



Bedford Master Plan Think Tank  
September 14, 2018, 8 a.m.  
MINUTES

A meeting of the Blueprint Bedford Master Plan Think Tank was held on Friday, September 14, 2018 at the Bedford Public Library. This was the second meeting of the Think Tank. Present were: Jon Levenstein (Planning Board Chairman), Chris Bandazian (Town Councilor), Matt Sullivan (Planning Board member), Beth Evarts (Conservation Commission member), Barbara Salvatore, Bob MacPherson, Maureen McCombs, Dan Monfried, Susan Burns, Fred Matuszewski, Becky Hebert (Planning Director), Mark Connors (Assistant Planning Director), Brian Wright (Principal of TPUDC), and Sandrine Thibault (Director of Comprehensive Planning for TPUDC).

Planning Director Hebert opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming in so early after the late kickoff meeting last night. Ms. Thibault asked members to re-introduce themselves briefly as a refresher from the last meeting. After the introductions, Mr. Wright asked members how they thought the kickoff went yesterday. Mr. Bandazian said he was happy to see the community so engaged in the process, though disappointed that many people had already formed negative preconceptions. Ms. Burns noted that she was happy to see so many people attend the event. She said she especially liked the comment from the last woman to speak, Ms. Bemiss, who mentioned that she was one of the crazy people who had read the Master Plan and the Zoning Ordinance and encouraged people to review them in advance of the Planapalooza meetings. Ms. Hebert said she appreciated the comment made that “Bedford’s best days were ahead of us” and several Think Tank members agreed. Mr. Connors noted that for future events, it may be helpful to start with a positive question such that comments are a little more balanced, including what residents like best about the community and what their concerns are. There was some discussion by the Think Tank of the choice of venue for the event, the nature of the public comments, the success of the various outreach activities, and venues that would be appropriate for future events.

Ms. Evarts said that regardless of the difference of opinion on some issues, she had never seen so much engagement from the community in a planning process and so many people attend such a meeting. Mr. MacPherson said he felt there were some misconceptions in the community based on the comments. He said he heard a lot about the lack of a Town Center, but he felt the ‘Market & Main’ project was fulfilling that need. He asked about the scope of the project and whether the project would include a statistically valued survey. Ms. Hebert noted that was part of the 2010 Master Plan process, but it was not included in the scope of the current update of the plan. He added that there were several comments related to school enrollment by speakers and concerns about school overcrowding, so it would be important to review those figures.

Mr. Monfried noted that the workforce housing development off Route 101 had generated a great deal of the discussion at the meeting. Ms. McCombs said that there was so much discussion in the community regarding the project that it was hard to keep track and the various stages of approval. This was followed by a discussion regarding workforce housing in Bedford, zoning related to workforce housing and state laws requiring communities to provide a ‘fair share’ of workforce

housing. Several members noted it would be important for the Think Tank to present just objective facts about issues such as this one, so residents could draw their own conclusions.

Ms. Salvatore referenced the 'Bedford Age Friendly' survey results and the need to present those results to the community. Ms. Hebert noted that staff had just recently received the survey results from SNHPC and is planning to present them to the Planning Board and the Master Plan Think Tank in the near future. This was followed by a short discussion of the survey and its contents. Mr. Wright clarified that a reference to 500 during his presentation related to the number of postcards handed out during the primary election. This was followed by a short discussion of the survey and its contents.

Ms. Evarts noted that while development was a dominant theme of the kickoff meeting, she approached the plan believing that preserving open spaces and conservation lands was an equally important goal. Mr. Wright noted that when they do these types of plans, people are usually surprised to see how few areas are set aside in communities for conservation. He said that often people are surprised when large open spaces near their homes are developed.

Ms. Thibault brought up the timeline for the Master Plan project. She reminded the Think Tank that the Planapalooza events were scheduled for November 1<sup>st</sup> through the 5<sup>th</sup>. She reminded members of the art contest and Ms. Hebert noted the schools were promoting it. Ms. Thibault noted that it would be important to focus as much of the public dialogue in between public events, on the website [www.blueprintbedford.com](http://www.blueprintbedford.com) for ease of analyzing the input.

Ms. Hebert thanked members for attending and the meeting closed at 9:30 am.

- *Respectfully submitted by Mark Connors*