



July 21, 2015 ([revised September 21, 2015](#))

Ms. Kat Hudson, Vice-Chair  
Acton 2020 Committee  
Subject: New website for Acton 2020 / Master Plan

Dear Kat:

Thank you for contacting me regarding the new website needed for the Town of Acton's planning efforts, [Acton2020.com](#). I would be delighted to work with you on this exciting new project to improve public access to information and events regarding the Master Plan itself as well as ongoing planning and development efforts. Please review the following pages for my proposal for a new website and a new logo for Acton 2020. **Feel free to suggest any changes or edits to this proposal.**

As we discussed by phone, it seems that WordPress is the best solution for your website. The home page could showcase the most important and time-sensitive information (such as public meetings and town events). Blog features such as posts, categories, and tags will allow readers to sift through information in various ways and see how different initiatives share common threads. With more images and updated colors and graphic styling, the new website will be more enjoyable to use. For you and the committee, making everyday edits and additions and maintaining the new website will be much more straightforward.

We have an important choice to make regarding whether to use WordPress.org or WordPress.com. I first thought you should use the simpler WordPress.com, but the more I understand the types of features you'd like to include, the more I believe you might want to use WordPress.org.

I used WordPress.org to create [ConnectKendallSquare.com](#), [82ndStreet.org](#), and [HudsonInc.com](#). For my own new Naiad Design website (to be launched in a couple of weeks; you may preview the testing site at [dianamarsh.wordpress.com](#)), I am using WordPress.com. I hope I will be able to help Acton as well, using one of these great platforms.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
Diana Marsh

NAIAD DESIGN  
30 CHARNWOOD ROAD  
SOMERVILLE MA 02144  
617/874-6000  
[WWW.NAIADDESIGN.COM](#)

# Project Understanding

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## WEBSITE

### ■ Audience and Purpose

The Acton2020 website should provide information to the residents and businesses of Acton. It could also serve developers and businesses interested in building or locating in Acton. It should allow people to see what are Acton's long-term policies, primarily through its Master Plan; how these policies are being implemented today; and other planning efforts currently underway throughout Acton, including Kelley's Corner.

The current website's Master Plan Implementation Plan ([http://implementation.acton2020.info/implementation\\_plan](http://implementation.acton2020.info/implementation_plan)) lists goals, objectives, strategies, responsibilities, etc. This information could be presented in long-form text on the new website, rather than just one item per page, which requires a lot of clicking back and forth. The Action Item Sorter (<http://implementation.acton2020.info/action-item-sorter>) offers a level of detail and sorting that you felt was not necessary in the new website. The new website, intended primarily for the public, should focus more on making the master plan and other planning efforts accessible to the general public, but does not need to show the detailed inner workings of specific implementation measures.

### ■ Technology: The Benefits of WordPress

You have indicated that WordPress is probably the most appropriate technology for this website, and I agree. WordPress is a Content Management System; it separates the content (text, images, and uploads such as PDF documents) from the styling and organization of its presentation. Through it, one can upload and maintain all the content, while having the freedom to change the organization or styling down the road, for example to add a new page / section, change the colors or fonts, or add sidebar areas with meeting notices. The current versions of WordPress will rearrange content to fit different screen widths (called "responsive"), great for mobile phone users. A CMS lets you set up different levels of user accounts, tailored to each person's technical skill and the amount of control they need, from Admins with full site control to Authors who can add content, but not edit or change anyone else's.

We spoke on the phone a bit about the choice of WordPress platform: WordPress.org or WordPress.com. We will need to continue this conversation at the first meeting.

### *WordPress.org, the Power Option*

**WordPress.org** is more complex to install and maintain, but it offers powerful features. The software is free to use, so you only pay a website hosting fee, a version of which you're already paying to your ISP. I recommend Dreamhost, which offers great WordPress support and charges \$8.95/month. WordPress.org allows you to begin with one of dozens of pre-supplied design themes, then customize the structure and appearance by means of a 'child theme' with revisions as necessary to CSS and PHP. A theme can also be built from scratch, but that is not necessary here.

Third-party plugins are a WordPress.org option that let you easily add features such as social media feeds, Constant Contact sign-ups, secure contact forms, tables, rotating media galleries, and event calendars. WordPress.org offers full support for all HTML code, including one of my favorites: *@import* to allow use of all available Google fonts.

