Madeleine asked that this budget analysis be presented to the PB at one of their October meetings. The Committee planned to discuss the planning analysis and how it interfaces with the financial model in more detail at upcoming meetings.

Minutes

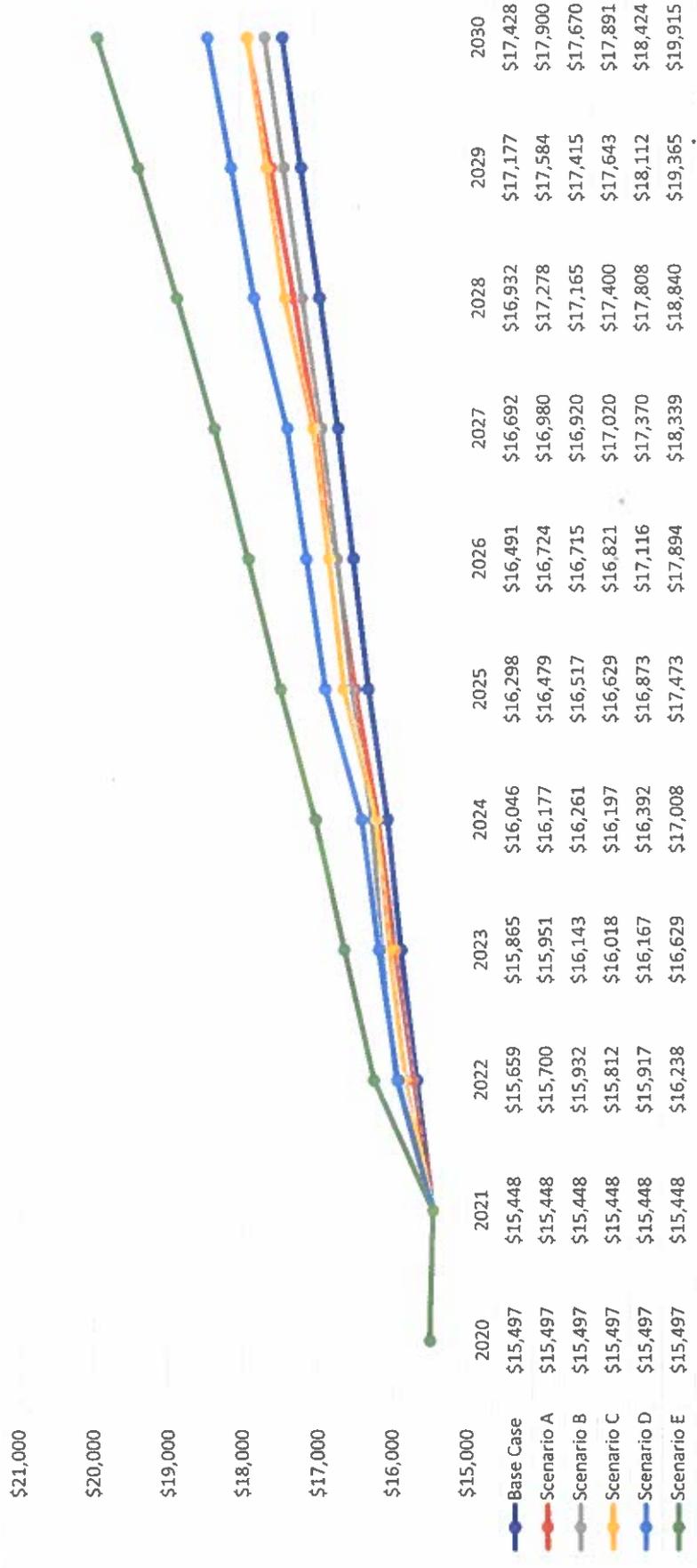
The Committee reviewed the draft Minutes from the 8/12/20 meeting and a few amendments were suggested. Lynne moved to approve the Minutes as amended, Barney seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (9 - 0) by roll call vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Caywood

Tax Growth by Scenario 2020 - 2030



Financial Scenario "What If":

Starting with Approved Budget for FY 2021 of \$30,699,630 and est. avg tax bill of \$15,145 w/o CPA surcharge (\$15,448 w/ CPA):

Base Case - No Capital Spending or Facilities Maintenance spending; All Departmental Budgets incr. at 2%* per year; no new debt:

Scenario A - Base Case except Insurance increases at 4% and Retirement increases at 6%; no new debt:

Scenario B - Base Case plus Capital Spending and Facilities Maintenance at \$250k each in 2021 increasing at 2% annually; no new debt:

Scenario C - Base Case at 2% increases across the board, but \$15 million in new debt scattered over next 10 years:

Scenario D - Scenario A but with \$15 million in new debt scattered over 10 years:

Scenario E - Functional Budgets raised at avg. incr. 2011 to 2019; Muni. Fac. at \$375k incr. at 2%; Cap at \$375K incr. at 1%; no new debt: