

**Open Space/Master Plan Committee Minutes**  
**Town Hall, Banquet Hall**  
**Minutes of February 4, 2009**

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

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

**No Guests Present**

The meeting was called to order at 6:42 pm by Vice-Chair Bill Simpson.

**A) Approval of Previous Minutes.** Bill moved and Tim seconded approval of the minutes from January 14 and January 21. All in favor.

**B) Correspondence.**

1) Bill reviewed the mail from our town hall mail box:

(a) Invoice 1324 dated 12/31/08 from CMRPC for "Services rendered" for \$388.77. It was noted that there was a previous bill (Invoice 1313) for \$4846.03 that was on the 2/3/09 Selectmen's warrant. Cheri Carty, committee treasurer, is reviewing that one to try to identify the items covered in schedule of payments. Members present agreed that Sarah would contact Cheri about this second invoice.

(b) Draft outline of the Open Space Chapter from Trish Settles for our review.

2) Carol Childress, our volunteer grant writer, sent emails giving notice of grant denials from the Greater Worc. Community Foundation and Mass Environmental Trust. She noted "Foundation support is drying up all over; even well established organizations vying for such grants are being turned away. Foundations were hit hard with this economic downturn, so their portfolios of grant funds have dwindled which means there's less to go around. I'll do my best to find the remaining \$17,000 that's needed." The committee is most appreciative of Carol's efforts on our behalf.

3) Sarah received an email from Brenda Metterville offering to help the committee start a blogspot similar to the one the library maintains. Discussion of this was deferred to New Business.

**C) Economic chapter goals and objectives.** There was a wide ranging discussion.

(a) Bill mentioned that he has asked Jonathan Church to provide CMRPC's research on what goals have actually been implemented in other towns.

(b) Gwen asked that we try to include measurable objectives rather than general statements. Bill said that at some point in the implementation measurable objectives need to be included.

(c) Tim stated that he would like to see more emphasis on economic sustainability, on trying to satisfy locally residents' needs such as food, shelter, clothing, energy, recreation, etc. Bill expressed his view of government's role as creating an environment for meeting the needs of citizens. Government should create "the container" for allowing growth.

- (d) Gwen would like to see fostering relationships between people and keeping money in the community as part of the goal. She reminded us of the concept of Financial "Permaculture", building local production in a phased in manner. She mentioned the idea of requiring that town government and the school system to purchase some percentage of their budget locally. The members present expressed their support for this idea and felt it should be included as part of implementation.

Sarah mentioned the idea of having an "incubator" center to help residents start new businesses. There was discussion about the desirability of having farmers markets on the town common, use of the school after hours for business activities such as craft fairs and other business activities that help connect consumers with local small businesses and farmers.

- (e) We reviewed the goal proposed by Tim at the Jan 21 meeting. We amended it as follows:  
"The goal of Brookfield's economic strategy is to encourage entrepreneurial activity that maintains a sustainable local economy. There should be a balance between residents' preferences for limited commercial and industrial growth and expanding local opportunities for meeting the needs of Brookfield's residents."
- (f) Members looked at the resources mentioned under the heading "Opportunities for Economic Development" in the 3<sup>rd</sup> draft of the Economic Chapter. Several were selected as having the potential to help us with research about the best ways to implement our goals and objectives. Gwen will contact Claire O'Neill of the Mass. Office of Business Development. Sarah will contact the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corp. We also need to contact our state representatives' offices to see what there is available through them. It was decided to add a 5<sup>th</sup> objective to explore the possibility of establishing a local Tax Increment Financing Program (TIF) that is mentioned in the Opportunities section:  
"5. Explore the possibility of establishing a local Tax Increment Financing Program (TIF)."
- (g) We re-wrote objective (1) as follows:  
"1. Create a program to market the town's local economy and promote the use of town facilities for local entrepreneurial activity."
- (h) We deleted the word "new" from objective (3). Before it read "... to foster new economic development..." It now reads: "... to foster economic development..."
- (i) We would like to have more review of the goals and objectives at future meetings when hopefully more members are present and we have had input from the resources mentioned in item (f).

**D) CMRPC.** Members expressed a need for more detail in the invoices. There was also discussion about the need for better response on questions asked. There are currently two outstanding questions:

(1) CMRPCs research on the current thinking about how economic development impacts the tax rate. This question arose during our discussions at the Dec 17 meeting and again at the Dec 29 meeting.

(2) CMRPC's research on what goals and objectives have been successfully implemented in other towns.

**D) Committee status.** There was discussion about the need to increase membership. We also discussed the fact that it is difficult to get a quorum of current members at meetings. Gwen moved and Sarah seconded the following "The committee makes a policy of assuming that members will make a posted meeting. If a

member cannot make a meeting, he or she will notify the other members via email at least 48 hours before the meeting." Vote taken. All in favor.

Tim asked what we can do to have closer ties to the Planning Committee. Bill said that he has been sending drafts of the chapters to Chair Trudy O'Connell and she has been passing them on to members. Once we have a final draft of a chapter, he will send that and set a date to meet with the committee.

We agreed that we will all make an effort to get town department heads to come to a meeting to report to us what planning issues they face. We should be able to have one dept. for 1/2 hour at each meeting. We should notify the other members once we have a commitment from the dept. head so we can schedule them. For the school, we should have both the committee members and the school principal if possible, perhaps at different meetings. Sarah will contact the elementary school principal and school committee members. Bill will contact the highway dept. Others still to be contacted include: Bd. Of Health, Assessors, Water, Police, Building Inspector, Housing Authority.

**E) New Business: Blogspot.** There was discussion about Brenda's offer to help set up a blogspot. It was agreed that no one has time to take on more duties and we should concentrate on getting articles published in the newspaper and getting information out via Public Access. For future hearings, we need to be sure to notify Public Access so they can videotape. Tim and Sarah agreed to work on producing 500 word newspaper articles and distributing to the local media.

**F) Next Meeting.** Feb 18 at 6:30. The meeting has been posted.

**G) Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Heller, Secretary

Date approved by the Committee: Feb 4, 2009

Date submitted to the Selectmen's office: April 28, 2009