

## Observer Corps Report Town of Plymouth Charter Commission Meeting of November 29, 2021

Present: D. Peck, B. Hall, D. Malaguti, L. Pizer, B. Abbott, B. Keohan, F. Mann, S. Vecchi. Zoom: W. Brewster.

### 2. Discussion – Items for possible inclusion in New Charter (third of several updates, to be revisited in early 2022):

b. Purpose of Master Plan and its effect on zoning and permitting. Brigitta Kuehn presenting in person, using Master Plan handout. Lee Hartman and Paul McCollough available via Zoom. Plymouth Master Plan was started in 1980 with 5 Village Centers plan, followed by 2004-2024 plan which has been updated several times, is a document for all of Plymouth, defined by State law, contains 2(9 per Birgitta) elements: Public infrastructure, etc. and Zoning, looks forward and backward. Hartman stated that the plan is actually only advisory(per State law, per Birgitta), but is used daily by Planning Dept., DPW, and other departments. It is used when Planning Dept is developing their Budget and presenting it to Town Meeting. And the Planning Dept. seeks advise of village center committees throughout year and at budget time. A complete update of the Plan would cost \$250-400,000. Therefore, funding would be a major challenge. Last year's update of all town Fire Depts. Cost \$150,000.

Discussion followed including concerns of B. Abbott, F. Mann and B. Keohan of whether Master Plan language including permitting process is advisory and if so, should it be changed to support compliance(per BK Master P could be compulsory via bylaws or policy, per Birgitta). D. Malaguti questioned how a Plan could prevent a Bump Rock Rd like issue when a covenant was broken by Planning Board vote. L. Hartman explained that covenants are worded much tighter now and that nothing is forever. D. Peck brought up the issue of whether Planning Board members should be elected or appointed. This matter will be discussed at another date. Paul Mc C. remarks were not audible to me.

- a. Role, makeup and appointment of Finance committee. Most Commissioners contributed to this discussion that included the following possible ideas: 1. Alternate members that could be quickly appointed by Town Moderator and a shared appointing process for permanent members that could include Moderator, SB, and COPC/Committee of Precinct Chairs (as is the current/new process for Charter Committees). 2. Finance committee consider money items on the Town Meeting Warrant, another committee look at future/forecasting/long term warrant items, Zoning Board consider Zoning articles, and COPC consider Advisory/non-money warrant items. 3. Should members of these committees be involved early in the budget process or should hired professional continue to do that?
- d. Role of Select Board(SB). Again most commissioners contributed to discussion, that included 1. noting that the language in a number of other municipal charters was clear about separation of role and duties between SB and Town Manager. 2. the history of Plymouth's progression of changes in SB role. 3. possibility of relieving SB role in approving licenses and creating a License Board.

### 6. New business

Charter Commission Budget – need to submit a budget request to cover Staff (Michelle Turner), Legal, and Printing, which will cover about 4 pages in OCM and sending a copy of the final report to homes of all voters. Motion made and passed unanimously that B. Abbott will prepare a budget for member review.

#### 4. Public comment

R. Caproni – Comments included his concern about 1. Current SB and T. Manager issues are an example of Plymouth government dysfunction. 2. Nobody in Plymouth is thinking strategically. 3. Growth is important. 4. T. Moderator has too much power. 5. A&FC is a mess; no experts. 6. SB doesn't welcome professionals.

Rabbi Silverman – Spoke eloquently about how wonderful Plymouth is today, in no small part due to our TM form of government, and comparing Plymouth to his upbringing in Brookline that also still has TM form of government. He concluded by stating that he sees Plymouth as having a promising future.

P. Neville – Master Plan should have a greater role in town government including at TM, and that TM articles should include supportive language from Master Plan as well as Charter.

A. Zuckerman – Concerned about formation and role of Master Plan Committee members, and other concerns that were not audible to me.

In closing the meeting, B. Abbott praised M. Turner for excellent, detailed, and accurate minutes.

Reported by Martha Vautrain, Observer Corp, LWV of Plymouth Area