However, the WordPress.org version also creates the potential for your site to be exploited and taken over by hackers if you don't keep plugins and the WordPress software updated, and you are responsible for making your own site backups. It's not hard to do, but in a busy organization, these things can fall through the cracks. Some of my website clients retain my services for ongoing maintenance such as keeping plugins and software updated, making backups, and performing more complex site edits.

### *WordPress.com, a More Limited Approach*

**WordPress.com** costs \$99/year, including hosting and a free domain name. Software updates and backups are automated for you. WordPress.com websites rely on one of several dozen pre-supplied design themes, with limited customization of fonts, colors, and styling available through CSS. Plugins are not allowed, so there is much less risk of a site getting neglected and then hacked. WordPress.com also strips away certain HTML and CSS codes that could compromise the safety of this shared hosting environment. As WordPress states<sup>1</sup>:

*WordPress.com is a type of shared environment, where all users are running off of the same software. This is great because it allows us ... to update millions of blogs at the same time with a single click. It means we can fix bugs or offer new features very quickly, which is a win for you as users. Having all users running on the same software can also be dangerous. If we aren't careful, one user has the potential to take down the entire site. So this is why we need to limit some of the things you post on your blog.*

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1 <https://en.support.wordpress.com/code/>

I have found that WordPress.com can be buggy, and it can be difficult to fix every formatting or content issue due to the limited customization available. If you are content to live with fewer features and a not-quite-perfect appearance, then it may be a perfectly fine tradeoff for its simplicity.

## ■ Format and Structure

The website will likely be divided into a few main sections, indicated through one or two top-level menus. In addition, the CMS / blog format allows you to use “categories” and “tags” to cross-label content. A visitor to the site can then search for information through all these different portals. For example, based on our initial brief conversions, the website might use the available WordPress features as follows:

### *Pages*

Top-level pages could cover the span of planning-related activities in Acton. Sub-pages below each one could provide further in-depth information.

- About Acton 2020
- The Master Plan
- Current Planning Activities
- Village (or Area) Planning Efforts
- Contact
- Perhaps others, such as “Get Involved” (geared towards community participation) or “For Businesses” (a guide to development, zoning, etc.) or “Properties for Sale / Lease” (e.g. to attract new commercial development)

### *Categories*

Categories are typically defined at the outset (unlike tags), and limited to a finite list of a dozen or so. For example: categories based on the goals from the Master Plan lend themselves not just to measuring the implementation of the Plan, but to guiding all planning- and development-related activities in the Town, such as zoning changes or development approvals:

- Town Character
- Environmental Sustainability
- Physical Connections
- Community Gathering and Recreation
- Inclusion and Diversity
- Town-owned Assets
- Financial Well-being

### *Tags*

Tags are typically defined on the fly, as posts are written, and gradually accumulate to indicate the relative prominence of different topics on a website (as often shown in “tag clouds”). They are used for finer-grain or more specific classifications, such as the KMart site, a new development project, or a special concern that is a subset of a larger category or subject (such as potholes, senior housing, or rain gardens).

### *Posts*

The posts of a website are the blog-like features, typically used for content that appears periodically over time. For example, posts could be used to provide information about upcoming meetings, updates on Kelley’s Corner, the progress of a new project through the review process, or emergency information such as blizzard warnings and street closures.

The posts can be shown all together, or organized into feeds by category, each post can be assigned to multiple categories. So you could show all posts related to the implementation process of the master plan on the Master Plan page, or on sub pages of the Master Plan page. You could show posts related to various small, one-off current development projects under Current Planning. You could show items related to the major Kelley’s Corner Improvement Initiative through posts under both Current Planning and Village Planning.

### *Sidebars*

Sidebars on the website will provide an easy-to-peruse means of offering popular information (such as contact addresses) and topical notices (such as meeting notices). They can be created as a feed of certain posts, or entered manually.

### *Social Media and Email Campaigns*

Social media feeds from Facebook and Twitter are easy to include in the new website, whether it’s the .com or .org version of WordPress. Tie-ins that allow people to sign up for Constant Contact emails from right within the website, however, are only able to be integrated with WordPress.org.

### *Display of PDF documents*

The current website includes many PDF documents from the Master Plan and other efforts. If a user’s browser doesn’t support reading of PDFs, it can be tedious for a user to download and then page through each document to see if it contains the content they want. An option is to use a separate app such as [issuu.com](http://issuu.com) to allow readers to page through the docu-

ment on-screen -- something that many browsers also allow, but often not as quickly or easily. This is easy to set up.

