

September 11, 2020

APPROVED

1 In attendance: Dwight Brew, Chris Yates, Tom Quinn, Will Ludt, Tracie Adams, Tom Gauthier,
2 Jared Hardner, Tim Kachmar, and Joe Ilsley.
3 Staff in attendance: Nic Strong – Community Development Director, Natasha Kypfer – Town
4 Planner
5

6 **1. Roll Call to Order**

7 Dwight Brew called the meeting to order at 6:30pm +/-, and Natasha Kypfer read the
8 following statement. I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a
9 result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor’s Emergency Order
10 #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, as extended by various Executive Orders, this
11 public body is authorized to meet electronically.
12

13 Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this
14 meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor’s Emergency Order.
15 However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:
16 Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by
17 video or other electronic means:
18

19 We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting.
20 All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this
21 meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if
22 necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone #312-626-6799
23 and password 875 2591 3497, or by clicking on the following website address:
24 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87525913497> that was included in the public notice of this
25 meeting.
26

26 Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:
27

28 We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the
29 meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions
30 have also been provided on the website of the Planning Board at: www.amherstnh.gov.
31 Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are
32 problems with access: If anybody has a problem, please call 603-341-5290.
33

34 Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:
35 In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and
36 rescheduled.
37

38 Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.
39 Let’s start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their
40 presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this
41 meeting, which is required under the Right-to- Know law.
42

September 11, 2020

APPROVED

43 **Roll call attendance: Dwight Brew, Chris Yates, Tom Quinn, Will Ludt, Tracie**
44 **Adams, Tom Gauthier, Jared Hardner, Tim Kachmar, and Joe Ilsley – all present and**
45 **alone.**

46
47 TOPICS OF DISCUSSION:

48
49 Chris Yates shared a presentation put together by himself, Natasha Kypfer, Tim Kachmar, Tom
50 Gauthier, and Joe Ilsley. He explained that the proposed themes were drafted based on Nic
51 Strong and Mike Akillian’s suggestions.

52
53 Joe Ilsley stated that the recommended themes initially were: Rural Character & Quality of Life;
54 History, Heritage, and Culture; Growth, Development, and Design; People & Community; and
55 Essential Facilities and Services. Other potential themes included: Fiscal Practices, Goals, and
56 Concepts; Environmental Protection Philosophies; Energy Efficiency, Goals, and Strategies; and
57 Care for Community Members.

58
59 The final suggested list of themes is:

- 60 • Fiscal Practices, Goals, and Concepts
- 61 • Environmental Protection Philosophies
- 62 • Critical Infrastructure (Essential Facilities and Services)
- 63 • History, Heritage, and Rural Character
- 64 • Our Quality of Life (People, Community, and Education)
- 65 • Growth, Economic Development, and Design – Residential
- 66 • Growth, Economic Development, and Design – Commercial
- 67 • Resource Efficiency, Goals, and Strategies

68
69 Joe Ilsley explained that the themes were brainstormed, a definition was considered, and the
70 guiding principles were used to define desired/undesired outcomes. He ran through the draft
71 definitions of the first suggested theme.

72
73 **Fiscal Practices, Goals, and Concepts**

74 It is the goal of the Master Plan to foster and preserve the economic prosperity of this
75 community, provide long-term stabilization of the tax rate, ensure equitable distribution of tax
76 burden, ensure lifetime affordability to residents of our community, and pursue efficiency and
77 the highest level of stewardship of taxpayer funds.

78
79 All elected and appointed officials, official boards, committees, and any entity contracted to the
80 Town are encouraged to adopt, implement, and achieve the Fiscal Practices, Goals, and Concepts
81 outlined in the Guiding Principles whenever reasonably achievable and incorporated in all phases
82 of the planning cycle.

83
84 Dwight Brew stated that he believes this plan looks similar to what might come out after the
85 community is surveyed, not before. He is concerned that the community may think that this
86 small group developed the Master Plan before reaching out for their opinion.

September 11, 2020

APPROVED

87

88 Joe Ilsley agreed but believes that some level of context is needed in order to ask for community
89 support levels on each Guiding Principle.

