

**Athol Master Planning Committee
Zoom Meeting
February 28, 2024**

Attendees:

BSC Group: Heather Gould, Aqsa Butt

Town: Eric Smith (PCD), Heidi Murphy (PCD), Rebecca Bialecki (Select Board), Tom Russo (Planning Board), Mary Holtorf (Downtown Vitality Committee), Jean Shaughnessy (Library), Aimee Hanson (Planning Board)

Others: Greg Vine - Athol Daily News

Heidi – The Town received grant funding to complete this scope of work. This scope will update the Natural and Cultural Resources and the Open Space and Recreation Element as well as the entire Master Plan's overall goals and objectives and a vision for the plan. There is a district technical assistance grant from MRPC that the Town can pursue to update additional chapters in the future.

The Committee elected officers.

Ms. Bialecki moved, seconded by Ms. Hanson and VOTED 4-0: that Tom Russo serve as the Chair of the Master Plan Committee.

Mr. Hanson moved, seconded by Ms. Holtorf and VOTED 4-0: that Rebecca Bialecki serve as Vice Chair of the Master Plan Committee.

Workplan – Heather presented the workplan, explaining the scope and project timeline.

- Project needs to be done by June. This June deadline is fast tracked.
- Working off background and prior master plan chapters. We will look at overall goals and summarize that information as a starting point.
- We have a communication plan to get the word out to the public. This will include a survey, crowdsourcing map, and the visioning sessions.
- We have example questions for the survey.
- BSC will create a SharePoint site to collaborate.

Community Visioning

- Look at survey results and define goals and objectives.
- Public engagement related to Natural and Cultural Resources and Open Space elements.
- Different stations, open house style, focus groups. We have options, discussed best approach with the committee.
 - Preference for small focus groups with report out.
- Communication plan – flyers, social media posts, newsletters, Athol Daily News, bulletin boards, etc.
- Aqsa presented an example of a crowdsource map. The committee would like to add zoning and protected areas to the basemap and have a paper version at the library to obtain comments. The Committee likes the crowdsource map.

Past Documents and Reports

- Survey was created previously for master plan. Could make sense to duplicate it or pull from it.
- 2014 UMass report for downtown Athol.

Amy is going on vacation for 6 weeks. With the speed of this project, would it make sense to have someone else take her official space on the Committee. As such she suggested resigning from the Committee to allow another member who had the time commitment to take her place.

Ms. Holtorf moved, seconded by Mr. Russo: to accept Ms. Hanson's resignation from the Master Plan Committee.

Ms. Hanson handed her resignation to the Assistant Town Planner to provide to the Town Clerk.

Ms. Bialecki moved, seconded by Mr. Russo to adjourn the Master Plan Committee meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Murphy

Assistant Town Planner/Grants Administrator