

TOWN OF AMHERST  
Master Plan Steering Committee

April 22, 2021

**APPROVED**

In attendance: Dwight Brew, Chris Yates, Jared Hardner, Tracie Adams, Tom Quinn, Will Ludt, and Joe Ilsley.

Staff in attendance: Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner, and Nic Strong – Community Development Director

**1. Roll Call to Order**

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

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor’s Emergency Order.

However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:  
Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting.

All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone #312-626-6799 and password 892 5332 6221, or by clicking on the following website address:

<https://zoom.us/j/89253326221> that was included in the public notice of this meeting.

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

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the Planning Board at: [www.amherstnh.gov](http://www.amherstnh.gov).

Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access: If anybody has a problem, please call 603-341-5290.

Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let’s start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to- Know law.

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

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**2. Committee discussion with Resilience Planning and Design, LLC to discuss scope of work.**

Steve Whitman, Liz Kelly, and Zak Brohinsky, of Resilience Planning & Design, LLC, joined the Steering Committee.

Steve Whitman reviewed the Scope of Services document with the group. He explained that task #1 will focus on project management and meetings. Resilience will hold monthly meetings with the group, and others as needed. At least one to two Resilience members will attend meetings at first. In between meetings, Resilience will work with Nic Strong and other staff as needed. The deliverables for this task include agendas and draft documents.

Task #2 will focus on mapping, analyses and existing conditions reports. During this task, Resilience and the Steering Committee will identify plans and studies that need to be considered and reviewed. The groups will brainstorm on what else is needed. He suggested that the Town use Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) for build out analyses and scenarios. Resilience will work with NRPC to integrate this into the Master Plan. During this phase, Resilience will also set up a website so that interested parties can view background documents.

Task #3 is outreach and engagement. The groups will brainstorm which outreach techniques to use.

During task #4, everything will be pulled together. Themes will emerge and information on where Amherst is headed, and the steps needed to get there will become clear. There will be an easy-to-navigate document that the Town can use as a tool moving forward. Resilience will help the Town through the public hearing process and the Story Map will be fine-tuned.

Steve Whitman explained that he was not able to fit themed working groups into the Scope of Services. He explained that the Town would need a longer time frame for the project in order to have Resilience meet with working groups outside of the Steering Committee each month. This also creates complexity, as not all groups are likely to operate at the same level. He suggested that the Steering Committee could use the existing conditions document to identify people with interest and/or expertise on certain topics to review these items.

In response to a question from Chris Yates, Steve Whitman stated that he shares the concern about NRPC doing the build out study but believes this can be done well with a two-phase approach. Once Resilience is under contract with the Town, he can reach out to NRPC to work on the study. The groups will then review the study again after the public engagement task to make sure it is on track. Chris Yates noted that the Town needs tools to understand certain tradeoffs for development in areas of Town.

In response to a question from Dwight Brew, Nic Strong explained that NRPC completed a build out summary for Amherst, along with such summaries or analyses for other surrounding towns a few years ago.

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89 Zak Brohinsky stated that he is happy to have information from NRPC included in this way, as  
90 NRPC has this service well-tuned.

91  
92 Will Ludt noted that the Heritage Commission is currently working on a story map for certain  
93 heritage sites in Town. He would like to see the information shared with the Master Plan story  
94 map. Jared Hardner also noted that the Amherst Conservation Commission has a number of GIS  
95 map layers that could also be included.

96  
97 Zak Brohinsky explained that the story map, once completed, will live under the Town's  
98 ARCGIS license. Steve Whitman noted that the budget can be reduced by \$1,500, due to the fact  
99 that the Town already has its own license.

100  
101 In response to a question from Tom Quinn, Zak Brohinsky stated that he does not believe there  
102 will be additional data sets, outside of NRPC's, that the Town will need to contract separately for  
103 as part of this project.

104  
105 In response to a question from Tom Quinn, Steve Whitman stated that Resilience can be flexible  
106 if the Steering Committee needs to meet additional times per month, within reason.

107  
108 In response to a question from Joe Ilsley, Steve Whitman stated that it is unclear how much it  
109 would cost the Town additionally to add in working groups to the project. Steve Whitman noted  
110 that it would probably add six months or more to the project timeline. He believes there are other  
111 ways to get the information the Town is seeking to get through these working groups.

112  
113 Dwight Brew explained that the schools will likely move forward with a large warrant article on  
114 next year's ballot. He is concerned about people voting on this item before being able to view the  
115 Master Plan. He asked if it would be possible to create a table with potential Town-wide projects  
116 and possible initial prioritizations in the fall in order to show some basic tradeoffs before the  
117 March vote. Steve Whitman stated that he believed this would be possible.

118  
119 In response to a question from Chris Yates, Steve Whitman stated that the Steering Committee  
120 could choose to pursue DES funding for the water study or could pursue it later for things like a  
121 detailed water quality analysis.

122  
123 In response to a question from Chris Yates, Liz Kelly stated that Resilience prefers if  
124 photographers that live in Town send in their pictures to be included in the Master Plan. Zak  
125 Brohinsky noted that people can also send in videos and audio clips to be included in the story  
126 map.

127  
128 In response to a question from Will Ludt, Steve Whitman explained that the 2020 Census data  
129 may not be available under the end of the 2021 calendar year. He explained that Resilience will  
130 be looking at the 2019 American Community Survey data, along with data for the Town from  
131 other time periods.

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The group discussed dates and times for future meetings.

In response to a question from Nic Strong, Steve Whitman explained that the overall vision will be drafted after examining the existing conditions by topic. The group will then revisit the previous Master Plan vision and incorporate this information into their public forums. He explained that this process should take place around later summer or early fall.

**Jared Hardner moved to request that the Board of Selectmen, at its next meeting on May 10, 2021, enter into an agreement with Resilience Planning & Design, LLC, to be engaged in the development of the Amherst Master Plan. Chris Yates seconded. Roll call: Dwight Brew - aye, Chris Yates - aye, Will Ludt - aye, Tom Quinn - aye, Tracie Adams, - aye, Jared Hardner - aye, and Joe Ilsley - aye. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Chris Yates moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:51pm PM. Tracie Adams seconded. Roll call: Dwight Brew - aye, Chris Yates - aye, Will Ludt - aye, Tom Quinn - aye, Tracie Adams - aye, Jared Hardner - aye, and Joe Ilsley - aye. Motion carried unanimously.**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Kristan Patenaude*

Minutes approved: July 19, 2021