



Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

Planning Board
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Linda K. Hamlin, Chairman
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Planning Board Strategic Asset Plan Subcommittee Meeting June 5, 2017 at 8:30 AM Town Hall, Room 103 333 Washington Street

Minutes

Subcommittee Members present: Neil Wishinsky, Carla Benka, George Cole, Betsy DeWitt

Subcommittee Members not present: Bob Cook, Lynda Roseman

Staff present: Kara Brewton, Andy Martineau

Guests: Mark Zarrillo, Carol Levin, Richard Nagle, Ilan Wapinski, Sasaki/RKG team (see below)

Handouts & Meeting Materials:

6/5/17 Agenda, 5/3/17 Meeting Minutes, Sasaki/ RKG Presentation (6/5/17)

Review & Approve 5/3/17 Minutes

The Subcommittee reviewed and approved the draft meeting minutes as edited.

Strategic Asset Plan (SAP) and Major Parcel Study (MPS) Discussion with Sasaki/ RKG

The consulting team introduced themselves, including Brie Hensold, Chris Freda, and Julia Carlton from Sasaki; Eric Halvorson and Jahangir Akbar from RKG.

As background, Andy Martineau noted that staff interviewed during the internally-conducted Needs Assessment interviews shared a desire for holistic capital planning in the next 5-20 years, especially following the most recent debt exclusion and override vote.

Carol Levin noted that as a volunteer on the Override Study Committee five years ago, her conclusion was that the Town did an excellent job of repair/ replacement of capital items, but it seemed more difficult to capture needs in the 5-20 year timeframe. Her hope was that this study would consider the changing demographics, needs, and service delivery for Town services in the future. In other words, beyond our existing facilities, what are our real assets going to look like and at what level of service in the future? George Cole, Building Commission, agreed that much of the capital planning seems to have been reactive rather than taking actions based on a master plan of needs.

Mark Zarrillo, Planning Board member, noted as a recent example that multiple Departments were studying use of the same parcel (Centre St. East parking lot). Although each study talked about the criteria they needed for an appropriate site, it was not clear how the criteria resulted in their selection of a particular site. Secondly, he thought the Planning Board needed a document that could help them weight competing issues in their CIP review every year, especially understanding which capital items should be pushed forward/backwards in timing.

Betsy DeWitt, former Selectman, noted that the Comprehensive Plan hasn't been benchmarked in a long time, and therefore it was difficult to measure implementation of recommendations since that time. She also agreed with Carol's thought that the Town has changing demographics. Additionally, the state's 40B process has resulted in recent unpredictable development processes, all outside the control of zoning.

Neil Wishinsky, Chair of Board of Selectmen, added that the Open Space plan update should be completed this fall. He did not think the Selectmen had the bandwidth to take on updating the Comprehensive Plan right now. He also noted that the demographic changes in Brookline seem to be driven by the regional trend for young families to live in more urban areas.

Mark Zarrillo questioned how this process would take in what he expects to be a dichotomy of opinions. For example, 25-40 year olds and those over 40 are likely to have different views and therefore different opinions on what criteria are important for a selection of a site for a particular use. He asked the consultants to consider how cold data versus values of a community should be balanced.

Carla Benka, Chair of the Capital Subcommittee for Advisory, didn't want the bread-and-butter needs of the Town to be lost in conversations about the values of the community. For example, there may not be an advocating group for the Building Department to locate a facility for their craftspeople and fabrication area; however, this doesn't mean that it's not an important piece to move forward. Another example is room for road clearing and parks equipment. Even after the construction of the Municipal Service Center, Town staff are annually moving equipment back and forth to juggle space needs.

Carol suggested that it would also be helpful to have recommendations of when it makes sense to lease properties outside of the properties we already own.

Regarding follow-up staff interviews, RKG will be touching base with various Department and Division heads in upcoming weeks. Kara Brewton noted that they should especially check in with Fire & Health as both Departments have seen leadership change since the Needs Assessment interviews were conducted. Carla also suggested that there be one cross-Dept. meeting to discuss storage (physical and data storage) and technology needs.

The consultant shared the proposed timeline, and the Subcommittee unanimously agreed that the more formal public meeting should be shifted to the fall. Other community engagement opportunities that consultants and staff will explore over the summer are Brookline Day and communication through the Brookline Neighborhood Alliance. George agreed that the consultants probably needed to be a little further along so that we are asking people 2-3 key questions rather than an open-ended questionnaire.

Carol believed that the study should also include a broader vision, even if aspirational and not binding. This overall vision would help the Town understand how to allocate financial resources between competing uses. George thought that a forum where people could understand options between various future decisions would be the best use of everyone's time.

Action items & next meeting date:

1. Consultants will create a draft project goals and outcomes document based on this discussion. Kara will distribute and collect comments prior to our next meeting together.
2. Consultants will start to research innovations of municipal service delivery, understand where Brookline is headed with service delivery, aiming for a time period of 10 years out.
3. Carla will mention the SAP/MPS timeline to the upcoming Brookline Neighborhood Alliance meeting and let them know we will be looking to them for assistance in community engagement.
4. Next meeting to be scheduled via doodle, aiming for mid-July and will include further discussion of the public engagement plan.