

1 **TOWN OF FITZWILLIAM**
2 **Master Plan Steering Committee**

3 **Minutes - DRAFT**

4 **April 26, 2022**

5 **Members Present:** Rik Ekstrom; Skip Hagstrom; Robin Marra; Richard Marshall; Sarah Olson;
6 Brian Doerpholz; Laureen Lafond;

7 **Planning Board Members Present:** Barbara Young; Karen Craig; Suzanne Gray

8 **Staff Present:** Lori Nolan.

9 The meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm.

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11 **Thank you cards:** Suzanne and Lori created cards on vista print. They were ordered and will
12 arrive Thursday. They will be sent to those who volunteered at the forum as well as the people
13 that worked the forum and those at the school that helped with reservations. We could then
14 send a separate e-card to all the participants since we now have many participant emails.

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16 **Community forum note transcription and survey summary:**

17 *Population and housing*

- 18 • Suzanne reported it is now on google drive. We acknowledged the public is confused
19 about section 8 vs affordable vs work force housing. We need to identify a to better
20 communicate the differences in order to remove public misconceptions. Overall
21 summary includes key points such as maintaining the rural character and ensuring
22 Fitzwilliam does not become Rindge. There were interesting conversations about cluster
23 developments and how that could possibly maintain the rural character if situated off the
24 road and decreasing houses visible from the road with larger stretches between
25 driveways.
- 26 • Overlap with other sessions: attracting younger people and families; population concerns
27 related to taxes and schools; need for a workforce for businesses; need for senior
28 citizens and low income housing will need workers; people in town will want businesses

29 *Economic Development*

- 30 • Everyone agrees that the closing of the inn is a loss and that this has reduced the draw
31 to Fitzwilliam as a destination. The farmers market is great but has limited impact.
32 Broadband could be great for additional home businesses but could also decrease
33 usage of the library and attendance at town events. The lack of 3-phase power is still an
34 issue on regions of 12. Other ideas included an information or tourism center on Rt 12
35 as well as a rotary (which has already been explored previously). The types of
36 businesses that we want to attract include small businesses and light manufacturing.
37 Current zoning has the industrial zone on 12 South and ordinances do not allow for big
38 box stores.
- 39 • **Summary:** There is a need to further promote and communicate events as well as
40 identifying “attractors” or ways to make the town a “destination”. An additional committee
41 to study wetlands inventory might be necessary to identify whether the industrial zone
42 can be further developed.
- 43 • Overlap: Connections with housing

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Arts & Culture

- Discussions in the breakout and the survey were similar; people are interested in different types of festivals, art shows, and fairs. The previous fantasy fair was successful; it brought people town. In order to run successful events, we need better communication, the ability to engage or deploy library or rec staff, as well as a committee to identify festivals and venues for the festivals.

Conservation and Resources

- Similar to the last forum and survey, residents are still concerned with ground water, lead, traffic, and Rail Trail access. We identified that there could be continued and increased coordination between planning board and conservation that could be enforced by the master plan.

Youth and Education

- There is a need for a rec center but we could reimagine current spaces we have as a headquarter, such as the pole barn. Conversations focused on developing the rail trails, ski lift / rope tow, recreational trails, and a desire for sidewalks. We noted that we still do not have a large dataset for children or parents of young children.
- Overlap with Conservation in terms of rail trail overlap. This prevents opportunities for a hike challenge, a conservation and historic treasure hunt
- Overlap with Arts and Culture if festivals have components that are of interest for youth and education
- Overlap with economic/business if there is the possibility of food trucks or vendors near rail trail if more coordinated activities take place

Historic - Preservation

- There is continued agreement to preserve and have additional collaboration. Discussions and comments centered on the potential to highlight historic railroads, cellars, and old buildings via guided tours or plaques/signages.
- Overlap and collaboration are feasible with Library for exhibits.

Post Its: Barbara has summarized this on the drive.

Feasibility study: We should consider drafting an RFP if we want to take goal in the master plan and propose ways of achieving these goals.

What we heard document: We realize the town is heterogeneous and that we have only heard from a subset of residents. We could report what we heard and then also address things that are not feasible (e.g. rotary). We want to encourage continued input as well as delineating short term vs long term goals. Barb will talk to Janet to see if feasible for June newsletter and we discussed a 2-page insert (colored paper). We can also send to facilitators for additional feedback.

The next meeting will be May 12th.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sarah Olson