



**Mayor
Charles C. Kokoros**

Department of Planning and Community Development

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MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Jennifer Wadland, Chair
David Cunningham, Member
Julia Flaherty, Member
Peter C. Herbst, Member
Amy Holmes, Member
Justine Huang, Member
Thomas Kent, Member
Shelley North, Member
Elizabeth Page, Member
Joseph Reynolds, Member
Rayna Rubin, Member

IN LIEU OF ACCEPTANCE BY MPSC

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES

Thursday – July 20, 2023 – 7:00 PM

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

Meeting came to order at 7:00 PM

Members Present:

Jennifer Wadland, Chairperson
David Cunningham, Resident
Julia Flaherty, Town Councilor, District 1
Peter Herbst, Business Owner
Amy Holmes, Business Owner
Justine Huang, Resident
Thomas Kent, Planning Board Representative
Shelley North, Business Owner
Elizabeth Page, Resident
Joe Reynolds, Town Councilor, District 2
Rayna Rubin, Resident

Staff Present:

Melissa SantucciRozzi, Director-PCD
Connor Murphy, Assistant Director – PCD

Consulting Firms

Jenn Goldson

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM and attendance was taken.

MPSC Member and Staff Announcements:

Chairwoman Wadland states we will open with Member and Staff Announcements. There are no announcements from staff. Chairwoman Wadland wants to recognize those that are joining us from Town Council: Councilor Reynolds, Councilor Flaherty, and Councilor Boericke. Chairwoman Wadland wants to recognize those that are joining us from the Planning Board: Thomas Kent, Acting Chairperson Kim Kroha, and William Grove. The Chair thanks these individuals for attending this meeting.

Committee Organization - Election of Vice Chair:

Chairwoman Wadland asks if anyone would like to nominate anyone for a Vice Chair position. Member Justine Huang would like to nominate Member Amy Holmes for the Vice Chair position. She has been a small business owner in town, and she represents the town from this perspective. Chair Wadland asks Member Holmes if she consents to the nomination. Member Holmes will consent to the nomination. Chair Wadland asks if there are any other nominations. There are none. Member Shelley North seconds the nomination. It is voted 11:0:0 in favor.

Presentation and Discussion on Ideas and Strategies Shortlist – Jenn Goldson

Jenn Goldson, Planning Consultant, explains that tonight is the finalization of Phase III, which is a great milestone. After this, we will talk about what happens next. Ms. Goldson wanted to remind the committee of the work they have been doing since January. She shares the schedule on the screen. Beginning in January, we started off talking about metrics and goals and planned for the Technical Working Sessions. There was a brainstorm done by the consulting team to get the committee started on strategies in January, and they were presented in February with RKG and Kittelson (the consulting subcontractors) in attendance to answer questions. In March, Technical Working Sessions were held where we looked at strategy ideas for every core theme. At the same time, committee members were running Road Shows where you went out to various boards, commissions, committees, and organizations. In May, we also ran a Department Managers Working Session to have the department managers help us to understand their capacity and where they had any capacity issues or other concerns or strong feelings. Through all of that, data was gathered, analyzed, and presented to committee members, another questionnaire was developed. From that, we had a lengthy discussion to determine what should make the shortlist and what should we change wording on. At the June meeting, we looked at strategies to either demote items or advocate for them. The handout that was provided to members last week reflects what the consultants understood the takeaways from that discussion to be. There were a couple of items highlighted where there was no clear resolution yet, and she wanted to make sure the members had a chance to talk through those tonight to get a resolution on those areas highlighted in yellow. The next step after this, as we enter Phase IV, is to take all the work already done (the Vision, the Goals, the Strategies), and we start to lay out this plan. At the August meeting, we will be looking at a bunch of different options for how members want this plan laid out. We have different graphic mechanisms that are used, and we can decide on how you want to visualize this plan. The design is important because it's a way to communicate all the work that you've done. It's also a way to reach folks that may not sift through a 200-page document. If folks get a well-designed Master Plan that is very graphic, they're much more likely to take in what these priorities are. The graphics will be worked on at the next meeting, but that doesn't mean there is no chance of changing anything; things can be changed at any point in time. After tonight, Ms. Goldson is hoping that we will pretty much know what is going to be in the plan. There will likely be some tweaks from tonight's discussion, but we want to walk out of this meeting with some understanding of what strategies will be in the plan. Ms. Goldson wanted to remind members that there are some inconsistencies in the goals. Now that we have a shortlist of strategies, we want to go back through the goals and make them more concise and pull out anything that ended up just being a strategy idea. The consultant team will work on clarifying, consolidating, and refining those goals so that we are not being repetitive with what ended up being in the strategies. As a reminder, we have an overall Community Vision, which hasn't changed that much.

There are five Core Themes. The first is a theme around Conservation, Preservation, and Social Vitality. The second theme is Economic Development and supporting local businesses. The third theme is related to Transportation Safety and Connectivity. The fourth theme is regarding Residential Neighborhoods, as well as Housing options. The fifth theme is improving and expanding Town Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure. Each Core Theme has its own Vision Statement.

Core Theme 1 is: **Braintree will protect, enhance, and conserve water and other natural resources; expand protected open space; strengthen climate resilience; preserve historic resources; and promote social vitality for a sustainable community with strong connections to the natural world and its historic roots.**

There are currently 13 goals. In the next iteration, you will see that we can pair some of these down, some of them are a little repetitive, and some of them also have become strategies. When members see this next, there will most likely not be 13 goals. There are 16 strategy ideas in a variety of types. Some deal more with capital improvements or buying/protecting land. Some deal with town practices, and some are more around policies and regulations.

Core Theme 2 is: Pursue strategic economic development that is respectful of surrounding land uses, promotes local business, repurposes developed sites that are blighted or underutilized, supports vibrant commercial squares, protects existing neighborhoods, and revitalizes business areas.

This has a shorter vision. This core theme has seven goals, which provided the direction for how to build the strategies. There are 15 strategies in this area. Some strategies are capital improvement, and in this case, some are beautification and streetscape improvements, some are investing in business areas, some have to do with zoning and how to attract different types of commercial uses and businesses, and some have to do with supporting local business owners. Ms. Goldson advises that one thing members should know, as they are going through this, is she doesn't view a Master Plan as a blueprint. In many ways, she views it as a menu. She advises that the town will try lots of things over the next decade. Some of them will work, but some of them won't pass when brought to the Town Council. You might not be able to get funding for some. Those ideas will end up dropping away, but your vision and your goals will remain constant for the next ten years. You are starting off with lots of ideas, but your implementation committee, as they track this very closely, might start to pivot and say this set of ideas isn't working. The implementation committee will be working to update this so that you're still trying to meet your goals, you're still trying to achieve that Vision, but there are lots of different ways to do that. In this area, we have combined ideas and added some ideas, which we talked about last time.

