

Master Plan Review/Update Committee
Regular Meeting
AGENDA
Wednesday, August 11, 2021
Virtual Meeting

THIS MEETING WILL BE BY REMOTE PARTICIPATION ONLY

Interested parties are welcome to participate:

Join Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/kfr-epcj-jrj>
Call-in Number: [1 470-328-5891](tel:14703285891) PIN: [688 378 896#](tel:688378896)

Chair's Announcement – Under MGL Chapter 30A, section 20(f) – The meeting is being recorded. Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020, and June 16, 2021 Orders imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Master Plan Review/Update Committee is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. A reminder that persons who would like to listen to or view this meeting while in progress may do so by following the remote links above. A video recording of this meeting is posted on the town's website. (www.westport-ma.com)

MASTER PLAN REVIEW/UPDATE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Co-Chairman Mark L. Schmid called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. with members, Co-Chair David Cole, Robert Daylor, Jim Whittin, Manuel Soares, Ann Boxler, and Town Planner Jim Hartnett in attendance. Henry Lanier was absent.

Schmid read the virtual meeting notice into the record. This is the Ninth meeting of the Master Plan Review/Update committee.

Call to order 4:00 p.m.

1. Minutes

June 14, 2021

Motion

Daylor moved to approve the minutes of June 14, 2021. Seconded by Cole. Upon a roll call vote being taken, members Cole, Daylor, Soares, and Schmid voted aye and the motion carried 4-0.

2. Discussion

Major challenges: Draft statements submitted by committee members for inclusion in the final report.

The formation of a Public Works Department or DPW was discussed to maintain the water and sewer districts for areas of town that would benefit substantially from having sewer or water systems, such as Westport Harbor, North Westport, Westport Point, and Central Village.

Fiscal challenges: Designing a politically acceptable override strategy.

David Cole prepared a paper detailing the financial challenges of the town.

The Board reviewed various options for reducing the town's budget deficit without having to rely on an override. They considered raising the tax on commercial, industrial, and personal property to generate more revenue for the town. Many members believed that raising commercial, industrial, and personal property taxes, especially during the Covid-19 epidemic, would be a problem and were not in favor of that idea.

Prepare, adopt and implement a plan for the disposition of the old High School.

Hartnett mentioned that Mass Development did a study on the different alternatives for reuse of the school and the uses were limited. He said that other communities discovered that the older schools were not within code and that it was not economically possible to rebuild them, so they were demolished. Hartnett mentioned that the next step would be to have an appraisal of the building so that the town may decide whether or not it will maintain the property.

Soares inquired whether a request for proposals could be advertised to solicit public feedback.

Decide how best to develop high-speed internet service throughout the town building on the base being established with the new fiber-optic system.

David Cole stated that when he receives the final figures from the Westport internet survey that was conducted, he will discuss them and decided how they will proceed from there.

Manny Soares volunteered to work on writing a few paragraphs on how to achieve full use of the new athletic fields and other facilities such as the Town Hall Annex.

Ann Boxler volunteered to work on items 13 & 14 for the Beech Grove Cemetery and agreed that a cemetery commission may be needed.

3. Other Business

None.

Next Meeting

September 15, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Daylor motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Cole. Upon a roll call vote being taken, members Bullard, Daylor, Schmid, Soares, and Whitin voted aye and the motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James Hartnett, Town Planner

Nadine Castro, Assistant Town Planner II