

Mr. Singer explained the garage floor will be even with the existing road. There will be a slight pitch in the driveway away from the road.

Referring to the catch basin, Mr. Singer explained the road is pitched towards his property. The property's side of the road does not drain into that catch basin.

Chair Losik stated the Board would like to know where everything is to scale on the plan. She suggested they note what was just said in regards to the topography, which is that there is not going to be a change.

**Motion by JM Lord to continue application #04-2022 to the March meeting.  
Seconded by Jim Finn. All in favor.**

### **3. New Business**

#### **a. Visioning Presentation, Update, and Next Steps**

Planning Consultant Julie LaBranche gave a presentation regarding the work of the Long Range Planning Committee over the past year. The Long Range Planning Committee members included; Steve Carter (chair), Katy Sherman, Kathryn Garcia, Rob Wright, and ad hoc member Dominique Winebaum, along with Patricia Losik sitting in as an ad hoc alternate. Planning Administrator Kim Reed was also part of the committee as planning coordinator and facilitator for the Town.

The goal of the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) 2021 Master Plan Project was to prepare a visioning framework to launch a complete Master Plan update. That consisted of looking in detail at what a Vision Chapter may look and feel like, while exploring different methods, different approaches and strategies towards creating a framework that could help prepare the Planning Board and LRPC to do a complete Master Plan rewrite.

#### Steps in the Project:

- Decide on approach to conduct community outreach
- Identify how best to conduct community and municipal outreach
- Outline a vision framework for a future comprehensive Master Plan update

#### Challenges:

- Conduct community and municipal outreach amidst COVID restrictions
- Methods and tools to communicate effectively and safely with the residents and businesses of Rye (surveys, online tools and public workshops when feasible)

#### Accomplishments of LRPC:

- Developed and implemented 2 surveys to gain input and data collection from the community (207 responses) and municipal staff, boards and committee (19 responses)

- Conducted a 2021 Public Visioning Workshop (105 participants) with facilitation of groups, note taking and workshop handout responses
- Solicited additional community input through the Visioning Workshop input form online and through email distribution (19 responses)
- Drafted a Vision Framework for a comprehensive Master Plan Vision Chapter update

Vision Framework that came out of the work of the LRPC:

Vision Statement:

The Town of Rye's vision is to:

Maintain a semi-rural character while fostering community connections, supporting diverse housing choices, providing equitable services, protecting the environment and natural resources, and striving toward a resilient and sustainable community.

Master Plan Draft Themes:

- Community
- Municipal Operations and Organization
- Land Development and Growth
- Environment, Natural Resources and Sustainability
- Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience

Next Steps to Advance the Master Plan Process:

- Planning Board will decide steps on how to proceed with the Master Plan update process
- Frame elements of what a Master Plan update process might be and steps needed to achieve it
- Solicit quotes for comprehensive Master Plan update or research from other towns
- Prepare a budget for the comprehensive Master Plan update
- Prepare a Request for Proposals for a comprehensive Master Plan update
- Conduct follow up community outreach about the Master Plan update process

2022 Master Plan Timeline:

- ❖ February – LRPC concludes its work on the draft Vision Framework
- ❖ March – Town Meeting Elections
- ❖ April – Planning Board and committee appointments
- ❖ May/June – Committee meets to identify next steps in the Master Plan process
- ❖ June/July – Issue RFQ for Master Plan process or research costs from other towns
- ❖ August – Identify a budget for the Master Plan update
- ❖ September – Propose to the Budget Committee a line item for the Master Plan update
- ❖ October/November/December – Planning Board works through the Budget Committee process

Anticipated outcomes for 2023-2024:

- Warrant article to support the comprehensive Master Plan update
- RFP developed to contract with a consultant for the comprehensive Master Plan update
- 2023-2024 prepare a new Master Plan

Questions from Board and discussion:

Chair Losik stated that Amherst is starting an initiative. They are using a group out of Plymouth that is a single shop who formed a consortium of other disciplines to work together. How is the puzzle solved of who the consultant should be? There are firms who have it all; mapping, science, etc. Then there are single shops or shops like Plymouth. What should the Town go?

Ms. LaBranche replied that Rye is not there yet. The timeline for the Planning Board next steps of May or June will be the time to ask these questions. At that time, there should be discussions about the direction to head in.

Chair Losik asked Ms. LaBranche what she sees, as she has worked for Rye for many years and knows the problems and opportunities.

Ms. LaBranche stated that the Town would probably spend less money to get separate consultants to do different parts. The Town could also pay someone to do the complete project, but it will cost quite a bit of money. Those things have to be weighed out. Part of coming up with a budget proposal will be to have those conversations; asking questions, getting quotes and getting an idea of what is to be accomplished with the Master Plan. Coming up with a strategic list of things to be accomplished as part of the Master Plan is a first step before going out with an RFP for a consultant.

Vice-Chair Lord asked who would manage this process.

Ms. LaBranche replied that she is sure that Planning Administrator Reed would have a hand in managing the process. Also, a general consultant could be hired to help manage the process.

Alternate Wright stated some of these questions will sort themselves based on what the top priorities are deemed to be. Part of the process is very likely to be that there needs to be a dedicated overseer, whether it's in the form of a large consulting firm or an in-house advisor. Probably one of the biggest challenges will be who will coordinate this process.

