



**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
David Cunningham, Member
Julia Flaherty, Member
Peter C. Herbst, Member
Justine Huang, Member
Erin V. Joyce, Member
Shelley North, Member
Elizabeth Page, Member
Joseph Reynolds, Member
Rayna Rubin, Member

Approved – October 3, 2022

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE – MEETING MINUTES

Thursday – August 18, 2022 – 7PM

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

Meeting came to order at 7:00 PM

Members Present:

Jennifer Wadland, Chair
Kay Young, Vice-Chair, Business Owner
David Cunningham, Resident
Erin Joyce, Planning Board Representative
Joe Reynolds, Town Councilor, District 2
Rayna Rubin, Resident

Staff Present:

Connor Murphy, Assistant Director – PCD

Consulting Firm (JM Goldson)

Delaney Almond
Elana Zabar

Members Absent:

Julia Flaherty, Town Councilor, District 1
Peter Herbst, Business Owner
Justine Huang, Resident
Shelley North, Business Owner
Elizabeth Page, Resident

Member and Staff Announcements:

Assistant Director Connor Murphy explains, just to follow-up from the last meeting, they are working with BELD on having inserts in the monthly paper billing. We are looking at costs. In addition, BELD is putting out monthly newsletters, and we have asked to be included in a small portion of the Newsletter. The Newsletter is virtual. It is emailed out, and it will be hyperlinked to the survey, to the Meeting in a Box, and to the Master Plan website. In addition to contact information being provided, we are working with the Mayor's office on a Robocall using the reverse 911 technology (this was brought up at last meeting). In addition, staff is trying to attend the Farmer's Market. We have posted flyers throughout the town in town buildings. They are at DPW, Pond Street, Town Hall and other town facilities. We have encouraged multiple departments to post them. We asked the golf course to have the posting visible. We are working with Town Clerk on the exit line for early voting to have sheets with QR code available as voters exit.

Chairperson Wadland announces that we have a Google Sheet, which has great ideas for outreach, and she suggests that member sign up for some of these outreach ideas. She also encourages members to add any new ideas that they may have.

Chairperson Wadland and Members Page, Young and Huang are doing a Meeting in a Box at the Senior Center on September 9, 2022. Member Huang is doing a Meeting in a Box with the Asian Outreach Group, as part of the Senior Center.

Review Phase II Project Schedule

Delaney Almond, JM Goldson, has a quick announcement that she will be leaving JM Goldson. This will be her last meeting with the Master Plan Steering Committee. Ms. Almond introduces Elana Zabar who has been working on the project “behind-the-scenes for a while, particularly on the engagement efforts. Ms. Zabar will be presenting the progress made with the engagement efforts and survey. Chairperson Wadland thanks Delaney for all her hard work.

Delaney Almond provides a review of the project schedule. For tonight’s meeting, we will be reviewing the engagement process, reviewing the survey, Meeting in a Box and looking at how we can perform further outreach in the next couple of months. Next month we will close the summer engagement. We are extending the Meeting in a Box through the second Community Forum in October. That gives members an opportunity to schedule more meetings. We will have one more meeting on September 22 to review engagement efforts and to prepare for the Forum. In November, we will be discussing Vision/Goals (Meeting on November 17), which will be presented at the Forum. We will be putting together the draft Vision/Goals Report in December to wrap up Phase II (Meeting on December 15).

Update on Status of Engagement and Outreach Efforts:

Elana Zabar, JM Goldson, tells the Members a bit about herself. Ms. Zabar got her Planning Degree from the University of New Hampshire, where she studied Community and Environmental Planning. She also had a dual major in Sustainability and a minor in Political Science. She went on to get her Master of Education in Community Engagement from Merrimac College. She spent the last year working with the North Shore Community Redevelopment Coalition in Salem, MA. She started to work for JM Goldson at the end of June 2022. She has been working behind-the-scenes on Braintree’s engagement, specifically the survey.

