



**Mayor  
Charles C. Kokoros**

**Department of Planning and Community Development**

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**MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**

Jennifer Wadland, Chair  
Kay Young, Vice-Chair  
Erin V. Joyce, Member  
Julia Flaherty, Member  
Peter C. Herbst, Member  
Shelley North, Member  
David Cunningham, Member  
Shaynah Barnes Munro, Member  
Liz Page, Member  
Joseph Reynolds, Member  
Rayna Rubin, Member

**Approved 4.28.2022**

**MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday – March 24, 2022 – 7PM**

**Location: Cahill Auditorium, Braintree Town Hall, 1 JFK Memorial Drive**

**Meeting came to order at 7:10 PM**

**Members Present:**

Jennifer Wadland, Chair  
Kay Young, Vice-Chair, Business Owner  
David Cunningham, Resident  
Julia Flaherty, Town Councilor, District 1  
Peter Herbst, Business Owner  
Erin Joyce, Planning Board Representative  
Shelley North, Business Owner  
Liz Page, Resident  
Joe Reynolds, Town Councilor, District 2  
Rayna Rubin, Resident

**Staff Present:**

Melissa M. SantucciRozzi, Director – PCD  
Connor Murphy, Zoning Planner – PCD

**Consulting Firm (JM Goldson)**

Jenn Goldson  
Delaney Almond

**Members Absent:**

Shaynah Barnes Munro, Resident

**Member and Staff Announcements:**

Director SantucciRozzi has two announcements for the Committee. The Planning Department in conjunction with our consultant, Jenn Goldson, is in the process of providing a massive response to a data request that had come from the consultant. There was about 8 pages of different information, town data, maps, different types of items related to open space, housing, recreation, transportation and GIS data. That is almost completed. Also, we are gearing up to do our Focus Groups. The Focus Groups will be conducted in April, and there are various topics: **1.** transportation (circulation and transit); **2.** economic development; **3.** housing; **4.** historic and cultural resources; **5.** open space, natural resources and recreation; and **6.** sustainability and resilience. The Director explains if there are any members of the public that are watching from home that are interested in the Focus Groups or if any of the Master Plan Steering Committee Members have any suggestions of people they know in the community, please contact the Director. She advises that they are looking for seven (7) people for each of the topic groups, and she would like to firm that up in the next week or so.

**Overview:**

Jennifer Goldson begins by explaining that they have a PowerPoint to share to keep everyone organized. They also have an activity to do with the committee. Jennifer Goldson is the owner and founder of JM Goldson, and she is the Prime Consultant. On the team, they also have RKG Associates as well as Kittelson & Associates.

Delaney Almond, Community Planner at JM Goldson, is excited to see everyone in person, and she will be reviewing the website they have created a little later in the presentation.

Ms. Goldson is going to review the Phase I Schedule, discuss the Focus Groups and then the committee and any interested members from the public will break into smaller groups to participate in a mapping exercise. Ms. Goldson likes to do activities like this at as many Master Plan meetings as she can, as it allows participants to share their thoughts and ideas. After the exercise is concluded, Ms. Almond will review the website, and there will be a discussion about the first community forum, which is planned for Saturday, May 21, 2022.

Ms. Goldson reviews upcoming activities in Phase I of the Project Schedule. In April, there will be Focus Groups held over a number of weeks; then the Committee will meet at the end of April (on April 28) to share what we learned at the Focus Groups. We also want to prepare for and design the Community Workshop. Throughout these months, we are working on the Existing Conditions Report. In May, we will not have a regular meeting of the Steering Committee, as we will be having the Community Forum. In June, JM Goldson will be submitting the Existing Conditions Report, in draft form, for the committee to review. It will be presented to the Master Plan Steering Committee, the Planning Board and the Town Council in order to get feedback and make revisions over the summer. The next immediate step is the Focus Groups.

