

TOWN OF SHELBYNE  
Planning Board  
MINUTES

Regular Meeting ~ Oct 7, 2025

A duly posted meeting of the Shelburne Planning Board was held at the Town Hall meeting room, on Tuesday, Oct 7, 2025.

Present: John Wheeler

Will Flanders

Paul Hollings

Geoff Stack

Faith Williams

The meeting was called to order at 6:10

**Review and approval of any prior minutes** – members listed some typos and corrections

Motion to approve as amended; seconded; motion passed unanimously

**Review of the Mail, Memos and Other Correspondence** - susan will find the email that came in.

**ANR Plans/Subdivision** – Laura Manners brought in an application but Joe didn't tell Susan or John; he doesn't want to time stamp/officially receive ANRs. Susan will invite him to the next meeting to clarify the process of the ANR and in the meantime will ask him to put any ANRs in our mailbox. Re. the Manners ANR plan: the lot line is changing slightly – no change in frontage, and both lots are legal size.

Motion to approve, motion seconded, motion carried unanimously

**Zoning Relief/Special Permit Applications** - None

**Appointments** - None

**Old business** - None

**New Business:** Report in on master plan homework:

Members shared their thoughts on the master plans done by Montague, Charlemont and Westhampton and agree all are useful as good models.

- Faith: spent more time on Charlemont than the other two because we share a lot with them: threat from river, are on rt 2, and while we have a bigger down town and revenue from commerce, we have many of the same issues. First time she ever read through a plan – noted the disconnect between the aspirations for what they want and the financial realities they face. Westhampton's doesn't reflect support of affordable housing the way

others towns do; bottom line for her: there has to be an economic engine to drive aspirational desires.

- Paul: Montague plan appendix listed about thirty sources for funding possibilities. Montague a much bigger town; they had aspirations that seem achievable, but not so with Charlemont. was struck by all of them reporting minimal input reported from residents; if there is a low rate of engagement, what is the ongoing commitment for the plan? FRCOG consulted with Montague on their master plan; Megan Rhodes said Montague was happy with the plan and the town has been working on the things they wanted to do.
- Will: noted that Westhampton had an implementation committee; the others had implementation plan. In 1999, we just made the plan but no plan to implement. Seems wise to have a committee take on the job of actually doing what the plan proposes, This seems to fall outside the scope of the planning board role, which is focused on zoning. Maybe the resilience committee could do this work.
- Geoff: The 1999 Shelburne/bBuckland plan was really dull. He felt juice in Westhampton and Montague plans that seemed to be driven by ideals - climate, social equity etc.. When thinking about our master plan, three things he is looking for: 1. how we maximize engagement and make it about engaging our citizens; to quote Eisenhower “plans are useless but planning is indispensable” (John notes that in the 1999 plan for shelburne 40-50% of community responded ); 2. how the plan makes a difference in how the town runs and 3. a real exploration of what makes this place unique and how we build from that uniqueness. This is such a unique place; how do we articulate what that is and what's the value it brings and the purpose it has, and what role do we play in the region? It's the hub for the Hilltowns. The vision statements from the three master plans we looked at are generic, could be anywhere, not based in reality. Instead of mission statement, could we instead include a story of place: geology, hydrology, the economies over time, the culture that comes from that and now who are we and what's our role in the larger system?

Discussion about the values and practicalities that might inform the new master plan

- Themes of resilience, community cohesion, responding to changes in climate, national government that affect us; defining the values that unite the residents of Shelburne. There is a group working on resilience – growing more food, starting a process to connect people with land with people who want to grow food. Tom Williams is involved in emergency planning focused on neighborhood groups who know each other and collaborate to make emergency plans to support one another during emergencies; This might also be a way to increase engagement in master plan input. Also: there are a lot of people who grew up here and a lot of people who moved in – town has changed a lot. How does that affect who we are? How do we attract people who share both newcomer and old timer values?

- Planning assumes constant change and need to plan for change; master plan gives framework to address this holistically. The Montague plan is exciting, making an attempt to take a wide, comprehensive view of what is needed.
- 1999 plans was done with Buckland, so should we be including them, taking to them? Two selectmen said it must be done with Buckland because towns are intertwined.
- Grant money from Community One Stop for Growth: How ambitious would we want to be to apply for money in January due in June. Towns need to pony up 10% and showing some level of coordination before applying. Go for it now or slowly wind up for next cycle? Hard to do it for this year, but we could lay the groundwork to apply for funding next year. Megan Rhodes willing to come and talk about how to get a plan going. If we are going in with Buckland, can each town apply for money? That would double our available funds.
- Perhaps there needs to be a meeting outside of the planning board to start a master planning process – Tom Wiliams, Selectboard, Tricia, reps from other committees and boards, district business coordinator. Could we look toward masterplan key stakeholder meeting, a planning workshop to launch the planning process? How do we get them to the table, in both towns? And what does that meeting look like?
- Maybe we could get a small amount of money from Community One Stop for growth – application opens in January and then is due in June – could we get grant money to support the gathering of key players as a first step?
- Getting FRCOG people – Megan Rhodes, specifically – and Buckland folks - Andrea Donlon, perhaps - to our next meeting a good next step. 10 years ago Shelburne Planning Board talked about master planning with Buckland folks, who signaled that Shelburne should go ahead and then share whatever they came up with, not interested in being part of the planning work.
- Focus at least in part on what we value and who we want to become; how about if we have a pre-master plan gathering or series of gatherings that help us to shape our values/future as a town?
- two valuable processes being put forth: get to know your humans (planning board may not have a role in that) and a two-town master plan, focused on a long range planning process.
- interwoven with master planning is the ability to engage on larger questions: social cohesion showed up in the other plans we looked at and there is an appetite for that now that maybe wasn't there 20 years ago.

Homework: Talk to Tom Williams (Will); invite Megan Rhodes from FRCOG to come and educate us; reach out to Andrea Donlon (Paul); articulate story of place (Geoff); reach out to business coordinator and definition or manufactured housing(faith)

**Housing** - nothing this time

**Committee and Regional Project Updates** -nothing this time

**Two Town News** – no need

**Any other business not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting** - None

**Public Comments** – none

**Next Meeting's agenda items**

- Manufacture home def added to bylaws;
- Multi-family housing currently defined “as up to 4 units”; change it to “more than two units”
- Parking – clear regulations governing town lots that can aid in enforcement
- new maps for flood zones and need to get our bylaw to be in compliance
- report on homework

Closing the Meeting: Motion to adjourn, seconded, motion passed unanimously at 8:07pm