Member Carter stated the Planning Board's next steps is an important piece. The Board has to agree on what LRPC has presented. After all this work, LRPC thinks a theme-based approach is more integrated and works better in terms of trying to implement something. A theme-based master plan can't be done without doing a full rewrite. LRPC came to the conclusion that if the Town wants a functioning master plan, there needs to be a full rewrite. That's what the LRPC is proposing and it's not an inexpensive venture. The first job of the Planning Board is to decide if they want to do this. Member Carter commented that one consultant makes a lot of sense. He doesn't think the Town has the capacity to manage this. If there are a lot of people doing things, the plan is going to look a lot like what it does right now. It's not going to flow if there is one group writing one chapter and another group writing another chapter. He noted that a lot of data has been collected by LRPC. There will need to be a discussion as to what to do with that data.

Ms. LaBranche stated that the Town would have one main consultant to be the authors of the Master Plan. She pointed out that a local consultant would have local information. She continued that hiring a consultant is a bit of a challenge in that consulting firms come in and don't know anything about the town. They're starting from square one.

Chair Losik commented that when she thinks about the numbers, she gets nervous because the Town has a lot of needs, not just the Mater Plan. However, in looking at how master plans are fashioned, she would imagine that when they are constructed well that they carry forward. In looking at Exeter and Stratham, it's a body of work. It's not unwieldy. It's maybe sixty pages of the themes that drive the action. Then there is the baseline information, which can be the demographics. Right now, Rye has chapters where all of that information is infused. When there is rewrite, it will get to be pretty cumbersome.

Ms. LaBranche noted there is a lot of good information in the current master plan, so it shouldn't all be thrown out. However, it could be distilled down into something smaller.

Chair Losik commented that she thinks about the survey that the committee put together. It's not just a check the box. It's rich information.

Referring to the data collected, Ms. LaBranche stated that she doesn't think the consultant would need to go into too much more detail. She did a pretty good summary of the community survey and the workshop information. She's not sure there's more to be had by delving into further detail, unless something comes up.

Ms. LaBranche continued that if the Planning Board anticipates that they want to have a warrant article in 2023 for a master plan update, all the things on the timeline have to happen. If the Planning Board wants to go forward with a 2023 warrant article and a 2024 deadline for a master plan update, everything must be in order for the budget by August. It's really important to keep the timeline in mind every month and to be sure the deadlines are met. By the time August and September come around, the Board should have their "ducks in a row", decisions should have been made and a direction should be known.

Member Carter stated that he thinks it's important that by August they have also brought in the Select Board and someone from the Budget Committee, so they will understand what's being done and that the Planning Board is just not asking for a number.

Ms. LaBranche suggested that the PowerPoint presentation be presented to the Select Board and the Budget Committee.

Planning Administrator Reed noted that the presentation is also going to be posted on the Town's website.

Referring to community outreach, Member Sherman noted that LRPC did everything they could to reach as many people as possible. It's really important that everyone is aware that the committee put a lot of effort into inviting everyone to participate in the surveys and the visioning session. She pointed out that the surveys, visioning sessions, and meetings all take time. It's not going to be done in one day. It is going to cost money to redo the Master Plan. She thinks this is something that Rye has a hard time with, but it's a fact. She would suggest having a consultant. She reiterated that it's important that the community understands how much time went into it this past year.

Ms. LaBranche noted that the one thing that came out of this process, and the committee recognized, is that people were "hungry" and wanted to talk. They wanted a platform to share their ideas and opinions.

Chair Losik commented there was a very strong response to the community survey. She continued that there seems to be an enormous misunderstanding that the Planning Board is late and has not achieved a deadline. Something is wrong with the Town because it has a master plan with a range of periods. For people who work with the Master Plan, there are one hundred pages that are about two years old. Those one hundred pages are what drove the Land Development Regulations update, which was just two years ago in February 2020. She thinks they should be conveying the information that the Planning Board uses the Master Plan a lot. To a certain degree, the chapter structure doesn't lend itself to a vibrant total product. She noted that the Master Plan is a living document that is used by the Planning Board.

Ms. LaBranche stated that some people don't understand the far-reaching implications of not having an updated master plan. The statute says from "time to time" and recommended "every five to ten years". She pointed out that hardly any town does an update every five to ten years. However, the Master Plan feeds into the Capital Improvement Program, along with budgetary and infrastructure investments. A really good master plan is a great tool for going out for grants, as it shows the town has a clear vision and clear goals with objectives. If a town invests in a good master plan, it can be a money maker, as it supports the community's vision.

There was some discussion about the next steps. It was agreed that the Planning Board will review the information and absorb it for further discussion at the March meeting. It was agreed that the March meeting should be changed from March 8<sup>th</sup> to March 15<sup>th</sup>, as the 8<sup>th</sup> is also the date for town meeting. By changing the date of the March meeting, the new planning board will be able to start moving forward on the next steps for the Master Plan.

Chair Losik thanked the Long Range Planning Committee Members, Ad Hoc Member Dominique Winebaum, Julie LaBranche and Kim Reed for all of their hard work and dedication to the project over the past year.

**Motion by Jim Finn to change the March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting to March 15<sup>th</sup>.  
Seconded by JM Lord. All in favor.**