

# **AMPUp Advisory Committee**

## **September 12, 2024**

### **Meeting Summary**

**Attending:** Eugene Benson, Tristan Boyd, Angelique Bradford, Grant Cook, Rachel Dunham, Molly Hargrove, Lillian Hartman, Ann LeRoy, Arthur Prokosh, Stephen Revilak, Paul Selker, Rachel Weil.

**Staff:** Claire Ricker, Sarah Suarez

## **Review Meeting Minutes**

The committee amended and approved minutes from their July 11, 2024 meeting.

## **Election of Co-chairs**

Ms. Ricker recalls that Tristan Boyd volunteered to serve as a chair, but none of the other committee members have expressed interest in doing so. Mr. Cook notes that the MBTA Communities Working Group had a single chair. He felt that working group functioned well. Ms. LeRoy thinks the group could seek a second chair in the future, if necessary. Mr. Prokosh asks Mr. Boyd to keep the group apprised of the chair's workload.

There's a motion to nominate Mr. Boyd as chair, which is adopted unanimously.

## **Select Board Member Update**

Ms. Ricker gave a presentation about the Master Plan Update to the Select Board, and asked for a volunteer to serve on the committee. None of the board members felt they had the time to do so. The Select Board suggested that they have a liaison rather than a member. Ms. Ricker says it would also be possible for the Select Board to have an appointee. The Redevelopment and Select Boards will discuss this at their meeting Monday night, and she asks if committee members have any thoughts.

Ms. LeRoy doesn't believe the Select Board had a member on the last Master Plan Committee. Mr. Benson likes the idea of having a Select Board liaison. He doesn't see any advantage to having a non-Select Board representative. Mr. Benson started reading Lexington's Master Plan, which says that their Master Plan Committee had two Select Board members. Mr. Cook doesn't see the need for an appointee. Mr. Revilak is fine with having a Select Board liaison. Ms. Ricker says she'll tell the Select Board that the AMPUp Committee is interested in having a liaison.

Ms. Ricker informs the Committee that Jonathan Gowin has resigned, leaving the committee with an open seat. She says we'll have to think about how to fill that vacancy. Mr. Cook recalls that there were more applicants than positions. Since the committee is just getting started, he suggests going back to

the original applicant pool. Mr. Benson agrees with Mr. Cook. He notes that the new member will have to be approved by the Redevelopment Board. Ms. Ricker says she'll go back to the applicant list, and see who's still interested.

## **RFP Update**

Ms. Ricker says that staff held an info session for RFP applicants. Nitsch Engineering and Stantec attended. MAPC was also interested, but had a number of questions. The town will release an RFP addendum soon. Ms. Ricker believes well have at least two applicants to choose from.

Ms. Ricker plans to interview applicants during the second week of October, and she'd like committee members to be part of that process. The interview will likely be held in the evening, in a hybrid format. Ms. Ricker asks committee members to send their availability that week.

## **Review of Master Plan Precedents**

Ms. Ricker notes that Ms. Suarez distributed a collection of master plans from nearby communities. She says that each community has its own unique master plan. Some were done by consultants, while others were largely done in house. Maynard's Master Plan was done by VHB and other consultants. Somerville's was mostly done in house, with the committee doing a substantial part of the work. Medford's plan was mostly done by a consultant, with a good mix of public input. Lexington's plan was done mostly in-house. Cambridge's plan used quite a few consultants and was very expensive to produce. Their plan focused a lot on transportation, and less on land use. Ms. Ricker says that we'll get to decide which sections to emphasize. Our Economic Development chapter could probably use some beefing up.

Mr. Selker thinks that Arlington's 2015 Master Plan is not a very opinionated document. He puts this in contrast to Savannah, GA's master plan, which expresses very strong opinions. He asks if it's better to have lots of points to pick from, or a smaller number of strong directions.

Mr. Revilak sees two sections to Arlington's Master Plan. The first consists of the narratives, which analyze existing conditions and discuss what the committee considered. The second are the recommendations, which is what the plan suggests that we do. Mr. Revilak thinks the recommendations are the plan's opinions, and they've been helpful in providing direction to the Redevelopment Board. For example, the Master Plan encourages a broader adoption of mixed use, and the board has tried to pursue that.

Ms. Ricker says that the recommendations from the 2015 Master Plan were put into a document, and there was a Master Plan Implementation Committee that tracked their progress. She expects that climate and resilience will get significant focus, although survey and outreach might indicate a different direction. She says that Somerville's master plan chapters were written by different groups, and each has a slightly different voice.

Mr. Revilak says he's read the Cambridge and Somerville plans during the last few months, and can offer some specific comments on them. Cambridge's plan has a map that divides the city into three categories: areas to be transformed, areas to be enhanced, and areas that will essentially be left as they are. Boston's 2030 plan does something similar. Mr. Revilak thought that provided a useful high-level overview. He also appreciated the way that Cambridge and Somerville's plans set concrete goals. For example, achieving a 1:1 job:worker ratio in Somerville.

Ms. LeRoyer agrees with having goals, and an implementation committee to track them. She says the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan has a set of goals and objectives, and these are helpful to the Open Space committee.

Ms. Hartman has found benefit in Master Plans that express a lot of opinions. When applying for grants, the awarding agency will often ask "is this in your master plan", and it helps to be able to answer "yes".

Mr. Benson sees a tendency for people to cherry-pick the parts of the Master Plan that suit their view. Perhaps this is because our plan doesn't have strong opinions. He notes that towns are not required to follow what's in their master plan. He thinks it's important to have something that's compelling and achievable.

Mr. Boyd thinks the Cambridge and Somerville plans are very easy to read, and Arlington's is less so. He notes that Cambridge's plan tends to stick to a few colors, which helps guide the reader. He thinks it's useful to keep design in mind. Ms. Ricker says that one of the consultants asked about graphic standards. She thinks the consultants should work with the committee in this area. This might be a topic to bring up during interviews.

Mr. Selker notes that some parts of Arlington's Master Plan are in contention with each other. He sees pros and cons to having a strong direction versus stating many different points of view. Mr. Prokosch sees a tension between the desire for historic preservation and the desire to welcome more families with new growth. He thinks it's possible to talk about both of these viewpoints, and how they can work in synergy with one another. Mr. Cook expects that different groups working on different sections will have different opinions. He raises some concern about parochialism. Ms. Ricker sees an opportunity to resolve some of these issues in print. For example, adaptive re-use is a way to preserve existing buildings, while allowing for new growth. She likes the idea of holding up tensions and looking for a way forward. Mr. Boyd thinks it may behoove us to serve on committees that are outside our primary interest, to help bridge the gap. Ms. Ricker envisions having 1--2 committee members on each subject group. There can also be joint meetings between groups.

Mr. Boyd asks if we have to decide on a community-written vs consultant-written approach before hiring the consultant. Ms. Ricker thinks that's still to-be-determined. For example, the committee could write chapters, and the consultant could stitch them together.

Ms. Bradford asks when we can expect to set times for the interview. Ms. Ricker says she'll send a reminder mail to the group.

Ms. Dunham asks if we'll be doing anything for town day. Ms. Ricker says the Department of Planning and Community Development will have a table, and there will be information about the Master Plan update available.

Mr. Selker asks if committee members should be thinking about applicant interview questions. Ms. Ricker says that staff will work on a set of questions. Ms. Hartman notes that some of the rubric has already been set by the RFP. Ms. Ricker says she'll distribute copies of the RFP to the group, in advance of the interview.

Meeting adjourned.