

Master Plan Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 18, 2024

1. Attendance: Matt Benoit Community Development Director, Richard Preston, Ross Smith arrives at 5:07pm, Meg Schlesman, Mike Zwicker arrives at 5:20pm, Bob Minarik, Carol Gogolinski, Gordon Larrivee, Linda Brown and Bob Moran. Also present are two residents that wish to become members, Rebecca Lavalley and Dan Mascroft.
2. Meeting called to order at 5:03pm.
3. Minutes of 11/20/2024. Bob Moran motions to approve the minutes as presented. Meg Schlesman seconds the motion. The motion passes.
4. Discussion: YMCA discussion with residents Judy and Dan Russell. The Russell's are here to discuss a YMCA type facility located in Douglas. The Putnam, CT YMCA is used as an example. Dan Russell states they are not affiliated with any private, nonprofit YMCA. Dan Russell requests that the Master Plan Committee do a more detailed analysis to determine the Town of Douglas's need for such a facility. The Russell's state this type of facility would not be used for overnight use or to house people. The Russell's feel a private or town owned YMCA type/Community Center is needed. This facility would be open to all ages and not just for Douglas residents. This facility could draw non-residents to town that could benefit Douglas businesses. The Committee states this type of project would be nice to have but Douglas cannot fund this type of facility at this time. Public sewer and water would be needed for this type of facility and that would determine its location. Dan Russell states that the minimum amount of land needed for this type of project would be four acres and are hoping the town of Douglas would donate the land. Dan Russell states this type of facility could be built by a private nonprofit. The Master Plan Committee agrees outsourcing and assessing the need would be our first step to consider this type of facility in Douglas. The Committee agrees to consider this Community Center addition to the Master Plan and invite the Russell's to attend our meetings.
5. CMRPC Survey Discussion: Emily Glaubitz and Sam Carter are here from CMRPC. So far we have 710 surveys received. Churches and local newspapers have been contacted with our survey information and purpose. We will close out the survey on January 31, 2025. Emily will reach out to the Douglas Adult Social Center and see if more paper surveys are needed. The Town offices could be encouraged to ask patrons to participate in our survey. The Douglas Library has added a Douglas Town Events page to their newsletter and the Master Plan survey info has been included in it.
6. Next Steps: Emily has a list of town tour destinations for CMRPC to view or interview. They are the Municipal Center, Adult Social Center, Library, Public schools, Douglas Transfer Station, Police, Water/Sewer and Fire Departments. CMRPC want to visit individually and meet with the department heads at all the locations. Matt will provide

Emily with our most recent Town Book that would have all our town boards, departments and committees for contact information. We discuss other local private organizations and scenic vistas that should be viewed and or invited to participate in our Master Plan. Matt Benoit will contact our local DCR (Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation) representative and inquire if the DCR could give a tour of their Douglas State Forest facility to our CMRPC representatives. We can discuss with DCR the possibility for grants to be used for improvements such as parking. Carol Gogolinski mentions the Reservoir Association should be involved. Historic sites to visit are the E.N. Jenckes Store Museum/Douglas Historical Society, Douglas Town Common area, Soldiers Field, Hayward Landing, Old Schuster Mill and Lovett Mill/apartments. Rebecca Lavalley, who works at the Douglas Library, will research Nipmuc/Indian articles or Douglas Indian sites. Stakeholders to be interviewed by CMRPC are Veteran's Agent, Town Administrator, Library Director, Fire Chief, Police Chief, Public School Superintendent, Selectmen chair, Finance Director, Highway superintendent, Senior Center director, Planning Board chair, Open Space Committee chair, Conservation Commission chair, Economic Development chair, Building and Facilities chair, Water Sewer director, Recreation Committee chair, Town Clerk and Historical Commission chair. These meetings and tours will be conducted over the next few months.

7. Strengths, issues and opportunities. February will be for a Mobile Workshop at the Adult Social Center and Douglas Schools. Create a separate survey for students under 18. Perhaps the school Civics class could participate and hand out a short survey to students or be completed online. Questions to students could be how long have they lived in Douglas, hobbies, activities indoor or outdoor and what other organization, town or private, do they belong to. CMRPC will have a draft student survey for our next meeting.
8. Other Discussion:
 - The Public School attendance in 2010 was 1,771 and in 2024 it was 1,160 down 611 students.
 - Population since the last school was built in 2013 was 8,535 and in 2022 was 8,730 and an increase of 195 residents.
 - Master Plan needs to look at Housing Density in all zones.
 - Dangerous areas in town are the North Street Bridge, the causeway over Whitins Reservoir, the need for a safety light at the intersection of Main and Depot Streets so Police coming from the Police Station can stop Main Street traffic and pass safely.
9. Bob Moran motions to adjourn at 6:48pm. Bob Minarik seconds the motion. The motion passes.

Linda Brown

Master Plan Committee

Secretary