



**Town of Amherst
Special Town Council Meeting – Primer on the Master Plan
Monday, October 28, 2019
5:00 p.m.
Town Room, Town Hall
4 Boltwood Avenue**

Minutes

Complete video is available online: <https://amherstmedia.org/content/amherst-town-council-master-plan-102819>

1. Call to order and declaration of a quorum

President Griesemer declared the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Members present: Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, De Angelis, DuMont, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, Ross, Ryan, Schoen, Schreiber, Steinberg.

Councilors absent: Councilor Swartz.

Councilors participating remotely: None

Others present: Assistant Town Manager David Ziomek, Planning Director Christine Brestrup, Clerk of the Council Athena O’Keeffe

President Griesemer announced audio and video recording by Amherst Media.

2. Announcements

3. Swearing-In of Town Clerk Shavena Martin

President Griesemer welcomed and swore in Town Clerk Shavena Martin.

4. Presentations and Discussion

a. Primer on the Master Plan

Planning Director Christine Brestrup spoke about the history and purpose, the need for periodic updating, and an overview of the Master Plan.

Councilor Schoen observed that the Master Plan lays out a vision of a walkable downtown and village centers with public spaces and bike ways, yet zoning provisions allow for narrow sidewalks and buildings built to the edge and do not address the width of the road. Schoen referred to a sidewalk downtown and a new building in North Amherst that will prevent later widening to enable buses and bikes. Thus, zoning can be barriers to achieving the Master plan goals and vision.

Councilor Pam asked about affordable housing and preserving neighborhoods.

Councilor Steinberg asked how the Master Plan works when it can be in conflict with itself.

C. Brestrup responded that the Planning Department has a list of zoning amendments that we are working on, including buildings set back from the street; the Planning Department and Planning Board are aware of issues and will work with the Community Resources Committee and the Council to address those issues. The current developments are located in parts of town that do not have that downtown character. New developments in areas with deteriorated buildings or parking lots, not tearing down anything charming. Small affordable developments is a good idea. Developers have trouble securing funding for less than 40-75 units. Trying to use all the different mechanisms that we can. Have achieved a good number of units using inclusionary zoning. In terms of the land use policy map, some areas marked for development and preservation overlap, we will look at those conflicts in the future. Some conflicts may not be resolved.

Councilor DuMont commented that the Energy and Climate Action Committee will bring forward goals for the town and they fall within master plan categories. Eventually climate goals should be integrated into the Master Plan.

Councilor Ryan asked about affordable housing, and how communities determine what percentage of its housing stock should be affordable housing. What about people who are 80-100% AMI. Senior housing and aging community. Stabilizing neighborhoods, student rentals have been issues. What can a community do to stabilize neighborhoods. D. Ziomek responded that in terms of stabilizing neighborhoods, Amherst has done good work in the last 8-10 years with rental registration and bylaw. Broke down some of the silos between Inspections, Planning, Zoning, Police, and Fire to work on trouble spots in town. Neighborhoods have seen improvement in quality of life in last 6-10 years.

5. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the President 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

None.

6. Adjourn

MOTION: Councilor Steinberg moved, second by Councilor Hanneke, to adjourn.

VOTED unanimously to adjourn at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Athena O'Keeffe
Clerk of the Council

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented

10-28-2019 FINAL Town Council Agenda - Primer on the Master Plan

10-28-2019 FINAL Town Council Agenda - Public Forum to Address the Master Plan

Master Plan - All Chapters combined (excludes appendix)

Master Plan Feedback - Cunningham

Preliminary Master Plan Comments - Keller

Presentation on Master Plan 10-28-19 Short Version

Presentation to TC on Master Plan 10-28-19 (2)

Thoughts on Master Plan - Gage