Alternately, a more time-intensive approach that creates a more direct experience for users is to translate all the text of the Master Plan into live HTML text, with images and maps included on each page. Then users can view the Master Plan directly in their browser window, no matter the screen size or resolution, without being bound to the fixed page layout of a PDF. I would be happy to make this conversion, but it is outside this scope of work.

### *Images and Photography*

The current website has very few graphics, making for a dull viewing experience, especially in contrast to today's websites. You indicated that you will be able to get many good photographs of Acton through various volunteers. If some of them can be provided at the start, I can design the site to highlight them, with the best images perhaps being used as page banners or backgrounds.

### ■ Adding Content

I will set up the website structure (pages, location of posts, categories, tags, widgets and sidebars). Regarding the large amount of content on the current website, I will add a representative sample of information to the website—at least one of each type of document (images, PDFs, live HTML text)—so that you will see how it will be displayed and organized. You or other committee members will be responsible for adding the balance of content once the site structure and design are established.

### ■ Training

I will train you (and up to two others, in the same meeting) on how to make edits and updates via WordPress. I will show you how the higher-level Admin features work, such as adding widgets, adding new users, and moderating comments and trackbacks.

### ■ Maintenance

Once the site is launched live to the public, you will take over the maintenance of the site.

Optionally, I can provide assistance indefinitely with updates or changes on an as-needed basis (hourly or for a quarterly fee).

## NEW ACTON 2020 LOGO

Design of a new logo can proceed in tandem with the website development. The logo's colors, proportions, and design should be conceived as an integral part of the website design.

We will discuss what the new logo should communicate, what aspects of Acton's character and identity it should reflect. Through my initial design process, I will develop and present a minimum of three (3) draft logo concepts, to be distributed (probably by email) to you and any others who may have review responsibility.

You will have the opportunity to provide one round of comments, which I will use to modify, synthesize, or rework one or more of the concepts into a final draft logo. I will solicit your comments or suggestions on this version, and then create the final version.

I will provide the completed logo in CMYK-TIF format for print use, in RGB-JPG format for web use, and in the original vector (Illustrator) format.

## Milestones and Schedule

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The following schedule and milestones assumes that I will have a notice to proceed and contract approval by August 1; otherwise, the schedule may need to be moved back. I assume that most meetings and communication will be done by phone, email, or video chat; but one or two meetings in person (particularly for kickoff, and for WordPress training) may be prudent.

### ■ Milestone One: Kickoff and Goals

~~Late July / Early August~~ Mid-September 2015

We should begin by discussing problems with the current website. We will discuss the potential structure of the new website, including pages, posts, and categories. We'll discuss what information the website needs to provide, what it does *not* need to provide, and who it should serve. Most importantly, we'll try to work out whether the website needs features that are only available through WordPress.org.

We should also discuss goals for the logo design at this first meeting.

## ■ Milestone Two: Website Structure, Draft Logo Designs

~~Mid / Late August~~ Early October 2015

~~I know you'll be away the last two weeks of August, and I may be away part of the first week of September, but we should try to fit in a discussion sometime around now.~~

The goal at this stage is to agree on the structure and organization of information, and to confirm the choice of WordPress platform. I will show you the suggested website structure through a website mockup that uses a pre-existing WordPress template. I will include pages, sample posts, categories, and tags. The website mockup probably will not show banner images, a new logo, or customized colors or fonts, but it will let us judge whether the selected .com or .org WordPress platform works for your needs. This new testing website will be hosted at a temporary staging site, such as Acton2020.wordpress.com, or staging.Acton2020.com, so that the current website will continue to exist at its current domain name.

I will also show at least three (3) initial logo design concepts at this meeting. We will review the logo concepts, in order to move to a final draft logo.

## ■ Milestone Three: Website Design with Logo

~~Mid / Late September~~ Late October / early November

By this point, the website solution should be locked in to either the WordPress.org or WordPress.com platform. If a decision is made at this point to change platforms, an additional fee may be necessary to cover the cost of my re-creating the content in the new platform.

Building upon the earlier mockup website, I will show you a more refined website appearance, as styled with banner images (provided by you), custom fonts, graphics, and colors; additional text and PDF content taken from the current website; and refined sidebars and footers with examples of concise and/or time-sensitive information.

The website will also include the final draft logo design. Any further and final comments on the logo will be incorporated in time for the next milestone.