Core Theme 3 is: Upgrade roadway corridors and transportation infrastructure to improve safety for all users, reduce neighborhood cut-through traffic, prioritize pedestrian access and support alternative modes of transportation (such as bicycles and shuttles), and produce better connectivity between the two sides of the highway to help people get around the town and region.

This core theme has five goals, and we have 15 strategies. These have a variety of types of ideas. Some of them deal with studies to try to understand things better – like cut-through traffic patterns. Some of them deal with other things like designated truck routes, sidewalk clearing, etc.

Core Theme 4 is: Enhance community vitality with careful and strategic growth policies that preserve, protect, and improve existing residential neighborhoods. Plan and supply a diverse range of compatibly scaled and well-designed housing options that harmonize with the surrounding context of the neighborhood, including affordable housing options that address the needs of the community.

This core theme talks about residential neighborhoods and housing options. A lot of time was spent on this vision statement. This is probably the core theme we spent the most energy trying to get right with members. There are four goals and 22 strategy ideas. There is a real variety of ideas. Some deal with zoning quite a bit in this area, and some deal with other public place-making solutions.

Core Theme 5 is: Prioritize fiscal planning and implementation for new, expanded, and modernized Town facilities and infrastructure, especially public-school infrastructure, including services and sound maintenance thereof. Residents will feel respected and welcome to share their ideas and perspectives in order to take a more active role in designing and establishing the policies and investment to promote the community where they wish to live. Residents will also be proud of new, expanded, and modernized public facilities.

This core theme is about your public facilities, services, and infrastructure. This is mostly focused on the theme of both expanding and modernizing. There are five goals and 22 strategy ideas.

Ms. Goldson explains that these strategy ideas, as they get incorporated into the Master Plan, will be worked into an Action Plan Matrix, which is a spreadsheet that the implementation committee and staff will be in charge of

maintaining. It will tell you what department oversees this strategy, what are some possible funding sources for each strategy idea that would cost money (ideas might be other grant programs, state or federal funding, Community Preservation Act funding, capital budget, operating budget). There is a variety of funding mechanisms, and we can also look at public-private partnerships. The consulting team will also provide a sense of sequencing – so that we look at the next ten years and think about what are the things that you can do in year one and year two to lay the foundation for the rest of the decade, what are things that need more study or are going to be big ticket items that will take a while to figure out if affordable. The reason that a spreadsheet is provided is because the action plan is something that is updated consistently. The implementation committee will meet multiple times per year and look at that spreadsheet, make sure they know what has and hasn't been done, and keep it as a public document on the town website and consistently updated so that every member of the public knows where you are in the process of implementing. You might not get funding for everything. Then, what happens? You start to change that matrix, but the goals and the vision remain the same. Ms. Goldson wanted to make sure the committee knows the next steps.

Ms. Goldson is not going to go through every strategy, but she will leave them up on the screen, as she knows the committee will be taking comments and you may want to go back and talk about the yellow highlighted ones.

Future Land Use Map

Ms. Goldson explains, as part of the plan, they create a Future Land Use Map. Some of these strategies are not spatial, but some of them are. If we can map strategy ideas, we put them on the map. You will see, for example, the yellow splotches are business areas where you would like to see improvements (beautification investment). The orange areas on the map are called “transformation areas” that includes South Shore Plaza and places that you see potential for improvements on a bigger scale from what is there. You can also see the Riverwalk, which has been added as a pretty well-connected Riverwalk, much bigger than it is now. Then, you will see the purple areas, which are all neighborhood preservation areas, which the consulting team heard were very precious to the community. You are not looking for a lot of change here; you're looking to preserve the characteristics of those neighborhoods. They have also identified some multimodal improvement areas, some bike/pet improvement areas, and lands of interest or protection areas, which largely relate to your open space plan and what has been identified. Ms. Goldson advises that as we change the strategies, if any major changes happen tonight, that will be reflected on the map.

Member Huang asks a question about the map related to local public transportation. For example, her neighborhood is closer to go to Quincy Adams vs. Braintree Station. Ms. Goldson explains that there was a strategy that talked about connectivity from Braintree Station, but she understands that Member Huang is saying that we also have good connectivity in Quincy Adams already. Ms. Goldson suggests talking about that strategy and possibly changing it. Member Rubin asks about the purple area on the map. Ms. Goldson explains that purple is neighborhood preservation areas. Member Rubin clarifies that she is referring to the magenta area. Ms. Goldson believes that they are open space areas or lands of interest and protection.

Director SantucciRozzi highlights areas for modifications on the proposed Future Land Use Map. She refers to expanding Area 1, the Wood Road area, where there are plans to do some rezoning related to life science, and they have also included the area of Braintree Hill Office Park, as well as the area on North Street where Long's Jewelry, Bye Bye Baby, and formerly Pier 1 are located. The second thing she highlights on the plan is the Armstrong Cork property. While a portion of that is associated with the removal of the dam and the riverwalk, this site is going to be 99.9% redeveloped as part of our MBTA zoning overlay district. We are looking to change that to a transformation area. The third piece that has been identified is the St. Thomas More piece. There has been different discussions/desires from the community. That piece of property is under Purchase and Sales, and we have been having active discussions related to this, which Councilor Reynolds has also been involved in. We are looking to change this area to a transformation area. The Director refers to a green area on the map, which she believes is the area behind the Braintree Auto area. We need to make sure that is lining up correctly.

We would be making these changes based on things that we have already started and things that are in the works so that we don't have conflict with what is already going on in the map. Chair Wadland asks if there are any questions.

Members Shelly North and Liz Page ask for clarification on the location of the Braintree Auto area. The Director explains it is the wooded area behind the houses on Storrs Avenue and Braintree Auto on Washington Street. The Director explains it is the only area not developed in that location. She is assuming that is what was targeted for preservation outside of Braintree Square. Member North clarifies that it is for preservation and not transformation. Member Kent asks for clarification on the two magenta locations in the southeast corner – one is on Liberty Street, and one is off Grove Street. The Director clarifies that the one on Liberty Street is St. Claire's Church, and there is quite a bit of land behind that. The one that is closer to Weymouth is the wet area that is part of Banner Park but not being developed. Chair Wadland asks about the reservoir in magenta, and she asks why that would be in magenta. The Director clarifies that is all the land consisting of 21 acres; it is not the reservoir. The reservoir is next to it in blue. Member Rubin thought that the Ivory Street Corridor area extended all the way down to Plain Street. She remembers when MAPC was holding meetings, it actually went past Pearl Street all the way down. The Director confirms making the connection to the next intersection.

Chair Wadland reminds members that if the microphone doesn't seem to turn on when they are speaking, wait a second for it to turn on, as folks at home cannot hear you.

