

We the members of the Shutesbury Master Plan Working Group (MPWG) suggest that the Shutesbury Select Board work towards appointing an Achievable Actions Committee (AAC)*.

The visioning process conducted by the town suggests that townspeople have a range of ideas related to small, achievable, low cost high benefit projects. Some of the suggestions include, but are not limited to:

- community vegetable garden
- picnic table(s) & fireplace(s)
- incremental improvements to indoor meeting spaces
- trail and historic site map/guide of Shutesbury
- town reference guide
- researching and utilizing areas at SES during off hours
- support for the new Neighborhood Safety Net sponsored by the Board of Health
- volunteer ride sharing system
- ideas to encourage civil behavior in town through training workshops, informal gatherings, occasional coffee hours, etc.

These projects have some common properties, including reasonably small size and cost, creation of assets for the town, and achievable by a small group of residents with perhaps some help from town committees, commissions, departments and boards. Funding can be from multiple sources, including private donations. For example, the trail and historic site map/guide might be partially fundable with Community Preservation Committee (CPC) funds.

The Master Plan Working Group suggests to the Select Board that a mechanism be created by which groups of Shutesbury residents can petition the town for (partial) support of projects such as these. The mechanism might be a simplified version of the current CPA/CPC process. The key to selecting the improvements would be that they require minimal resources but have a high return. In order to create this mechanism, a number of steps should be taken:

- Establish a fund that is renewed each year at the Annual Town Meeting from which publicly accessible projects of no more than some limit can be funded.
- Establish a project evaluation committee (*perhaps called the Achievable Actions Committee, Low Hanging Fruit Committee, or Opportunistic Projects Committee) that determines whether or not a project is of interest to the town, how reasonable the costs are, if the project is an asset to the town, and if it is achievable given the resources. Such committee is to have no less than five members drawn from the community, which may include representatives from the CPC, Finance, Historical Commission, Recreation Committee or other relevant boards who are at the ready to meet periodically as needed. It may make sense to make this group a sub-committee of an existing board.
- Establish the structure for the petition process; e.g.
 - o A simple preliminary eligibility petition signed by not less than five residents that provides a brief description of the project, budget and potential funding sources. The eligibility petition is designed to determine whether or not the project is eligible for support from the town.
 - o For those projects that are of interest, a second more detailed proposal that establishes, among other things, the project oversight responsibility and a detailed budget.

The committee would be responsible for general oversight of all projects funded through town funds, and would annually solicit improvement ideas from town residents, as well as town staff and volunteers. The committee members would also consult with pertinent town boards and committees as needed to complete their charge. The committee would report its results to the Select Board, which would make the final implementation decision.