Open Space/Master Plan Committee Minutes

Town Hall, Banquet Hall

Minutes of December 17, 2008

Members Present: Gwen Broz, Sarah Heller, Tim Simon, William R. Simpson

Members Absent: Cindy Scott, Cheri Carty, Phil Chaffey, Sharon Mahoney

Also Present: Jonathan Church (Consultant), Rudy Heller (Selectman)

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm by Vice-Chair Bill Simpson.

The business of the meeting was a review of Jonathan's draft of the Economic Development Chapter.

a) Business List. Jonathan passed out copies of a list of town businesses given to him by the Assessors that he had emailed to members on 12.15.08. He explained that the shaded companies have a mailing address outside of Brookfield, but they do business in the town. Rudy and Sarah said that they had reviewed the list and found a number of businesses missing and some listed that have ceased operations. Jonathan asked that we all send him via email any changes to the list. Finalizing the business list is a lower priority than review of the draft of the chapter. Jonathan will also clarify with the Assessors how the list is generated (e.g. business registered with the town clerk), and we will add a note explaining that.

b) Draft of the chapter. Jonathan passed out copies of the draft that he had emailed to members on 12.15.08 and we went through it page by page. Jonathan asked us to send him any additional edits via email and especially any notes we took at the Dec 10 public hearing so that he can include that in the 2nd draft to be reviewed at our Dec 29 meeting.

Among the things discussed were:

(1) Federal Census data is from 2000. 2013 is the earliest we can expect to have 2010 data so 2000 is probably the most recent we can have for this Master Plan.

(2) Tim noted that Table 1 total for 2000 doesn't match Table 2. We need an explanation: perhaps it is because of season adjustments? Jonathan will check.

(3) Rudy asked a procedural question: Even though the chapter will be completed by Dec 31, can changes still be made closer to the end of the MP. Jonathan said yes, no problem.

(4) It was agreed that the School (whether as a subheading under "Town") or the Town would be listed as the largest employer in town.

(5) Members of the MP committee present each agreed to talk with one of the largest businesses listed in the draft and get an approved version of their business description. These will be emailed to Jonathan for inclusion.

(6) Sarah asked that a sentence stating that growth in business would lower the tax rate be deleted. A discussion followed about whether businesses do indeed contribute to lower the tax rate in a town. Sarah believes that there is no direct co-relation, contrary to common belief. Tim thought we should put in a paragraph explaining that it is difficult to assess the benefits of increasing business because there are many variables. Bill suggested that it would be important to have Jonathan research the economic impact of businesses at CMRPC since they should have the current thinking about this subject.

(7) We noted that missing from the Opportunities section were: Eco-Tourism and Sustainability. Missing

from the Impediments were Enforcement of zoning code, difficulty of permitting process, and empty buildings that the owners do not want to sell. There may be more things to add once Jonathan reviews all the notes from the Dec 10 hearing.

(8) Jonathan passed out copies of sample Economic Development goals and objectives that are in other towns' Master Plans. It is the same text as he emailed on 12.15.08 to the members. We very briefly looked at it but agreed to discuss further at the Dec 29 meeting. Jonathan asked us to think about including regional shared services as one of the goals.

(9) Jonathan will update the chapter based on our discussion and any notes from 12/3/08 hearing that we email to him.

c) Adjournment: Sarah made a motion to adjourn. Gwen seconded it. All in Favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Heller, Secretary

Date approved by the Committee: Dec 29, 2008

Date submitted to the Selectmen's office: January 11, 2009