Chair Wadland acknowledges that we have already gone through all the strategies, but she thinks we should open the discussion up for anyone if they had an issue with a specific strategy, a change to a specific strategy, if it's not represented properly, or if it's not well written. She suggests that we bring these issues forward now.

Councilor Reynolds wants to be clear on what it is that we are commenting on. Chair Wadland explains that the shortlist of strategies is in tonight's packet; they were discussed at the last meeting. She suggests bringing anything forward that members might take exception to, want to revise, or don't feel good about. Councilor Reynolds has a couple of questions. He is looking at Core Theme 4, and this is more of a clarification he is seeking. He asks about Item 1, **Creating and enhancing land use policies that protect neighborhoods, community members, and the environment from the impacts of commercial and other incongruent land uses.** Ms. Goldson clarifies that Councilor Reynolds is referring to a goal. Councilor Reynolds asks if they are just commenting on strategies. Ms. Goldson is open to looking at goals, but she recognizes that many of the goals need to be consolidated and some removed because they turned into strategies. She thinks if there are some language clarifications needed, like what is meant by "incongruent land uses" that is fair to talk about. Councilor Reynolds is asking if we are talking about current zoning. Ms. Goldson states the goal could translate to some zoning, but it could also translate to purchasing buffer areas or other conservation mechanisms to provide a buffer between residential neighborhoods and other land uses. Strategy 4A gets at this. The goal could refer to zoning or other measures such as purchasing land. Councilor Reynolds asks how one would interpret the definition of "incongruent". Ms. Goldson would say it would be commercial, industrial, or other higher intensity residential land uses that are significantly higher in density than the residential area we are talking about. Councilor Reynolds asks, if you have a Residence C area next to Residence A or B, how is that defined as incongruent? Ms. Goldson states they talked about buffers at the last meeting, and it was clear that the town already had a number of buffers in place. She doesn't know that it would affect those two residential districts in particular. As we go through these guidelines of a Master Plan, what will truly legally dictate uses or legal changes would be the zoning changes themselves. Ms. Goldson would say that the Master Plan, in Massachusetts, won't legally dictate because of the way the statute is written. Councilor Reynolds agrees with that. Ms. Goldson states, if you were to follow through with any of the zoning ideas in here, then the Town Council could decide.

Councilor Reynolds asks about Core Theme 4, Item 2, **Carefully considering a diverse range of well-designed and compatibly scaled housing options that are supported by the community, including age-restricted housing, veterans housing, service-enriched housing, and smaller single-family-accessible starter homes.** He has been looking for other areas of documentation about the fact that the region that we live in (i.e. the Greater Boston area) has numerous references to how we want to promote and attract life-sciences, bio-med, and commercial uses to help in our revenue generation. One of the things he doesn't see in this document is acknowledgement of the fact that those industries are in jeopardy right now. There are numerous studies that state this, and it is for the simple reason that there is a lack of a variety of housing inventory. Councilor Reynolds states we are missing a variety of housing inventory here – it's incomplete. He is not advocating for us to promote a dense, city-like community; however, businesses are not coming. There are decisions that have been made by many industries that are here not to invest in this area because of the lack of housing inventory and the expense of the housing in our inventory. The councilor thinks that we, as a community, have to at least acknowledge that is a problem. In the Master Plan, he believes that we should have some language, somewhere that acknowledges that is not something we are here to eliminate or to deny but to at least keep our minds open from an economic health standpoint.

Director SantucciRozzi wants to make a comment in response to Councilor Reynolds' comments and concerns. She states that, related to the timing of things such as MBTA requirements, we were not going to address that in the Master Plan because they are essentially parallel tracks. We are going to be finishing up at the time we need to make some adoptions. The Director explains that the MBTA zoning will allow for some of the things that the Councilor is concerned about not being in this community. Putting that zoning in place is likely going to trigger some investment and some interest. We've already had quite a bit of interest in Armstrong Cork. There are some other sites along that corridor, as well, that we are starting to get some calls about. It's no secret that we are a Rapid Transit Community, and the development community is aware of that. While we don't specifically home in on that style of housing in the Master Plan, there will be other tools in the community and "on the books" in our zoning that will provide for that lack of housing in the community. Councilor Reynolds thanks the Director for that clarification and states that is very helpful. Understanding that this is a working model that we are dealing with, having that additional documentation at the time of publication a few months down the road would be extremely helpful from his perspective. So, if it's going to be addressed in other areas like the way it was just explained, he is satisfied.

Chair Wadland asks if anyone else has any concerns with anything currently written.

Member Page refers to Core Theme 2, Strategy 2R: **Eliminate all instances of split zoning that occur on individual parcels.** The way it is written in the shortlist is much shorter than the way it was described at the last meeting. She thinks it was inadvertently cut short. She went back and watched the video of the meeting; it should read: **Eliminate all instances of split zoning that occur on individual parcels, taking care to mitigate the impact of uses incompatible with residential uses, and to preserve and expand protective buffers.** Member Page states that is what was discussed at the last meeting. Chair Wadland asks if anyone has an issue with that. Director SantucciRozzi states we have something we are looking at now that is on Granite Street. It is commercial property, and the whole strip in front of this particular property is zoned Residence B. The front is Residence B, and the back is Commercial. Everything around it is Commercial, and everything is used as Commercial. She asks where are we expanding these buffers? She thinks the split-lot discussion is getting confusing, and she is concerned that people don't truly understand what we mean when we are talking about these situations. People are not aware that back in the 1950's the town went along Granite Street and zoned these strips Residence B in front of all the Commercial areas. Where would these buffers be on this property that is mostly used as Commercial? Councilor Flaherty has a question pertaining to this. She states clearly that split lots have been a problem in Braintree; it pops up as an issue periodically. She asks if there is a process that we have in place or that the Director has in mind that would be used to determine how the split lots would be resolved. What would the considerations be? How would the decisions be made? Who makes the decisions?