**Master Plan Topic Focus Groups:**

Jennifer Goldson explains that sometimes people get confused between Focus Groups and Public Forums. The Focus Group is a way of understanding a variety of perspectives of people that are town leaders or that serve on Boards/Commissions or have some special knowledge of the subjects we are studying. As we put the Existing Conditions Report together, Ms. Goldson feels it is important not just to look at the plans and reports but to also talk to various knowledgeable people in the community about those things, as they are a lot closer to those issues. It helps the consultants understand what they are seeing in the data, what they are learning in reports and studies and if there is anything else they should know. These are not big, public forums; they are limited to seven people in each group. They are about an hour and 15 minutes long. They are not recorded. People are given a sense of what they will be asked about. Participants are mainly asked about issues, opportunities and strengths. People that are invited are typically people that serve on Town Council, people that may be Board/Commission Members who have some special focus, as well as people who work for the Town and sometimes advocates in the community. Master Plan Steering Committee Members can serve on the Focus Groups, but they do not have to. There is one focus group for each of the six elements that were mentioned earlier by Director SantucciRozzi: **1.** transportation (circulation and transit); **2.** economic development; **3.** housing; **4.** historic and cultural resources; **5.** open space, natural resources and recreation; and **6.** sustainability and resilience. The Public Facilities and Services element won't be a Focus Group. An RKG representative will conduct a series of one-on-one interviews with all relevant town department manager. The immediate next step is to send Director SantucciRozzi any ideas you have for participants in these Focus Groups by next Thursday, March 31, 2022.

Rayna Rubin asks about "Meetings in a Box" and when that would happen in the schedule. Ms. Goldson advises that would be in Phase II. Phase I is really focused on Existing Conditions. At the Forum we will start to talk about peoples concerns/issues as well as what they envision. Phase II will be focused on getting out to the

community in multiple different ways. Rather than doing another public forum, we would do “Meetings in a Box”.

Julia Flaherty asks to review what an individual should do if they want to participate in a Focus Group. Ms. Goldson suggests that they email Director Melissa SantucciRozzi, who is collecting a list. Ms. Flaherty confirms that they should provide their name, contact information, their area of interest and why they are interested. Ms. Goldson advises that there will be lots of opportunities to participate.

### **Group Activity Session:**

Ms. Goldson suggests committee members form groups of at least three, and members of the audience can also participate. There are two parts to this activity. One is identifying Special Places in the community. The second is identifying Opportunity Areas. This can be defined in many different ways – whatever you feel that in the next ten year you would not want to see gone, deteriorated or compromised (i.e. places that you want to see preserved or protected). The blue markers are to be used to identify Special Places. Participants are asked to write down any disagreements as well as anything they strongly come to consensus on. Participants are asked to label these locations with A, B, C, D so that they can be cross-referenced on the notes. The red markers are to be used to identify Opportunity Areas. These are places that may have issues and could use improvement; they present opportunities for change or transformation. Participants do not have to specify how these locations should be transformed but they can merely say they think this is a problem and the area has opportunity for change. If there is an idea on how the area can be transformed, this can also be included.

Julia Flaherty asks if an area can be special as well as challenged, and therefore be both blue and red. Ms. Goldson responds and states that perhaps you can work with preservation and change in the same site.

Liz Page clarifies how audience members can participate. Ms. Goldson specifies that easels have been distributed around the room for audience member participation. Once the group activity winds down, Ms. Goldson would like to hear brief presentations from each group. Ms. Goldson asks Planning Staff, Connor Murphy, to provide an overview on the map of key locations. Mr. Murphy highlights Route 93 junction, South Shore Plaza, Five Corners, Franklin Street (Route 37), intersection of Granite Street with Pond Street, South Braintree Square, Washington Street to Thayer Sports Academy, West Street to Washington and then north to Braintree Square, the Landing, Liberty Street (which begins at Commercial and extends south towards Holbrook), the high school near Sunset Lake, South Middle on Peach Street and where Route 3 bisects the town.

At the conclusion of this group activity, each group provides a presentation. Ms. Goldson wonders if, other than conservation areas that are already protected, there were other areas at risk that were called out for protection, and what areas were noted for opportunity.

Erin Joyce presents for her group; she worked with Liz Page and Rayna Rubin. They flagged a lot of “open space” locations such as the town forest, the Cranberry Pond area, Sunset Lake, Pond Meadow Park and the Quincy Reservoir. They also made a special point to point out the cemeteries in town – specifically the more historic cemeteries such as Elm Street Cemetery and the small cemetery near Sunset Lake. They are nice areas to walk for a moment of solitude. This group talked a lot about the historic area in the town with the idea of preservation and promoting new development to have an “ode to the historic areas”, whether that is through architectural guidelines. The historic area was identified as both an opportunity and a special place. There was discussion about the Monatiquot River Walk and other areas designated as public space along the Riverwalk with an idea that there could be connectivity in the future. There was a feeling that there is access to open spaces, but it is not well-signed and there is limited parking. Some opportunities included the Ivory Street corridor from the Grossman Plaza down to the Armstrong property. This area was liked for redevelopment. This group discussed pedestrian connectivity between some neighborhood and through the rotary and how that can

be improved. The green space in the Hawthorne Neighborhood near St. Thomas More Church was discussed as open space that may need to be preserved or for ideas on what can go there. Areas on Pond Street were discussed as areas of opportunity related to use for veterans and/or disabled housing and community spaces.

