

CITY OF LACONIA
MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE
Thursday, January 29, 2026 - 6:00 PM
City Hall - Armand A. Bolduc City Council Chamber
MINUTES

1/29/2026 - Minutes

1. 6:00 P.M. Call to Order

R. Mora calls the January 29th Master Plan Steering committee to order at 6:00 PM

2. Roll Call

Planner Technician Scott Pelchat gave the roll call.

In attendance from the Resilience Planning and RKG was Steve Whitman, Crystal Kidd, and Eric Halverson.

Rob Mora, Eric Hoffman, Jennifer Ulrich, Patrick Wood, Gary Dionne, John McArdle, Charlie St Clair.

Staff in Attendance Assistant Planning Director Tyler Carmichael and Planner Technician Scott Pelchat.

3. Acceptance of Minutes from Previous Meeting

3.1. Minutes

R. Mora inquired if anyone had any corrections to the draft minutes. J. McArdle outlined the changes he would like to propose. R. Mora then asked if anyone else had additional changes, no additional changes were proposed. P. Wood made a motion to accept the minutes with the changes, which was seconded by J. McArdle. The motion passed with all votes in favor.

4. Progress Report

S. Whitman discussed the current progress being made with the master plan existing conditions report.

5. Review of Draft Existing Conditions Report

S. Whitman walked the committee through the existing conditions report, explaining the individual criteria for the continued subsections. He discussed the portion of the plan that would eventually become the appendix of the master plan, outlining its key aspects. R. Mora informed the board that T. Carmichael would be the point of contact for questions and corrections. T. Carmichael advised the committee that a digital version of the report was sent to all members, but a printed color copy was not mass-produced to save costs.

E. Hoffman thanked the team for the extensive housing data but inquired about the percentage of ownership data, specifically how much was owned by enterprises versus families. RKG confirmed that this data could be found. P. Wood questioned why the housing authority was not referenced in the data. S. Whitman asked what specific information they might be looking for, and P. Wood replied that he wanted data on income and who can afford what type of housing.

J. McArdle asked about a data point regarding 2,700 seasonal vacancies and how this figure was determined. E. Halverson from RKG answered that it was based on census data. J. McArdle also inquired about the reported 44% increase in rental prices and how this compares with other costs. E. Halverson

responded that this could be investigated further. P. Wood requested a review of the relationship between income and inflation.

J. McArdle raised a question about the statistic regarding individuals with bachelor's degrees and how this data was broken down. E. Halverson clarified that it encompassed all individuals who hold a degree. Additionally, J. McArdle commented on bridges, which was addressed by R. Mora, who also received feedback from S. Whitman. There was also a discussion about potential increases in police staffing. E. Halverson summarized his conversation with the police chief regarding hiring needs. E. Hoffman mentioned he believed this number was referenced within the report. R. Mora noted that the Pillsbury Group conducted a similar study as well.

S. Whitman expressed gratitude to the members for their comments. E. Hoffman emphasized the need to identify what needs to change and what can be altered through policy or planning. He stated the importance of determining where the current data would lead them, noting that there is not much commercial zoning in the city and questioning where it could go. Charlie asked how commercial residential developments would be affected, and R. Mora provided clarification on this matter.

T. Carmichael inquired about some percentage breakdowns from E. Halverson. C. St. Clair noted that utilization seemed low, and this was generally agreed upon. E. Hoffman discussed the relationship between zoning and the availability of utilities. T. Carmichael collaborated with E. Hoffman on this topic, while E. Hoffman also addressed issues regarding conservation land and parking. Gary Dionne spoke about mixed-use development and zoning, expressing his belief that it has diminished over time. C. St. Clair and G. Dionne discussed a convenience store that has since become a Thai restaurant on North Main Street. T. Carmichael explained that certain zones allow this type of development while others do not.

5.1. Land Use

E. Halverson discussed the land use component of the master plan. He emphasized the significance of both place and city scale, explaining how various metrics can be used to assess the value of individual sites, as well as entire areas. He explored how to analyze their functionality and how this understanding can be leveraged to enhance overall city performance.

