



Bedford Master Plan Think Tank
August 15, 2018
MINUTES

A meeting of the Blueprint Bedford Master Plan Think Tank was held on Wednesday, August 15, 2018 at the Bedford Public Library. This was the first meeting of the Think Tank. Present were: Kelleigh Murphy (Town Councilor), Chris Bandazian (Town Councilor), Matt Sullivan (Planning Board member), Bill Granfield (Historic District Commission member), Beth Evarts (Conservation Commission member), Barbara Salvatore, Bob McPherson, Lindsey Valliere, Maureen McCombs, Dan Monfried, Andre Garron, Susan Burns, Fred Matuszewski, Becky Hebert (Planning Director), Mark Connors (Assistant Planning Director) and Sandrine Thibault (Director of Comprehensive Planning for TPUDC).

Planning Director Hebert opened the meeting and thanked everyone for volunteering to serve on the Master Plan Think Tank. She said the Town was very excited to be beginning the Master Plan process. She asked each member to introduce themselves and provide a little bit of information about their backgrounds, including how long they have lived in Bedford. After each Think Tank member had introduced themselves, Ms. Thibault provided a brief description of herself and TPUDC's role in the Master Plan process. She said that you, the residents of Bedford, are the real experts in the master plan. She noted that the Town would be controlling the Master Plan process, but because the staff is busy with land use applications, the Town had brought on an outside consultant to guide the process, as is common for most larger communities. She noted that TPUDC had worked extensively in the area, including completing the most recent master plan for Londonderry, NH. She said TPUDC strives to create plans that are non-traditional and more interesting and engaging so they don't just sit on a shelf.

Ms. Thibault described the schedule for the master plan process, with public engagement activities largely concentrated in late 2018, with the plan completion scheduled for Fall of 2019. She said for a portion of 2019, the consultants would take all the information and input they received from the community and leave to compile the plan. She noted that there would be many opportunities for public engagement throughout the process.

Ms. Thibault next described the role of the Think Tank. She said one of the primary roles of the Think Tank would be to serve as ambassadors in the community for the project, and to help expand the reach of the project by discussing it with their friends and in their social and professional networks. She said it was important that everyone from Bedford has an equal voice in the process and that people don't think the Think Tank has an outsized role. She said that there would be several opportunities to meet, but that they never wanted to meet just for the sake of meeting. Ms. Hebert said that there will be many opportunities to meet and check in.

Ms. Thibault then introduced the Outreach & Engagement Plan and asked for any feedback from the Think Tank on that plan. Ms. Murphy said it would be important that special interest groups and loud voices not dominate the process. Mr. Sullivan said that we didn't want to hear from the same people, that it was important we hear from a representative slice of the community. Ms. Evarts said

unfortunately, we can't make people be involved. Ms. Murphy indicated that she felt that all of the Town's many athletic and youth sports organizations should be included on communications and a part of the outreach strategy. Ms. Hebert said we could include them. There was some discussion about various social media outlets and how best to reach Millennials and younger residents. Ms. Salvatore said it was also important to reach out to seniors, who are not active on computers.

Ms. Thibault noted that an Art Contest is one creative way we will be engaging the community for the Master Plan, including reaching out to the local schools to participate. Ms. Salvatore indicated that the contest should be open to all ages. Mr. McPherson asked if the 'Age Friendly' survey he took was related to the Master Plan process and if surveying related to the master plan would be statistically correct. Ms. Hebert noted that input from the survey would be included in the master plan, and that there was not funding in this master plan for a statistically correct survey. She indicated one was conducted as part of the 2010 master plan, but the results were not very surprising or helpful.

There was some discussion regarding the 2010 Master Plan and the objectives and process associated with that plan. Mr. McPherson said he felt like many people did not know there was a master process underway at that time. There was general agreement that the public outreach effort associated with this process will be much more robust and visible in the community. Ms. Hebert noted that staff would send out the link for the old plan, and over the next several weeks staff would review the plan to update the Think Tank on what objectives were met and what ones remain outstanding.

Ms. Thibault mentioned the project website, www.blueprintbedford.com, and encouraged Think Tank members to visit the site and register to include comments and to encourage their friends to. She noted the Master Plan Kickoff event would be held on September 13, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. at the Manchester Country Club. This was followed by some discussion of the event and the best ways to reach the community to garner good turnout. Mr. Connors noted that staff would be printing several postcards and distributing them around town, including at the polls for the primary election.

Ms. Hebert thanked the members for attending and the meeting closed at 6:35 pm.