Jennifer Wadland presents for her group; she worked with Joe Reynolds, and Kay Young. This group chose many areas that are special including: Eaton's Pond, Casey's Pond, Watson Park, Hollingsworth Park, Pond Meadow. They are all very important to the community, and they are utilized quite often. They also identified the Braintree Dam and the Quincy Reservoir, which is behind the mall. There is some open space there. This was identified as an area that could be more open space. The Town Hall historic area and the square were also identified as Special Areas. They are both an opportunity, and they are special. They need some work, as do all the school playgrounds. The neighborhoods utilize the playgrounds. There are camps at the playgrounds, and they are all very special. North of Great Pond was brought up as a Special Area as well as an opportunity because it could be expanded. Opportunity Spaces that were identified included: Ivory Street Corridor; Wood Road, as there is opportunity for growth there; the former Lottery location; the squares are an opportunity; and the Landing is an opportunity. South Shore Plaza can be an opportunity with a need to re-imagining itself. There was discussion about more of a protection buffer between the neighborhoods and the mall, which Ms. Wadland feels is a big problem currently. That would be an area that is an opportunity and also a special place.

Julia Flaherty presents for her group; she worked with Shelley North, David Cunningham and Peter Herbst. Ms. Flaherty expressed that there are starting to be some really strong themes because her group identified some of the places that other groups have also identified. In her group, it was quickly very clear that they had a strong sense that a lot of the special places in Braintree had to do with open green space and water features. They talked about Sunset Lake, Pond Meadow, the **whole** Monatiquot River and how there is a wish for that to be preserved and to create some connectivity between different portions of the Monatiquot River. They talked about Smith Beach and how that needs to be maintained differently and thought through differently in terms of how we use it. This group talked about the Braintree Dam and the Reservoir, which could be used for passive recreation. The opportunity areas were largely commercial development opportunities such as: 1.) the Ivory Street Corridor; 2.) Route 53, which is rundown and needs a face-lift. Some development investment would be great there. They talked about all the square (South Braintree Square, Braintree Square), which are wonderful places that need to be carefully stewarded so that they don't become burdened with too much traffic and they remain vibrant. This group talked about some of the under-utilized buildings in the town like 90 Pond Street and the old South Middle School-once the new school is constructed. This group discussed the difficulty in getting from one side of town to the other, and the rotary was judged to be dangerous.

Kelly Moore presents for his group, which consisted of audience members. He expressed that there were a few themes. They want to maintain the integrity of the neighborhoods. They would like to ensure that there is no encroachment or "mega" changes. They like the idea of the "quaintness" quotient, which means to maintain more of a colonial look rather than a mechanized manufactured look for new commercial buildings, especially. Areas they are concerned about include: 1.) South Shore Plaza which they feel will need to be reconfigured and refashioned; 2.) they like all the maintained areas already that are the parks and playgrounds; however, if they could be used for more community pathways that would be an effective use; 3.) the Monatiquot River walkway, while they love what is happening there at the dam, they would love to see a walkway path all the way from the dam location all the way to Smith Beach; 4.) making sure the integrity of the squares are maintained because they are not. This group totally agrees with Councilor Flaherty's comments related to traffic in the squares.

Connor Murphy presents for the second group of audience participants which included: George Clements, Councilor Boericke and Jeri Frazier. With regards to Special Places, the group agreed that these areas included: Watson Park, Smith Beach, French's Common, the library and Town Hall area, Sunset Lake, the golf course, and the connectivity of the Town to the Blue Hills. The squares were discussed as blue areas (Special Places), as well as Elm Street Cemetery. They continued with the open space theme.

Areas that this group identified as red areas (Opportunities) were locations along Ivory Street and Grossman Drive, the corridor going from Five Corners down to Randolph, the corridor from the rotary along Union Street to the Landing, the areas right off the highway along Independence Avenue, Eaton's Pond, the St. Thomas More property, South Shore Plaza, the high school, 74/90 Pond Street, Armstrong Cork, Garden Park and the heavy commercial uses there and Columbian/Grove Streets.

