

**MINUTES  
TOWN OF STOW  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE**

Remote via Zoom

March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Members Present:** Charlie Hartford, Cortni Frecha, Dan Peterson, Laurie Burnett, Lori Clark, Marcia Rising

**Also Present:** Valerie Oorthuys and Michael Slagle, Town of Stow Planning Department; Jenn Goldson, Kadineyse Paz, Noah Harper of JM Goldson Consultants

Meeting called to order by Charlie Hartford at 7:02 PM

**JM Goldson- Presentation of Existing Conditions Inventory**

Charlie Hartford introduced Comprehensive Planning Committee members and JM Goldson Staff.

JM Goldson provided their presentation [found here](#).

Comments and questions fielded by JM Goldson included:

- JM Goldson uses the 2020 census data when possible and appropriate, as it is a point-in-time data set covering 100% of the population.
- Stow relies heavily on property taxes compared to other communities, such as Hudson, which has a more diverse tax base.
- How to build a business base is like the question which comes first, the chicken or the egg. If we had more people, would we get more businesses, or if we had more businesses, would more people be interested in Stow?
- There is a national and international goal of 30% land protection. Stow has exceeded this number. Some pros and cons of Open Space were discussed including whether Open Space supports climate resiliency plans, Stow's agri-tourism and keeps tax costs down or whether it increases the unaffordability of housing and the lack of housing. JM Goldson encouraged participation in Meeting in a Box participation and the Crowd map engagement tools to continue this discussion. JM Goldson also shared their work in Ashland and how they were hired to conduct a more detailed housing assessment for the town to examine what types of housing end up being net-negative or positive to the town. In Ashland they found that single-family homes were typically net-negative but multi-family housing was usually net-positive. However, they stressed these conclusions are specific to each town and dependent upon the individual laws, context, and other contexts.
- JM Goldson shared that Stow could benefit from a formal recreation needs assessment.
- The importance and challenge of public water and sewage were shared.
- Stow's cultural heritage and opportunities were called to attention, including opportunities for shining a light on the town's Nipmuc heritage past and present and building connections with indigenous communities.
- The importance and value of healthy soils were shared.

Marcia Rising moved to adjourn the meeting and Dan Peterson Seconds. The committee unanimously approves.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laurie Burnett