The Director explains that currently in the ordinance Section 135-306 is all split lots. There are provisions that say, if the least restrictive part is within 150 feet of the zone line, then you can use that lot for the least restrictive zoning. The question becomes least restrictive from use or least restrictive from setbacks. Some properties don't meet that – maybe it's more than 150 feet or maybe it's two lots that have never been combined but have been used as a site. The Director explains that we try to encourage people to eliminate those internal lines, and what the bylaw says is that lot needed to be in that configuration in 1940. Councilor Flaherty states this calls for eliminating all instances of split zoning. The Director explains that would be rezoning those parcels. Councilor Flaherty asks the Director to describe her vision for how that process would go. Who would look at it? What would the considerations be? How would the decision be made? The Director explains that a report would be run from the GIS (Geographic Information System) to analyze what is split. Then, we would have an inventory of these parcels and what their zones are. We would look at those parcels and the surrounding area and then make an evaluation about what makes sense. Is everything around there being used commercially? Are these properties already extending historically, non-conforming into the Residence B areas. They probably would be evaluated individually and case-by-case, but they are in clusters. Councilor Flaherty asks, when the Director says “we”, does she mean the Planning Department? The Director advises that the Council would be the one to approve this; it would be a zoning map amendment. The Director explains if Planning Staff were coming forward with an amendment to rezone a parcel, just like they do with all other rezones, they would have supporting information as to why. Typically, we do rezones now for development reasons. In those particular situations, we have concept plans showing what will be done with the particular property. Staff would not submit a map without backup information. The exercise would be based on an attempt to match the zoning with the current land use. Councilor Flaherty asks, as this is done, would there be recourse by specific abutters who would be impacted by that decision to weigh in? The Director explains that it is all public hearings. It would be public hearings at the Planning Board and then public hearings at the Town Council. Councilor Flaherty states it sounds like it would be a public hearing to discuss a broad change that would impact many parcels of land, potentially in different ways depending on each parcel of land. Before we reached that point, would there be means for abutters to weigh in with their concerns on the decision-making process? The Director states if she was advised to undertake something like this in the future, she would spell out a process. There are different areas, and taking on the town all at once might be a little aggressive from an outreach standpoint and trying to understand who could be at an advantage and who could potentially be at a disadvantage. Chair Wadland states that people get concerned when there are broad strokes. The Director advises that how things are going to be accomplished, the process for that, and when it's going to happen doesn't belong on this list. We don't spell out processes for things that are not at the table at this point. Chair Wadland thinks that members are here because the town was really anxious about some zoning and decisions that were made, and she thinks, to Councilor Flaherty's point, to include some of this verbiage is really important. The Director thinks that is addressed in the section where we talk about community-based plans and resident support.

Member Page suggests we look at the comment below: **“with the resulting zone equivalent to all abutting and/or a majority of the abutting zones”**. She suggests we allow for corrections to be made but keep it within reason for what the existing neighborhood supports. Member Page states, as Julia said, there needs to be a little protection there. Member North clarifies with Planning Staff; she is pretty sure that, any of her properties that have had any questions about any changes, she either gets a piece of Certified Mail or a letter saying she has an option to show up at a meeting and/or right to the town. Even when this process happens, most likely people will get a letter in the mail that says this might be changing. The Director confirms that they are noticed hearings, and everybody within 300 feet would be notified. Member North knows that, when anything changes on River Street or Washington Street, she gets a letter that says these changes are going to happen. Member North confirms that most of the abutters in this situation would get those same letters. The Director explains that we are required by law to notify abutters to abutters within 300 feet by mail to their mailing address. The legal notice is put in the newspaper and posted on the website. Councilor Reynolds agrees with the elimination of all instances of split zoning that occur on individual parcels. It is a really big problem that we have had in this town for quite a while.

Councilor Reynolds thinks there is other language here that would take care of that follow-on process. He thinks we need to be careful that we are not painting with a broad brush when we talk about all areas and handling them all in a similar fashion. Everyone here should be assured that there is a process in place. It is a state law, it is local law, and it is notification for any process that occurs. There is nothing in this town or this history that shows that things have been done behind closed doors. This is a complete transparent and open process. Councilor Reynolds would like to caution members from projecting. He thinks this particular statement is the essence of what the problem is and that the follow-on concerns, which are legitimate, are handled through the process.

Councilor Flaherty would like to make a suggestion. What she understands from the Planning Department is that we don't want to create a specific prescription for how every lot would be decided because that's not the work of this committee at this time. This is meant to be a menu. It sounds like the verbiage was eliminated because we're not going to decide every property in the same way every time. Councilor Flaherty thinks we can leave the language as it is and add: **“it is the expectation of this committee that abutters would be consulted through the process and given an opportunity to voice their concerns about how the zoning should proceed with regard to their particular property”**. Chair Wadland suggests going with 2R as written but adding **“with input from direct abutters”**. Chair Wadland asks members if anyone has an issue with that. Member Cunningham doesn't have an issue; he is trying to understand the outcome of the process. If we eliminate split zoning, how does that affect the property owner? Are they grandfathered so that they can stay in the house for however long they stay there? Or are they forced to sell to the nearest commercial property owner who wants to make them sell their house. The Director thinks it might be helpful to show an example on the screen. Member Cunningham says it would be helpful to him. The Director pulls up the town GIS system for a specific area, selecting “Layers” to show zoning to show an example. She highlights the Children of America, Swim School, Dunkin Donuts University, and an office building locations. She shows where the parking is for the office building and that the property is split with the front being in Residence B and the back being in Commercial. That would be something we would say should be all Commercial, as it is an office building property. For Dunkin Donuts University, it is the same thing. They have parking that goes all into Residence B area. Why is that zoned Residence B? Chair Wadland clarifies that there are a couple of houses in front of the office building, and she asks what happens to the houses? The Director advises that the houses stay Residence B, but the office building and parking lot shouldn't be half Commercial and half Residential. It's an effort to clean this up. Ms. Goldson explains that it is readjusted so that it matches the lot lines. The Director explains that our zoning lines don't match property lines. The Director explains that we are not talking about trying to take areas that are residential and convert them to Commercial or Highway Business or General Business if that isn't happening on the property. It's an effort to look at the land use patterns in the developed areas, if there is a split lot, and match the zoning with what is going on for that particular property. Chair Wadland asks how that could potentially impact a homeowner in a negative way? Chair Wadland brings up the housing around the Banner Park development, but the Director explains that is not applicable because it is not split zoned. Chair Wadland asks the Director if there is any instance that she can think of that would negatively impact a homeowner or a group of homeowners. The Director responds that, again, the goal isn't to do things to negatively impact them. We are not going to say to homeowners that we have changed your zone to Commercial to allow for new development. The parcels in question are already developed.

Member Huang states, if this is zoning, why is it here? Wouldn't it be up to the property owner to apply for it? Why is it in the Master Plan when the town has planned for it. The Director explains that the town and the Planning Board can sponsor rezone applications. They are entitled to do this type of work. It doesn't need to be the property owner as the applicant. There are various groups that can sponsor zoning amendments, including the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals. Member Huang asks, other than standardizing property usage, what are the benefits of doing this? The Director explains that the benefit is cleaning up a mess; it is an effort to remove zoning that exists that is incompatible with the current built environment. It is not an effort to take vacant land that would have been residential and now is going to be something else. It is looking at the built environment. It has put homes up against industrial parks.

The Director explains, if the town had good zoning in the right areas, you wouldn't have a lot of these problems. Chair Wadland asks about the residential properties near Liberty and Grove Street. The Director explains this was an example of a mess that was taken care of. The lots along Grove Street are split lots that are Residential A and Residential B. They would be fixed to extend the zoning to match the entire lot to the property boundary. The lots that are split would become Residential B. Member Page's only concern, related to the example provided on Granite Street, if zoning is changed for the houses to match the businesses behind them, will the houses be squeezed out? The Director explains that those housing lots would not meet the zoning requirements for a commercial lot.