Ms. Goldson is noticing common themes, and she states that this is really helpful. Ms. Goldson asks what the group thought of this exercise. Rayna Rubin learned a lot just in hearing how people perceive the areas. She thought the discussion around new ways to use areas was very useful. Joe Reynolds mentions that, although his group was diverse in the community and in life, it was obvious to him that there was a common theme of what their concerns were, what those areas of preservation and special areas should be. Councilor Reynolds observes that all participants seem to be generally in agreement of where the Opportunity Areas are. He felt it was a very encouraging step and experience to identify a few areas that were both Special Places and Opportunity Areas.

Ms. Goldson asks if any groups did not agree on anything. Member Cunningham found that there were people that didn't know each other and they were almost in agreement across the board on every single issue. It was interesting to see that people that met each other for the first time were able to see certain things before they even knew what other people were talking about.

Ms. Goldson explains that they will provide a summary of this activity to preserve it for the record. Any notes can be sent to Delaney Almond, Jenn Goldson or the Director. They will take photos of all the maps and provide a transcription.

### **Braintree Master Plan Website Launch and Project Naming Contest:**

Delaney Almond will briefly review the Website. The website can be found at:

<https://tinyurl.com/braintreemasterplan>

Ms. Almond will review the different aspects of the Website. The website hasn't yet been shared; therefore, any changes that Steering Committee might want could be included before the Website becomes public.

Director SantucciRozzi states that this link will be circulated on the Master Plan Steering Committee page on the town website, and this new website will probably be used as the main page. There will also be information on the Town's main page about the Master Plan Website.

The next section on the Website provides an overview of each of the Phases with a brief synopsis of what is going to happen in each phase. Next there is an area showing upcoming events so that people can stay up-to-date on what is happening next. This will be updated throughout the project.

The **Previous Plans and References** Section are project documents, and they link directly to the Town Website on the Master Plan Steering Committee Page.

The Website also includes a form, near the top of the page, that people can fill out to name the Master Plan. Ms. Goldson explains that the actual name is not specifically important, but she wants to provide a way for people to participate right away in this process. At the next meeting in April, we can look at ideas. Liz Page asks if there are many locations that give it a different name other than "Master Plan". Ms. Goldson states they have seen a lot of different names like "Envision Braintree" or "Imagine Braintree 2033" or "Our Town 2033". Liz Pages

states that someone expressed concern to her because in all the documents that we go back to it always refers to “The Master Plan”. There was concern that, with a different name, there wouldn’t be easy “look-up” access.

Ms. Goldson explains that the subtext would still call this a Master Plan.

Ms. Almond states, as we go forward with the project, we will have a lot more content to put on the page. We will have different links to activities and engagements that people can take part in. Ms. Almond has provided an example of what they did in Medway, which was a crowd mapping activity where people could look at a map online and put a point on the map with their idea. Ms. Almond explains that the “Name the Master Plan” option is done through Survey 1, 2, 3. There are also other opportunities to use surveys in the process. Ms. Goldson points out that it would be interesting to ask a new question every week.

Shelley North mentions that The Patch can sometimes include a survey with a link. Director SantucciRozzi is going to be having some discussions with the Mayor regarding what we want to do for social media. The Town does have a Facebook account, and we may want to do periodic posts.

Kay Young asks if there will be one central email address. The Director states that most likely it will be noted here; it will be a central area that is accessible. Getting people to go to the Website will be where they find all of the information. We really want to populate this with as much information as possible and encourage people to go here. Ms. Young confirms that people that are unable to attend meetings in person will still be able to email or participate or comment. Ms. Wadland asks if the committee will see the comments. Ms. Goldson advises that for every phase of the project they create a deliverable of everything they have learned through the process. In Phase II, which is where a lot of the public engagement around visioning will be, we will have lots of different ways to collect information including the crowd map idea. Ms. Goldson provides an overview regarding how reporting will be done.

### **Community Forum Details and Outreach:**

Ms. Goldson wants to begin discussions related to Community Forum, noting that we will have another meeting before it happens. She wants to get the group to start thinking about it. The Community Forum will be held on Saturday, May 21, 2022, at 1:00 PM. The purpose is to do a public launch of the project where we invite as many people as will come. We want to share as much information as we have learned about the project so far. Mostly, we want to solicit feedback. We will design different activities. Different ideas will be presented at the next meeting. The idea would be to design a bunch of activities where community members don’t need to know a lot. They don’t need to memorize data or be an expert in any subject to participate. The Forum will be held in Cahill Auditorium. There are two general styles which are: 1.) an open house style, and 2.) a workshop style. Both would start with a presentation at a specific time.