E. Halverson presented a slide illustrating the determinants of value creation. He highlighted key components in this analysis, specifically the quantitative versus qualitative aspects of a place. The first aspect he mentioned was the form and infrastructure, while the second was identity and values. He made comparisons across different parcels and land uses, examining how they integrate with their respective lots and surrounding areas, and questioned why certain locations function effectively while others do not.

Additionally, E. Halverson discussed the role of roads and other well-used infrastructure, as well as the tax value per area within the city. He cautioned against misidentifying identity and value, stressing the importance of accurate representation in these assessments.

5.2. Housing

E. Halverson spoke about some findings related to the housing component of the master plan. Costar Property Data was utilized in this section to analyze housing types and uses and their impact on property values in different areas. E. Hoffman referenced urban development as a factor in the current landscape. E. Halverson posed a question regarding a homework assignment to be discussed in February, asking whether the classification of place types resonated with the committee members and if it was a useful framework for thinking about Laconia.

P. Wood inquired about areas he believed were fully developed but were not represented on the map. E. Halverson noted that he would look into this matter. S. Whitman urged the committee to review the titles and areas to determine if changes are necessary regarding the existing place types or if they need further definition. Halverson elaborated on the criteria that could be established for this purpose.

E. Hoffman questioned Halverson about how much of the data could be influenced by different building types constructed in various eras. Halverson explained that the age of the buildings was not included in this metric. Hoffman expressed interest in seeing how the zoning reflects what currently exists and whether it is effective. G. Dionne addressed the topic of village districts, noting that some may have predated local zoning regulations. R. Mora discussed the former downtown zoning outline, while T. Carmichael talked about building timelines, styles, and uses, raising the question of whether the zoning should guide future development or serve to preserve what currently exists.

E. Halverson mentioned a model for this process that would compare the Laconia Zoning Ordinance against each building and parcel to assess whether they are performing in accordance with current zoning regulations and identify any that do not conform. P. Wood shared his knowledge of Laconia's history regarding zoning. R. Mora added that it would be intriguing to see the age of structures as an additional layer of data. The conversation also touched on form-based codes, sidewalks, and the pedestrian aspects of the city. E. Hoffman pointed out that growth of parcels through a series of variances indicates a different approach to zoning. C. St. Clair and E. Hoffman engaged in further discussion on this comment.

5.3. Economic Development

Economic development chapter for the Master Plan was included within the existing conditions report.

5.4. Transportation

Transportation chapter for the Master Plan was included within the existing conditions report.

5.5. Community Facilities

Community Facilities chapter for the Master Plan was included within the existing conditions report.

6. Integrated Land Use Analysis

Part of the presentation by E. Halverson.

7. Outreach and Engagement Plan

C. Kidd spoke regarding the outreach and engagement plan.

8. Timeline Review and Next Steps

The next steps, future meeting dates, and timelines were discussed by the board, the staff, and the Resilience team. A meeting date of February 12th was established, along with a workshop meeting on March 12th and a regular meeting scheduled for March 26th.

9. Public Comment

Michael Foote, a resident of Roller Coaster Road, addressed the Master Plan development process currently being undertaken by the city. He discussed the accessibility of the Master Plan on the city's website and shared his thoughts on the matter. R. Mora suggested that Mr. Foote visit the planning office for assistance.

Mr. Foote further delved into terminology related to the city's zoning, specifically mentioning the CR Zone, which stands for Commercial Resort, as opposed to the commonly mistaken Commercial Residential. He pointed out several lots still available for development and stressed the importance of understanding what will be created on these lots based on the community's needs and desires. Additionally, he highlighted how the zoning criteria play a significant role in making zoning decisions.

Marjorie Wilkinson, a resident of Pine Brook Lane and Chair of the Heritage Commission, as well as the Historic Overlay District, inquired about the integration of her boards into zoning planning and code enforcement. She expressed concerns regarding how these processes might be incorporated into the Master Plan. During her remarks, Ms. Wilkinson emphasized her apprehensions about changes she has observed, particularly the transition from demolition to development. She mentioned her and others' concerns regarding the actions of new property owners regarding their lots.

The board discussed the city's Historic District and when it should proceed with updating its ordinance related to the Historic District. E. Hoffman asked R. Mora if a presentation could be made to the City Council concerning the Historic District.

10. 8:00 P.M. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM

DRAFT