The Director suggests that something that might soften the statement would be to remove the word "all" from 2R. Chair Wadland suggests adding something related to input from direct abutters. Councilor Reynolds thinks adding: "the next step will apply to the current process of Planning and Zoning review". If someone is curious about the next step, they can look it up. Councilor Reynolds is concerned that we are making this into "War and Peace". Member Rubin would like to see it broader and not just in this instance. She wouldn't just put it in the split zoning. It seems to her that there should be a broader statement about public processes. Chair Wadland states there was some verbiage put in the General Vision about "public input and community supported projects". Chair Wadland understands there is a zoning process, but maybe mentioning the process makes people on this committee feel a little better. Member Rubin doesn't object, but she thinks we may want to say it in other places too. Chair Wadland asks if anyone objects if we move it forward and saying: **Eliminate all instances of split zoning that occur on individual parcels with the resulting zone equivalent to all abutting and/or a majority of the abutting zones as part of the public process currently established.** Councilor Reynolds objects to Member Page's more extensive wording because it sounds like we are telling Zoning what to do. The question at hand here is making a reference to an existing process that we have on our zoning books and our bylaws as Director SantucciRozzi walked through for us. The Councilor thinks that is as simple as it needs to be stating "the review process according to Section ? of our zoning bylaw". Chair Wadland asks to take a five-finger vote on this. From the voting, Chair Wadland is seeing some tweaks, and she is seeing that those members might want reference to the public process. She asks if we want the public process included and do we want the other comment related to "with the resulting zone equivalent"? Ms. Goldson proposes the following language to address concerns: **Eliminate instances of split zoning that occur on individual parcels with the resulting zone equivalent to all abutting and/or a majority of the abutting zones with input from direct abutters through the process of Planning and Zoning review.** Chair Wadland conducts an additional vote, and all members are fine with this wording.

Chair Wadland asks if anyone has an issue with any other strategies, and she includes the audience in this inquiry.

Member Huang asks about the tabled topic from the June meeting. Ms. Goldson reminds that there were two related strategies (4N and 4Y) that were tabled. Strategy 4N reads: **Consider options to incentivize public placemaking and other public benefits from private developers, such as using a Public Improvement Special Permit process to offer flexibility in exchange for public improvement projects to create public gathering spaces for the Braintree community at-large, including assisting with extending the Monatikot River Walk.** The Director clarifies that we have this in our ordinance in the Braintree-Weymouth Landing District, and she has provided a copy of that for everybody in the packet. She also has another example from another community with some different verbiage. The Director states that it looks like the Braintree ordinance is a little bit tighter, and that is Section 135-615(08). She states we already have it in the zoning, we got a great riverwalk out of it and millions of dollars of private investment that will be deeded to the town. That is just one example of what can be done with this. The Director clarifies that in the wording it says this can be done in the Special Permit; that is not true. It can only be done in the Braintree Weymouth Landing Zoning District. Chair Wadland doesn't recall that this was specific to the Monatikot River Walk, and Member Herbst thought it was a broader discussion. She asks committee members to either explain their issue or explain their support.

Member Page states, if you read through all the data that we have gathered, there is a lot of concern in the town about projects being too dense. The way this is written, it is much too vague, and it allows a little too much control to certain board. She feels that people don't want deals made in exchange for density. She thinks we have zoning bylaws for a reason, and she thinks it's important for the public to be able to count on those zoning bylaws and to know that they will be enforced. She does not see this as something that Braintree residents are crying out for. Member Page thinks there may be some instances that this has worked, but there are also some instances that did not – for example Landing 53 left the town with some financial gaps that we're still not making up for many years later. Member Page thinks this allows a little too much wiggle room for her comfort. Chair Wadland asks Member Page if we could add some verbiage to make her more comfortable. Member Page thinks it should be removed and that we have enough through our process. She doesn't think we should have Boards cutting deals.

Councilor Reynolds respects Member Page's opinion; however, he does have a different view. Councilor Reynolds knows this isn't the forum for it, but he is curious about what the financial shortfall was from Landing 53. Director SantucciRozzi wants to clarify that the tax deal for Landing 53 was not part of the Special Permit; it was a deal approved by the Town Council. That had absolutely nothing to do with the Special Permit. Councilor Reynolds states that we have Boards that are empowered by state law and empowered by our bylaws, and he is a little uncomfortable with references being made that there are some kind of deals being struck that harm our community, and he is really taken back by it. Councilor Reynolds hears it a lot, and there is no evidence whatsoever of any kind of activity like that ever occurring. We take a great amount of time and effort and integrity in ourselves when we come before this town on behalf of the town. To have people throw out that there are backroom deals with no evidence, doesn't help this process. If you have something that is very specific, Councilor Reynolds is all ears. Member Page states she didn't mention "back room deals". Councilor Reynolds states she inferred that there were people who lack integrity who serve our town on various boards. That is what he heard, and he totally disagrees. If you don't like these types of things, that is what elections are for. Mayors are elected, and they appoint these boards. Board members take an oath to do what is in the best interests of our town, and to do things legally. Councilor Reynolds takes exception to these facts and to having an objection to adding a strategy based on this reasoning. Chair Wadland states, if you think about the Planning Board, there are probably likely changes coming next year. There will probably be a completely different Planning Board. She states when you're working with the Planning Board, it is difficult to rely on different boards. She doesn't think it's an insult. There are probably likely changes coming, and there will be consistent changes, and this is a ten-year plan. We saw concern about what Braintree wants to be and what is important to people in Braintree through the survey. Chair Wadland thinks we need to come up with some verbiage to move this forward. Member Rubin wanted to get back to the verbiage and asks for suggestions. Chair Wadland knows we say "publicly supported" in the document a lot, and she thinks we say this because there is anxiety in the town. We saw that anxiety through the survey. Chair Wadland suggests we add some verbiage stating it is supported by the neighborhood in which it resides. The District Councilor works with the residents to really be heard, and Chair Wadland thinks we have a problem with that in Braintree. Councilor Reynolds states he is a living example of that right now with the St. Thomas More property, as a councilor representing the interests of the neighbors, and the opinions are varied amongst those neighbors. Councilor Reynolds is fine with Chair Wadland's suggestion. Councilor Flaherty asks, when you suggest a Public Improvement Special Permit process, how are the terms of that process arrived at? Who crafts the path for somebody to obtain a Special Permit. Director SantucciRozzi states she has given an example. It's in the packet. We have it in our zoning right now; it was approved by the Council. Section 135-615(08) states, as it is spelled out, if you are going to provide public improvements such as provisions of publicly accessible waterfront walkway with direct connections to adjacent sidewalk and existing or potential walkways on adjacent properties, and that section continues. The Director notes this is for The Landing. There might be other types of things that the community would be looking for. This would be a zoning amendment that would go into the Zoning Bylaw. There would be public hearings with the Planning Board and the Town Council. The Director notes that, for a lot of the public hearings for rezones, nobody comes to them. The Council sees the Director's reports, and when she goes to the Town Council to explain the rezone, the public doesn't attend.