Ms. Zabar advises, earlier in the process, we hosted Focus Groups, where 36 people participated. There have been 18 suggestions on the Crowdmap. We had two Meeting in a Box responses, and she received two more at tonight’s meeting. There have been 426 responses on the Long Survey, and 0 responses on the Short Survey. There has been a total of 491 people engaged in this process so far.

Ms. Zabar advises that the Crowdmap is linked on the Master Plan website, which is open until September 6th. There have been 9 people engaged so far. The Meeting in a Box is open until October 17th, and it is available in simplified Chinese. Of the two meetings mentioned earlier, there were a total of 11 participants.

Ms. Zabar advises that the Survey is opened until September 9th, and it is also available in simplified Chinese. As mentioned earlier, 426 people have engaged so far. The goal is to have 1000 responses. Ms. Zabar will next discuss demographics of the survey participants compared to demographics in Braintree’s total population. The population is mostly based upon the 2020 American Community Survey, but a few are based on the 2020 Census. For age, individuals between 35-74 are most likely to take the survey. Both younger people and older people are underrepresented. Here an opportunity would be high school students that are getting involved in Civics classes. They might have great ideas for the community that they have lived in. In terms of gender, of the 246 people answering these questions, women were more likely to take the survey.

In terms of Educational Attainment, 249 people responded to this question. People with higher educational attainment are more likely to be taking the survey. More age representation would remedy this. In terms of Employment Status, 252 people responded to this question. This is the one respondent where survey participants are close to the population. In terms of Household Income, there were 251 responses to this question, and folks who have higher income are more likely to take the survey. In terms of race, 250 people responded to this question, with white people being more likely to take the survey. Given Braintree's rich Asian population, Ms. Zabar would like to see more Asian representation. We are at about 6% for 14% of the population. In terms of Ethnicity, this is another demographic that is an accurate representation of the population. In terms of Tenure, 253 people answered this question, showing that homeowners are more likely to take the survey. About 5% of the people that took the survey are renters; with 26% of the population being renters, we would like to see more renter representation. This could be done with outreach efforts targeting apartment building and housing department locations. In terms of Affiliation, 424 people answered this question, showing that 408 people were residents. Ms. Zabar recognizes that there have been questions about whether we want non-residents to take this survey. When you think about schoolteachers and police officers that live outside of Braintree, they may have really great things to contribute. In terms of people that have held Municipal Office, 392 people responded, and of those 350 people have never held office in Braintree. This is an opportunity to reach people with a little more knowledge of the government process. Regarding Length of Time Associated with Town, 253 people responded to this question showing that folks are most likely in the 6-50 years category. There is an opportunity to get a better understanding of what is bringing people to town and what is keeping people in town.

In summary, Ms. Zabar states the question is really "Where do we go from here?". At the end of the day, any engagement is good engagement; however, we would hope to see more engagement. There are about 39,000 residents; with 426 people participating, that is less than 1% of people taking the survey. Only three people under the age of 18 have taken the survey. Ms. Zabar expresses that people are more likely to engage when there is a deadline, and there is one month left to engagement efforts. She thinks this will encourage more people to take the survey.

Open Questions and Answers:

Member Joyce explains that she has hosted two Meetings in a Box, and her son has taken the survey. She is very interested in outreach to younger, elementary, middle school and high school students. At the last meeting, she asked if there was anything specifically targeted to younger individuals. She has been hoping to spend some time in September engaging her elementary school in this process. Her question is, when her 12-year-old was taking the survey, it took him a very long time and it was hard for him to respond. Would it be better to do a Meeting in a Box with younger kids? Member Joyce asked for a reminder on the final date for the survey. Ms. Zabar states the final date for the survey is September 9th. Ms. Zabar thinks Meeting in a Box is a great tool, especially with younger kids, and she discusses just how this tool can be used with younger kids. She also suggests that the Short Survey if it is facilitated one-on-one, might be an option. Member Joyce is not sure she has seen a version of the Short Survey. Ms. Almond states they created the Short Survey; Ms. Goldman is reviewing it. Ms. Almond advises that the link is live, but they weren't going to post it on the website because it is very similar to the Long Survey, and they didn't want to confuse people. Ms. Almond states that the Short Survey was available to committee members to use as they see fit. Member Joyce mentions that when she did the Meeting in a Box, there wasn't a place to collect demographics, and she asks if we want to collect demographics when using this tool. Ms. Zabar explains that we are not collecting demographic information for Meeting in a Box.

