

Open Space/Master Plan Committee Minutes
Town Hall, Banquet Hall
Minutes of January 21, 2009

Members Present: Gwen Broz, Cheri Carty, Tim Simon, William R. Simpson

Members Absent: Phil Chaffey, Sarah Heller, Sharon Mahoney, Cindy Scott

Also Present: Jonathan Church (Consultant), Peter Martell (Fire Chief and EMT)

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Vice-Chair Bill Simpson.

A) Fire Department. Peter presented the following information on the concerns of the Fire Dept:

Brookfield is in District 7 of the state. Three concerns were presented.

1) The biggest concern is the possible need for expansion. The only fire station is in the village. Lots of development is occurring on the other side of the river. The new highway building allowed expansion of the fire department in the village, but there may be a future need for a substation on the south side of the river. It needs to be central to the south area and on the south side of the river so have access if Rt. 148 floods. Also there is a concern if the bridge over the river is out for rebuilding. An estimate is it could be out for 2 years. The fire dept. can't keep equipment on both sides of the river at this time, so this is unacceptable. There is a very limited area near Quaboag Equipment that would be central. Needed across the river would be a tanker, pumper, and brush truck if there were housing.

2) Also need to consider future replacement of equipment. If we continue to replace equipment with larger trucks, will also need larger housing.

3) Personal: A grant is coming to train volunteers. We used to have men working in town that could be volunteers. Currently companies aren't allowing fire fighters leave work to fight fires due to financial constraints. Not as many people are interested as well. The annual wages of the department are \$14,000. The chief earns \$1,400. The most active fire fighter gets \$400 a year and goes on 70+ calls and weekly meetings. This barely covers gas. We may need to compensate more in the future.

B) Emergency Squad. A new ambulance is coming. Insurance can be billed for some services. Unable to bill for all and the return is getting poorer. Of 40 calls, 8 aren't billable. Currently, the squad is self sufficient economically.

Problems: people feel they have to go to the city due to insurance companies, or if they decide not to go to the hospital after calling. We need to get the word out that Mary Lane and Harrington Hospital are good places to go to the ER. They are fast, efficient, honest, and transfer quickly if needed.

C) Economic Chapter. The rest of the meeting was going over the Economic Chapter and making suggestions for wording changes. We also discussed the goal and objectives as proposed in the last meeting.

Tim proposed changing the goal to:

The goal of Brookfield's economic strategy is to encourage new development that maintains a sustainable local economy that has a balance between resident's preferences for limited commercial and industrial growth while expanding local opportunities for meeting the employment and commerce needs of Brookfield

residents.

He also suggested adding : Re orient conventional thinking to a new sustainable economy for our basic needs.

We also discussed Bill's proposed objective/goal and Gwen's suggestions from the permaculture website.

Bill suggested reading Shumpeter on new economic thinking. (Look on the web.)

Gwen suggested reading Deep Economy by Bill McKibben.

D) Next Meeting. We agreed to meet again on Feb. 4 and Feb 18 at 6:30 to continue this discussion. (These meetings were posted.)

E) Adjournment. Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwen Broz, Acting Secretary

Date approved by the Committee: Feb 4, 2009

Date submitted to the Selectmen's office: Feb 5, 2009