The Director explains that there are processes in place, and people are not availing themselves of the opportunity to participate. The Director states this is an example of what we do in The Landing. The Special Permit process is the same as for Use Special Permits. You file with the Planning Board, you have a public hearing, and in this case, instead of the criteria for a Use Special Permit, this is the criteria. Is augmenting the development and allowing flexibility worth those public benefits to the community? Councilor Flaherty asks who crafted the language for this Special Permit. Director SantucciRozzi specifies that the previous Director did. The Director explains that there are multiple people that can craft and submit zoning amendments -- the Planning Board, the Zoning Board, a ten-person citizen petition. There is a variety of people that are enabled by state law to write zoning and propose zoning in communities. Councilor Flaherty states, one might imagine if the committee encourages something to happen through the master plan that the town might take that on rather than a citizens group or something of that nature. Councilor Flaherty confirms that then the Council votes to accept this Special Permit because it's a zoning change. The Director clarifies that the Council votes to accept the text amendment. Councilor Flaherty confirms that Section 135-615(08) was voted in by the Council. Councilor Flaherty confirms that, because there is a zoning change, it involves a public hearing. Councilor Flaherty confirms that when a Special Permit is applied for, then that hearing is also a public hearing. The Director states correct. Councilor Flaherty confirms those are all public meetings and subject to public meeting law, and she confirms that there is a public process for all of this in place to which we already adhere. Councilor Flaherty has a lot of confidence in our public boards. She states we can disagree – it's a free country – we can disagree, and we do often. She would note that anybody who is dissatisfied with our government structure or the checks and balances to power, as they exist at present, should take advantage of the opportunity you have right now to provide that feedback to the Charter Review process, which is simultaneously underway right now. Councilor Flaherty believes that Committee Member, Justine Huang, is on the Charter Review Committee, so there is your person to talk to. Councilor Flaherty thinks this is a tool these boards can benefit from to help residents get something, which the Master Plan has seen a lot of evidence that we want. We want public gathering places. We want green spaces. We want open space. We want trees. We want playgrounds, and so forth. The Councilor thinks that having this tool is one way that the current Planning Board and Planning Boards down the line may use, which the public will have adequate ability to weigh in on. For those reasons, Councilor Flaherty is going to support the strategy as it is currently stated.

Chair Wadland asks to take a temperature to see if we need to move on.

Member Huang states the question she has about this one is that it is only addressing the public's gathering space. She asks what if there is a building that doesn't comply with the 10% affordable housing. Chair Wadland thinks it is a non-issue now because of the Inclusionary Bylaw that passed. Director SantucciRozzi advises that the Inclusionary Bylaw is at the Town Council. The Planning Board had concerns about the 15% rate requirement on the smaller projects. They asked for a study to be done. The Director got a grant, and a study will be done to see if 15% works. The inclusionary is separate; we talked about doing density bonuses early on in the inclusionary that would up the amount of inclusionary, and there wasn't support for that in the community. So, that was taken out of the text. If you are looking to get more affordable units in a development, it should be in the inclusionary section and not here. Member Huang asks if there is something other than gathering space that we can get; the gathering space may only be for the area residents, what about the rest of the town? That is why Member Huang cannot live with this verbiage because it is just for one purpose of public gathering space. Chair Wadland thinks it's public gather space for all – you don't have to live there. In the example that Director SantucciRozzi cited, they are going to build the riverwalk and then deed that land to the town. So, not only are we getting improvements, but we are getting about an acre of land that the town will own.

Member Holmes asks if we can take out reference to the Monatiquot River Walk or use that as an example and not keep that in as a statement. The Director thinks the strategy can be ended after “community at-large”.

Ms. Goldson has been editing as members have been talking, and she would like to read what she has: **Consider options to incentivize neighborhood supported public placemaking and other public benefits from private developers, such as using a Public Improvement Special Permit process to offer flexibility in exchange for public improvement projects, such as to create public gathering spaces for the Braintree community at-large.** Chair Wadland would like to take a temperature. Member Rubin wants to vote on the revised version and not the original version. Member Cunningham asks, before taking the vote, can we have a definition of “placemaking”. Ms. Goldson explains that public placemaking is basically a design technique for public gathering spaces. You could do that through benches or other improvements so that people can gather and enjoy a space. You could also do that through public art or murals. It is basically making it feel as though it’s a place – meaning like an outdoor room so that people can spend time with others reading, having a picnic, etc. Member Cunningham asks if the concept behind this is that the public would be entitled to come upon private property and use it as if it was public property. Ms. Goldson states that is one way, or the developer can deed a piece of property back to the town for a public park or a playground. Chair Wadland asks if there is anyone that cannot get to a three or above. Everyone can get to three or above with the revised wording. Ms. Goldson states she is going to remove one “such as”.

Chair Wadland states there was one more issue from the June 22 meeting that was tabled. Ms. Goldson explains that some folks were trying to combine 4Y with 4N that we just talked about so that the broader representation would be related to the public benefit improvement. Others were saying that they wanted to keep 4Y as a separate thing because it applies more broadly than just that one idea.

Chair Wadland states, for everyone reading 4Y: **When developing housing regulations, policies, or programs, include a broader representation of community members particularly those most impacted by the decision-making process,** is anyone under a three and can’t live with this. Chair Wadland asks to move this forward.

Member Cunningham refers to increased parking in the three districts in the town being added to the language talking in 2B about doing streetscape improvements because, if all we do is streetscape improvements and we don’t do anything to deal with the parking problems, we’re going to have some pretty trees and pretty sidewalks but some empty storefronts. Chair Wadland asks if anyone has a problem with that. Director SantucciRozzi clarifies that combined strategy 2W/2X/2Y is basically our attack on the lack of parking strategy. Member Cunningham was hoping it would be more specific. Councilor Reynolds wants to caution members that these are guidelines, and we must be careful. Councilor Reynolds states that sounds like you’re trying to write a zoning law. Member Cunningham states all he is trying to do is address a problem within the town with a single solution. We have three business districts, and all of them have inadequate parking. All of them have difficulty keeping businesses that are there in business. We have empty storefronts on a regular basis in all three of the districts, and every small business owner that Member Cunningham has ever met, who does business in those districts, talks about the problem with parking, not only for customers but for employees. Nobody ever says there is too much parking. Councilor Reynolds agrees with what the issue is. He is just cautioning because he thinks the verbiage does bring out and articulate what the concern is from a guidance standpoint on what this document is trying to provide. Chair Wadland would like to suggest something and ask if we can add **“with particular attention paid to the three business districts”** to the combined 2W/2X/2Y Strategy. She asks if Member Cunningham can live with it incorporated or does he want it to be a separate bullet. Member Cunningham is fine with it being incorporated. Chair Wadland confirms that everyone agrees. Ms. Goldson explains that 2W/2X/2Y talks about managing the existing parking. A parking management study, which is what this is talking about, also looks at shared parking agreements and other solutions to take your existing inventory to understand it better and look at the utilization. It is not to knock down buildings, build more parking spaces, or build parking garages. She wants to be clear about that. Member North explains that, when we talked about this before, we did say there wasn’t a place to put more parking because it is all developed, and that is where we came up with that strategy or idea of talking to locations that have excess parking spaces where we can come up with those shared parking agreements or private lot operators because there isn’t a place, nor do we want parking lots.