90

91 Dwight Brew stated that some portions of what was presented are outside of a Master Plan.
92 Some of these fiscal goals, practices and concept items may not find their way into a Master Plan
93 but may be included in a Town/School Strategic Plan instead. Fiscal items do not necessarily fall
94 under the Planning Board's scope but may fall under the Board of Selectmen or School Boards.

95

96 Nic Strong agreed that the Master Plan is a statutory duty of the Planning Board to endeavor to
97 get the Town to a land use development ideal. The items that have come back from the
98 subcommittee are ideas that she usually sees come back after a second or third polling of the
99 community while working on themes. She envisions a process involving a survey of the
100 community in which they are involved in putting together the detailed objectives for each theme.
101 Land use does involve the environment, economic development, quality of life, etc., but there are
102 items being discussed here that are beyond what she would expect to see in the Master Plan.

103

104 Jared Hardner noted that a weakness for a Master Plan could be a "fluffy vision" without
105 detailing the amenities balanced with the tax and infrastructure needed to achieve them. Nic
106 Strong explained that that is how a Master Plan plays with a CIP (Capital Improvements Plan).
107 Thus, these items might not be found within the Master Plan, but the concepts that go along with
108 them may be involved in the goals, in order to tie into the CIP. The Master Plan does not have a
109 budget sheet; it notes the projects that are important to the plan and why.

110

111 Chris Yates noted that there is not a lot of back and forth between many of the
112 Committees/Boards in Town. He explained that the subcommittee was looking for overarching
113 ideas to help these groups talk about developing the community in a synergistic way.

114

115 Mike Akillian stated that he is unsure if this group has determined its role as a Steering
116 Committee versus the role of the working groups. He is concerned that the community may think
117 decisions have already been made by people with certain agendas. Holistic themes will allow
118 people in the working groups to engage with other work groups to come up with questions for
119 the public to relate to. He believes there are two levels of engagement that this group might want
120 to have with the public: to recruit people to participate in the Master Plan process, and
121 communications items regarding the public's thoughts on potential themes and sub questions.
122 The group might want to think about what kind of strategic items are needed to make the
123 potential themes happen.

124

125 Chris Yates noted that he doesn't believe it is useful to go to the public without theme examples
126 for them to discuss.

127

128 Tom Quinn stated that face-to-face meetings with the public will be quite limited for this Master
129 Plan process; thus, it might be useful to bring proposed themes to the public to discuss and work

TOWN OF AMHERST
Master Plan Steering Committee

September 11, 2020

APPROVED

130 through the process differently. He noted that it is important to pay attention to if biases are
131 carried through the process.
132 Mike Akillian explained that he would like the group to consider its role versus the roles of the
133 working groups. He questioned how the group knows it has the right themes and how it will
134 phrase them to be most accessible to the public.
135
136 Joe Ilsley stated that the group was trying to achieve exactly the process that Mike Akillian has
137 explained. Mike Akillian noted that he doesn't find much engaging in the definitions put forth
138 for the proposed themes. Jared Hardner stated that he believed the group was supposed to put
139 forth a menu of themes for the public to discuss. Once approval was received for the themes,
140 Jared Hardner stated that he believed the group would then go out to find people to discuss
141 possible tradeoffs, to then bring back to the community. Joe Ilsley explained that he believed
142 feedback from the community would be sought at each step.
143
144 Jared Hardner suggested that this document be edited with an eye toward questions, not answers,
145 and questions without bias.
146
147 Chris Yates and Joe Ilsley stated that they would like some specific details about what the
148 Committee wants from the subcommittee, if this product is not the direction that the group
149 wants.
150
151 The group agreed that the subcommittee will meet on the 15th to try to convert the suggested
152 themes into questions that could be posed to the public, for review by the Committee on the 24th.
153
154 **Jared Harder moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM +/-.** **Tim Kachmar**
155 **seconded.**
156 **Roll call: Chris Yates – aye; Dwight Brew – aye; Tom Gauthier – aye; Tom Quinn –**
157 **aye; Tracie Adams – aye; Jared Hardner – aye; Will Ludt – aye; Tim Kachmar –**
158 **aye; and Joe Ilsley – aye. Motion carried unanimously.**
159
160
161
162 *Respectfully submitted,*
163 *Kristan Patenaude*
164
165 Minutes approved: July 19, 2021
166