The Open House format would have stations around the room that would be staffed by committee members as well as the consultant’s team. There would be activities, and people can leave when they are done. If we start this meeting at 1:00 PM, the presentation could be at 1:15 PM so that people have a chance to come in, get settled and they would be oriented to the stations around the room. The Open House would probably be the shorter meeting of the two formats and could potentially end after 90 minutes.

For the second format, Workshop Style, people would be in attendance from beginning to end. There would be tables around the room. People would be sitting at a table of six to eight people. There are activities at each table, and people stay with that group. Each committee members and participants from the consultant’s team would be stationed at a table as the facilitator. Attendees are encouraged to stay for the whole time and participate in the discussion at their table. The Workshop Style would probably be for two full hours because there will presentation then activities.

Chairwoman Wadland asks what Ms. Goldson's recommendation is with the understanding that the Committee wants to get the most out of the session, to get the most information and to attract people to attend. What format would yield the best result. Ms. Goldson states there are pro's and con's to each style. The negative of the Open House style is that people don't necessarily talk to each other. They probably will talk to committee members and consultants as they roam the stations. Mostly they do individual activities. It is not designed to force the inter-action between participants. The benefit of the Open House is that people don't feel captive. They can come here the presentation, and if they are in a hurry, they can participate in as many stations or as few as they want. Then, they can leave when they want without feeling like they are disturbing the whole event. There is more flexibility with this format.

The benefit with the Workshop Style is the opposite. People are encouraged to sit with each other -- people that they may not know. Typically, nametags have an assigned table. So, the person you walk in with is likely not the person you sit with. Member Rubin asks if Ms. Goldson finds there is more participation with the Open House format than with the Workshop format. In "Pre-Covid" days the Open Houses may have had more participation because it is so flexible and you can advertise it that way. However, it is hard to say. The drawback with the Workshop Style is that sometimes people cannot commit the full two hours; so, they don't attend.

Member North asks, in the Open House forum when you didn't get enough people, how did you change your strategy to get the answers you needed to get? Ms. Goldson states they quickly, within 24 hours, created an on-line forum and took all of the information from the Open House and put it to a new web platform with the same questions. They were able to double the participation and get more feedback. Chairwoman Wadland asks if it would make sense to do both. Ms. Goldson states they could make it available online as well. Vice Chair Young thinks it makes sense to have both, as some people don't feel comfortable participating in public with people they don't know. Ms. Goldson concludes, if we are going to also do an online platform, the activities of an Open House would translate a little easier to an online platform because the Workshop format is more about talking to each other. Chairwoman Wadland states, if the committee member could help with the outreach, they could amplify the messages. Member Rubin suggests that the Mayor do a "robocall".

With regards to Outreach, Ms. Goldson and her team create social media graphics that the Town can post on the website. Committee Members can share it on their personal pages. They also create a traditional flyer than can be emailed, posted on the website, left around town at local businesses or handed out at various locations. They also create a Press Release. Six weeks prior to the forum (i.e. the week of April 4<sup>th</sup>), they will create a "Save the Date" blast. The consulting team will work with Director SantucciRozzi to make sure that gets out.

The April Master Plan Steering Committee Meeting is about a month before the Community Forum, and Ms. Goldson advises that is when they do the real push of outreach. She can share the Outreach Checklist (provided in tonight's slide deck). It basically goes through different ways to get the word out to the community. Ms. Goldson advises that the next meeting is on Thursday, April 28, 2022, at 7:00 PM. At that meeting, they will provide an update of what was learned at the Focus Groups and more work will be done to plan for the Community Forum.

#### **Recording Secretary:**

Director SantucciRozzi advises that we haven't hired a Recording Secretary yet. The Director was hoping to get a recent graduate of a planning program, and she has been unable to connect with that person. The Office Manager from the Planning Department has done the minutes for now, and she will continue to provide that service until we get a Recording Secretary.

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 24, 2022:**

Member Joyce states she was looking forward to the re-reading the discussion each committee member had brought saying who they are, how long they have been in the town and what they liked about the town. This was summarized in two sentences. For someone who is trying to catch up-to-speed, there is nice nuances in the introduction of each member of our committee. Member Joyce was wondering if it would be possible to expand on that one paragraph to include a snippet of what everybody said.

**MOTION** made by Member Young to approve the Meeting Minutes of February 24, 2022 with the revision mentioned by Member Joyce; **SECONDED** by Member Rubin; voted 10:0:0.

**Adjournment**

Chairwoman Wadland declared the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Louise F. Quinlan,  
Office Manager, Planning and Community Development