Member Cunningham states he is all for everything that Member North is talking about, but when push comes to shove, there is not enough parking provided in the three business districts that is open to the public. The front page of the Patriot Ledger, two days ago, had the City of Quincy talking about adding 1000 spaces to Quincy Center, and it happens to be a building that is going to be knocked down and turned into parking for Quincy Center. Member Cunningham states our business districts are going to be competing with Quincy Center – two miles away. Member Cunningham doesn't think our local businesses want to be in a situation where they have to compete with downtown Quincy for customers. Ms. Goldson hears what Member Cunningham is saying, but she doesn't think we are going to answer that here, as we don't have enough data to support whether you have enough parking or not. She suggests the following wording for 2W/2X/1Y: **Conduct a Town Parking Study, with particular attention to the three business districts, to establish the adequacy of the current parking inventory, identify overutilized and underutilized parking areas, update the Town's parking regulations for private properties, and establish a parking management plan for commercial areas with specific strategies for underutilized public parking options, such as designated parking for employees of area businesses, shared parking agreements with private lot operators, and wayfinding signage.** Member Cunningham doesn't think it addresses the underlying problem that everyone knows about. We don't need a study to know that the three districts in the town have inadequate parking. Director SantucciRozzi explains that we actually did do a parking study in Braintree Square and South Braintree Square. The Director would say that The Landing definitely needs more parking; there's no question about that. South Braintree Square is more of a management and enforcement situation. There is so much parking in South Braintree Square that is not utilized, with the items Ms. Goldson mentioned related to shared parking agreements. There are some properties that have a lot of parking that just sits empty all day, and it is just a waste. She agrees that The Landing definitely needs more parking, and maybe we could add something to this to increase parking stock if that is what comes out of this analysis. Member Huang states, as the Director said we just did a study, why can't we make this more action-driven in terms of the town making a parking management strategy vs. just a study. The Director said that we did the counts, but there are mixed feelings about different things in managing parking. Meters manage parking; enforcement manages parking. There are different tools you can use to manage that, and there is a difference of opinion on those things in some areas. She thinks it might be helpful to take that to the next step and thinks about some different options. She has made suggestions in the past about approaching some of these private property owners. She calls out one area – Bank of America. Somebody could put a restaurant in and use those spaces at night because the infrastructure is already there. Some areas, like The Landing where the properties don't have any parking, need review. With some of the other areas, it is more of a managing the inventory. The Director discusses creating the infrastructure that small businesses need for their workers and their customers. Without that, it is not successful. Councilor Reynolds likes the idea that Member Huang came up with as far as making this more of an action related statement. He recalls that parking studies have been done, and MAPC came in to do assessments. Councilor Reynolds states, to Member Cunningham's point, data is great but what are we doing with it? Councilor Reynolds asks if we can make a statement such as: **Pursue data-driven solutions to address the inadequacies in our business districts.** Councilor Reynolds knows that North Braintree has a very big challenge, but he thinks there could be solutions using the data and the types of businesses that are there. Councilor Flaherty doesn't mean to muddy the waters, but she asks how old is the study that we have done, is what we're proposing substantially different from the study, and is there a need for an updated study. The Director explains that we had Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates conduct a study about six years ago as part of our local rapid recovery. MAPC was our partner on that and went back out and had the same conclusion. There are plenty of spots; they are just not managed properly. The Director states this goes beyond the squares, and she gives the example of The Marketplace, which she states is an area that is overparked that it doesn't look desirable. It is a lot of asphalt with very little landscaping. She states a lot of retail locations in town are "over parked". Councilor Flaherty agrees that there are retail areas that are "over parked". The Director states, with a study, you are looking at different things. In the squares, you have people that live in those areas that park on the street, you have workers, and you have customers. In other areas, you have employees and customers.

Another example is our office parks. The Director mentions that pavement is not making us any money. What can we do to take advantage of some of the infrastructure that is surplus and put it to better use. If it's not development, make it grass. She thinks the parking needs a full "soup to nuts", and keeping this broad and encompassing will allow options for what we want to tackle. Ms. Goldson has been changing this as members have been talking. She reads the latest version: **Pursue data-driven solutions to address the parking needs in our business areas to establish an adequate parking inventory, increase parking stock as needed, appropriately utilize existing parking areas, update the Town's parking regulations, and establish a parking management plan including shared parking.** Chair Wadland asks if anyone is below a three. Everyone can agree with this wording.

Chair Wadland asks if anyone has any other strategy issues. Committee members have no further issues.

Public Questions and Comments

There is an audience member with comments. His name and address were not provided. He has been following the process on his own, and he read the report. With regards to the strategy shortlist, there are a couple of things from the report that merit addressing that he wanted to bring to the committee's attention. He thinks the demographics of the town have changed significantly in the past decade or more. He states 30% of the community is now composed of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) folks, and those numbers are increasing. A third of Braintree households are lower moderate income, and the vast majority according to the report (73% of those households that are lower moderate income) are burdened by the cost of housing and the cost of rent. As a resident, he is struck by these facts. He thinks these facts are relevant to the fifth theme about public services, as well as housing. In particular, he wanted to share that he grew up in Braintree, he went to Braintree Public Schools, and he has lived in the town for 15 years. His grandmother spent the last years of her life here, and like many of the people of color in this town he feels less comfortable using public services and participating in civic life here. Growing up, he has also witnessed a lot of racism and harm done to residents here, including kids he grew up with. He has participated in this culture too. He has seen how the lack of safe and welcoming spaces where Asian, Black, and Hispanic people can feel comfortable and confident enough to stand up and advocate for themselves has contributed to the exclusion of marginalized people in our community. As he has grown to become a better person, he has hoped that his town can better serve and actively listen to the most marginalized people in this community. That is why he thinks it is very important that the Steering Board and the Council take note of the facts that our demographics are changing, and the next ten years are an opportunity to repair harms that have been done to people who have lived invisible lives here and to create access to spaces through public facilities, housing and expanded public services that can encourage people to feel safe and welcomed and able to speak for themselves. He thanks the committee for the opportunity to speak. Chair Wadland states that, when the committee was creating the Vision Statement, they really wanted to make sure it was all-inclusive. She acknowledges that the demographics of this town have changed, and they wanted to make sure it was an inclusive Master Plan.