Member Reynolds discusses the underwhelming responses at 1% of 39,000 people in the community. As we started the surveys as part of our Summer Engagement Tools, in hindsight, would you think that the summer months not the best time for doing this. Member Reynolds asks for an explanation of the milestones and timelines of this full-length initiative. Is this something that other communities may have also experienced?

In general, Ms. Zabar doesn't think that having a survey in the summer is a bad idea. She does think that things start to pick up in the fall. In Ms. Zabar's opinion, people have less to do in the summer and more of a chance to take the survey. Taking the survey is usually done earlier in the process, so that it can inform the next steps. Ms. Almond adds that the survey is an instrumental part of developing the vision and goals, and that is why it is happening right now. They purposely put the second community forum in October so that more people will be in town and able to attend rather than on vacation. Ms. Almond advises that they have had similar schedules in other communities. The idea is that there are a lot of events going on over the summer where you can go to spread the word about the survey and engagement tools to get community involved. Member Reynolds is personally a little disappointed in the community's level of engagement on the survey, and he states that data collection is extremely important for the committee to be able to gather and to assess our most accurate community mindset. He wonders if there is an opportunity in the longer-term milestones that have been established for this overall process for the survey to be extended without interrupting the types of accomplishments set out. Ms. Almond explains that the survey was designed to get feedback for the vision and goals, which will be presented at the October Forum, so they need to have the information from the survey before that. There will be opportunities for more engagement in later phases of the project. There are ways to keep engaging with the community. It is an important part of the process throughout. Ms. Almond advises that Ms. Zabar has put together an amazing list on ways to do more outreach. Ms. Zabar advises that Braintree is not unlike other communities in terms of the percentage of people who participate.

Ms. Rubin states it seems to be a good time to check back in on how we are doing in October. She would also like to see more of a response. Chairperson Wadland suggests that maybe different activities generate more of a response, such as Meeting in a Box.

Member Young runs the Braintree Beer Garden every Saturday in September and October. They plan on having a table there so that people can participate. She estimates that about 200 people attend, with a high percentage of Braintree residents. She thinks it will help with that younger demographic. Ms. Zabar suggests checking in with neighbors and offering a personal invitation to participate.

Member Rubin mentions that at some events, attendees cannot take the survey if they are just at the event for a short time. She thinks it would be nice to have something short and concise. Focusing so much on the survey concerns Member Rubin. Chairperson Wadland asks if there could be a QR code for the short survey so that participants can quickly pull it up on the phone. Member Young agrees that people will probably not stop to take the survey at an event; however, it will alert them of the Master Plan process so that they can go home and take the survey. Ms. Zabar suggests the "Crowd Mapping" as an option.

Chairperson Wadland notes that the next meeting of the Master Plan Steering Committee will be September 22, 2022, and the Community Forum will be held on October 15, 2022. Assistant Director Murphy advises that more information will be provided on the Community Forum. They are currently looking for a location, as Cahill Auditorium will be used for voting. They will be looking for a more public venue.

Member Joyce asks what the process is with the Existing Conditions Report. Ms. Almond states they are waiting for Director SantucciRozzi's comments. The consultants have addressed all the committee member's comments. Ms. Almond advises that once they received the last batch of comments from the Director, there will be a quick turnaround time and then it will be out for public comment.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Member Young to adjourn the meeting; **SECONDED** by Member Reynolds; voted 6:0:0. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

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