■ Milestone Four: Refined Website and Final Logo, WordPress Instruction

~~Early / Mid-October~~ Mid-Late November

We will review the final website design and structure. I will have incorporated previous comments, and integrated the final logo and perhaps some additional text and image content into the website.

I will show you how to add and edit content and add users. After this meeting, you and your other committee members will be able to add all remaining content.

■ Milestone Five: Website Launch

~~Late-October / Early-November~~ Mid-December 2015

~~I understand you would like to have the site launched prior to the Town Meeting on November 10, 2015. After you have added all or sufficient content to unveil the website to the public, you will be ready to launch it. At this point, When the website is ready to launch,~~ I will move, or show you how to move, the existing Acton2020 domain name(s) to the new website hosting location. You may need to provide access to the current hosting plan and domain registration service so that we can change the settings.

I can also help you to set up new email accounts associated with your domain name, if you do not already have them, or if you want to move them from your old hosting provider.

## Budget

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### FEE

My total budget for this project is ~~either \$13,000 or~~ 15,000, as follows:

- New logo: \$1,500.
- New website using WordPress.org: ~~budget depends on choice of WordPress platform. \$11,500 for WordPress.com, or~~ 13,500.

### INVOICES

Invoices will be submitted by email following these milestones:

- \$3,750 after Milestone One.
- \$3,750 after Milestone Two, or by ~~September 18~~ October 16 at the latest.
- \$3,750 after Milestone Three, or by ~~October 16~~ November 13 at the latest.
- Balance of \$3,750 due following ~~(either \$1,750 or \$3,750, depending on choice of WordPress platform) after~~ website launch, or by ~~November 13~~ December 11, 2015, at the latest.

Payments are requested within three weeks of invoice date.

## General Terms & Conditions

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In the following terms, “Client” is the Acton 2020 Committee, as represented by Kat Hudson.

### CONTACT PERSON

- One person from Client will be the designated contact person with Naiad Design. The Client’s contact person will collect and assemble comments from others who may be involved in or reviewing the project, and transmit to Naiad Design as one package (not over multiple days or emails). If reviewers have conflicting opinions, Naiad Design will rely on the primary contact person to synthesize all comments and provide guidance on the appropriate response.

### FEES AND PAYMENTS

- Fees for WordPress plans, hosting, domain registration, and related internet fees shall be paid by Client.
- Design fees for Naiad Design shall be payable by check or money order payable to Diana Marsh.

### DELAYS AND POSTPONEMENTS

- Any delays to the proposed schedule caused by Client’s actions or lack of response may result in a day-for-day extension of time line of deliverables.
- Once the project has begun, if Client delays any stage of the work for more than three weeks, Client agrees to pay Naiad Design for all work completed up to that point, based on an interim invoice from Naiad Design.
- If Naiad Design delays work at any stage so that any project milestones are delayed by more than three weeks, Client shall have the right to cancel the project.

### CANCELLATION

- If Client cancels work at any stage, for any reason, Client agrees to pay the balance of the total project fee, if any, due Naiad Design for the share of work completed to that point, based on a final invoice from Naiad Design. If applicable, Naiad Design will refund the portion of the project fee that is due Client for work not yet completed.
- If Naiad Design cancels the project at any stage, Naiad Design agrees to refund to Client any portion of the project fee already paid for work that has not yet been completed.

- Naiad Design will provide all relevant project files to Client once project is complete, or if project is cancelled by either party.
- The determination of overpayment or underpayment shall be based on a generalized accounting of time spent to date by Naiad Design as a share of the total estimated project hours.

## ADDITIONAL ON-CALL SERVICES

- If additional work is necessary to complete this project beyond the tasks spelled out in this scope of work, it will be described in a Change Order, to be billed hourly.

## Agreement

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If the terms of this proposal are acceptable, please sign below and return one (1) signed copy of this page to Naiad Design at 30 Charnwood Road, Somerville MA 02144.

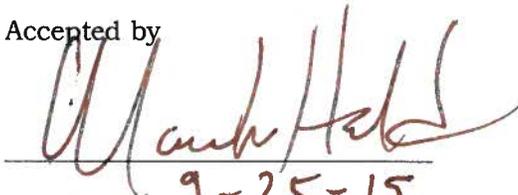
Offered by



Diana Marsh, Naiad Design

~~July 21, 2015~~ September 21, 2015

Accepted by



Date: 9-25-15