Member Huang refers to Strategies 5W, 5X and 5LL and explains that we specifically asked to make sure that we focus on diversity, equity, and being inclusive. Member Huang states we have done a lot this year. Mayor Kokoros has recognized the month of May as API (Asian and Pacific Islander) month for the Town of Braintree. Member Huang is the President of the Chinese American Association of Braintree. The mayor has supported the Association by providing public space, such as town hall. They have been able to utilize it three times a month and anytime they need to. The mayor has supported different celebrations such as Lunar New Years, and they have been working with the town to celebrate August Moon Festival in September. Member Huang is working with the mayor and a well-known diversity and empowerment advocate to determine how we can bring diversity and empowerment to Town Hall and the school environment, and she is on the Steering Committee to represent diversity, as well. Member Huang thanks the audience member for coming forward with comments.

Member Rubin wanted to thank the audience member for participating and sitting through the lengthy meeting to wait to speak. She was wondering if he would leave a copy of his comments with the committee or staff. The Director mentions that they are in the packet.

It is suggested that he speak with Member Justine Huang after the meeting to explore community involvement. The speaker notes that he thinks it is wonderful and that things are changing even just from when he was growing up. Youth services are something that he cares deeply about, and he thinks it is something that should be developed in the future. He thinks a lot of people of color moving into the community are families, and their children are growing up here. He thinks youth services will be a growing need. He thinks there are a lot of resources for the growing community of Chinese American folks. He is Chinese American. He also knows there are a lot of other people entering the community, and their identities also deserve to be reflected. It is always good to understand the specific demographic needs.

Ms. Goldson mentions that the participant offered three specific suggestions for strategies, and she asks if the committee wants to specifically take those up one-by-one. Ms. Goldson reads the suggestions:

1. **Creation of a task force reporting to the mayor's office to hear feedback/interface with residents of color about their needs and concerns,**
2. **Setting aside funds for youth and teen spaces and programs that are multiethnic in nature for promotion of mental/emotional wellness for marginalized youth,**
3. **Inventory of existing organizations that provide resources for BIPOC folks in Greater Boston / South Shore and inviting them to coordinate programming with the Town.**

Ms. Goldson agrees that these are probably the most appropriate in the last core theme under public facility services and infrastructure. Chair Wadland notes that this does exist, but maybe we should add it here. Member Huang thinks we should add it to make sure there is continuation of the effort. Ms. Goldson asks what the name of the task force is. Member Huang states there isn't a formal task force; it has been something she has been working on with the mayor. Ms. Goldson confirms that it should read: **Create a diversity, inclusion, and empowerment task force.** It is also suggested by Chair Wadland and confirmed by Member Huang that wording should include **"working with the youth to bring in diversity and empowerment programs into the schools"**. Member Huang also suggests **"increasing diversity training within the town government structure"**. Chair Wadland suggests **"exploring other organizations that offer resources"**. Member Huang states it doesn't need to be an organization, but we want to make sure that we have the strategy and tools for residents to be comfortable.

Member North is not sure if this would be the appropriate place to put it, but under Core Theme 5, under Item 2, **Creating new and improved outdoor adult, family and youth recreational facilities that are regularly cleaned and maintained and promoting access to recreational areas.** She suggests maybe his comment number 2 can be incorporated there.

Member Huang states we already have such a facility – the Braintree Art and Culture Community Center. Member Huang uses this center, and they are looking for volunteers to teach Chinese on Saturday. Member Huang states that Braintree has a lot of resources, but they are looking for a diversity-empowerment strategy to promote what is available. For her, she is lucky that she knows most of the resources from living in Braintree for over 20 years. People that don't get involved in town don't know what is available. She suggests a welcome package to new residents that are in a minority segment. What are the training programs available for employees and schools? Member Huang provides example of Chinese language class being offered at Braintree High School, but no one was taking it because it wasn't offered at elementary school or middle school. Chair Wadland mentions that we also talked about the websites and making them so they can be translated. Director SantucciRozzi doesn't think there is any harm in taking these three items that this gentleman has brought to the committee's attention and asking Ms. Goldson to put together a strategy around that. The Director says, as a town employee for over 20 years, we need to start to address our population appropriately. When minority populations enter town hall, it is

a different experience. There are barriers for them. We try to do our best to explain things and provide clarity, but getting building permits and things like that are difficult enough when there isn't a language barrier. She really thinks there should be some effort to try to put this into a strategy to try to address our population.

Chair Wadland suggests that Member Justine Huang work with Jen Goldson on that strategy.

Councilor Flaherty would like to add that Braintree has the Braintree Community Youth Center, which at present is almost on the precipice of failure. It was thriving some years ago, then it was declining a little, and then Covid hit it very hard. Now, it serves about seven or eight kids. It is open on Friday and Saturday nights from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM, and she believes anybody can come. Councilor Flaherty states it is a fun location, and she volunteered there several times. There is pizza, video games, pool, foosball, ping pong, and more. It needs a real investment, and it would be a sound area to boost along these lines because it is already focused on youth concerns. Mainly, it is a social area, but it has so much potential to be so much more with guidance and cash.

The gentleman from the audience returns to the podium, and he thanks the committee for the discussion on the points. It seems to him that there are a lot of small-scale programs in place. What he was having in mind with his comment was something more in line with what Councilor Flaherty mentioned related to having a specific core space and not specifically just a Chinese American program, but more of an open space that is inclusive of people of different ethnic identities. He mentions that having resources that target specific populations is important, but he thinks having a central planning principle or central mission. He mentions that the events being discussed sound amazing, but getting publicity for these events may not always be widespread. He acknowledges that the youth center is near his house, but he hadn't really heard a lot about it. He thinks it would have been a cool place to see and have available growing up, but it has been in decline for a while. He is interested in learning more about the task force. But hearing from residents of color and committing to creating a more centralized plan for all the different residents of color that live here is something that he would like to see spelled out.

Chair Wadland expresses that the committee appreciates all his input, and she confirms that Ms. Goldson will work with Member Huang. Chair Wadland asks if there are any other strategies up for discussion. There are none. Chair Wadland confirms with Ms. Goldson that she will be working on wording with Member Huang via email, and then it will be posted on the website.

Adjournment

Chair Wadland looks for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION made by Member Holmes to adjourn the meeting; **SECONDED** by Councilor Reynolds; voted 11:0:0. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.

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