

Planning Roadmap for Implementing a Master Plan for The Blue Hill Historic Village

From BS-

1. Invite property owners, business owners, institutions and Selectboard to Participate
2. Goal Setting and Priorities:
 - a. Meet to discuss and record what the process is meant to achieve in the end- when implemented
 - b. This is a type of non- technical visioning exercise that is meant to shape the process to answer the needs of Blue Hill.
3. Research potential physical and economic planning consultants and their services.
 - a. Write RFP /RFQ (Request for Proposals/Qualifications)
 - b. Solicit proposals
 - c. Evaluate proposals
 - d. Hire consultant
4. Develop goals “further” with consultant.
 - a. Set Objectives (what questions need to be answered?)
5. Gather information, Market analysis
6. Do Physical and Economic Planning with consultant team
7. Outreach to community:
 - a. Larger and smaller groups.
 - b. Manage Public Relations
8. Develop Plans and Create specific proposals / Establish Potential phases of implementation
 - a. Identify specific sources of potential funding.
9. Build further community support-
10. Implementation is a large phase of the process and the above list is only the beginning of executing it. And depending on the outcome / recommendations of the planning work this implementation phase may be very different.

From JW-

Outline for preparing a letter to Contributors.

Explain:

1. Purpose for a Master Plan
2. Scope of Services- boundaries/ goals- objectives /
SOS is usually provided to prospective Consultants, based on who the “Selection Committee” feels might be qualified to receive a Request for Proposals (RFP)
3. Stakeholders- An appeal for contributions will explain who is likely to benefit from a Master Plan. Ie..(Community of Blue Hill)
4. Time Frames- Start- completion
5. Consultant- Contributors can be expected to ask about consultants- their qualification, (RFP);
How will they be evaluated (Selection committee-selection process- ie.. -hiring
6. Anticipated Cost-
7. The Work Plan- Provide contributors a description of what a consultant will do..ie
Research-including an overview of Blue Hills economy, issues/ opportunities, a Market Study/ analysis- that supports recommendations presented in “final report” (see below).

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Work plan will also include scheduled meetings (updates) between: Consultant, Master Plan Committee/the Public and Town Selectboard -

8. Final Report- A significant piece of consultant's work will be a "Final Report". This report will include an "Action Plan" that recommends (and explains) a sequence of actions/time frames for implementing elements of the plan, benefits and related costs.
 - a. Funding- The work product should include possible funding sources, including the Town of Blue Hill; What qualifications may be required of applicant for each funding source, and any cost of funds;
 - b. Benefits/ Return on Investment- And the financial returns to stakeholders, over a 10-15 year period.

The following are Examples of what a letter to potential contributors might contain.

Why a Master Plan?

No community is immune to shifting markets, or impacts associated with new technologies. In the era of Amazon, change is inevitable. It can go unrecognized. It can be life altering for business and for communities.

In the last ten years Blue Hills Historic Village has experienced something many traditional commercial districts experienced decades ago when towns lost established businesses to the suburbs. Customers have always demanded better parking and other conveniences downtowns could not provide. Shopping centers listened, the flight to suburbia began. Customers followed.

Blue Hill experienced its own iteration with development of South Street. For those who feel this change threatens the Historic Village of Blue Hill, its charm, character and values, don't be anxious. There are remedies to consider that will strengthen these attributes, as well as will strengthen Blue Hill's economy. Actually, we feel all of the Blue Hill Peninsula will benefit from a limited Master Plan for Blue Hill's Historic Village.

But before benefits from any plan can be realized, there are questions to be asked and data to be collected and understood.

Such as- What issues have influenced vacancies on Main Street? Does Blue Hill have any weakness that might discourage existing businesses from further investment? And in this age of Amazon, what current and future markets might do well in Main Street's vacancies. We have a pretty good idea what many of Blue Hill's strengths are, but what can we do- even better?

Good things begin when we know what we want, and when we have a plan that guides actions to achieve them. The key to a good plan - information. The work behind a master plan is gathering and analyzing data, then preparing a plan that reflects Blue Hill values, and goals. That's exactly what a Master Plan for Blue Hill's Historic Village will accomplish.

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Community Goals that a Master Plan might Identify?

On November 7th, 2017 members of the BH community met at the BHP Library and compiled a list of concerns and hopes for the future of Blue Hill's Main Street. Some attendees owned businesses/ properties on Main Street, but the majority of the crowd were residents/ taxpayers. It is safe to say.....that from their list of "concerns and hopes" is the making of a community goal.

Of course, no one knows what goal they might have expressed, there wasn't time and no one asked. Nevertheless, setting goals is an important part of any planning process. Goals help define questions, for which information must be collected, before we can be confident the action we take will produce the goals we want.

Hers's an example- One goal might be: To establish a healthy/ sustainable economy within Blue Hill's Historic Village? Achieving that goal will require informed answers to many questions.

Like what questions- ??

What caused the closing of many businesses on Main Street? Are other Maine coastal towns experiencing similar issue? Are businesses on Main Street doing more or less business than they were 5 years ago? If there is a problem (s), what will correct the problem(s)? Is there any business, activity, or trend that by its nature might help Blue Hill?

And presuming there are issues we can correct- what will it cost? And who will benefit?

Who are the Stakeholders- Who will benefit from a Main Street Master Plan?

The answer seems clear. Let's look at who attended that initial meeting on Nov. 7th, 2017. I'll bet each of them thought of themselves as stakeholders...in some way. They'd be right.

Of the 80 (plus) in the room that night, not more than 15 owned businesses or property on Main Street. The remainder were tax payers, history buffs, and others who miss what they once enjoyed when they walked Main Street. And which, to this day, still represents more than a memory.

For the business person, property owner and employee –Main Street might represent food and shelter for the family, a college fund, more? For the summer resident it might be a place to meet friends, shop, take a walk or just relax. For the Town of Blue Hill and for tax payers, Main Street is a community asset, an important part of the Towns tax base. Which is strengthened by our guests- from the next town over, from further away; here for the day, night, or longer. Their visits help pay the mortgage, Patty's braces, and a host of other necessities/ pleasures. Let's not forget the pride we feel when our guests discover our library, GSA, the trails, local art, Kneisel Hall programs, and Blue Hill's history.

Main Street has for a long time been the place where the elements that define community also define us. Bottom line- We are all Stakeholders.