

**Open Space/Master Plan Committee Minutes – Public Forum**  
**Brookfield Elementary School Library**  
**Minutes of February 4, 2010**

**Members Present:** Cheri Carty, Kris Casucci, Sarah Heller, Tim Simon, William Simpson Jr.

**Other Present:** Consultant Bill Scanlan; Residents of the town, including 2 Selectmen

The forum was called to order at 7 pm by Chair Bill Simpson. There was no review of Minutes, Correspondence or Treasurer's Report because it was a public forum. Bill introduced the board and explained the evening's agenda to those present. The forum was videotaped and will be aired on Brookfield Public Access Channel.

**A) Land Use & Zoning Discussion – Bill Scanlan.** Bill presented a powerpoint explaining the committee's research to date. He included results pertaining to land use of the survey that was done July – December 2008. He also discussed his research into zoning . There was discussion with the audience members. Main points of discussion: (1) Strategy for encouraging commercial growth, especially mixed use in the center of town and on Rt 9, Rt 148 (tie in sewer from Sturbridge). Consider BA district in other parts of town. (2) Are there sites good for Senior Housing (3) Desirable to preserve rural character of the town. Does our zoning encourage or discourage growth? (4) Unlikely that Brookfield will see large residential developments soon because of low demand plus the lot size and most of the on-road frontage has been developed, preserving the back land.

**B) Transportation – Cheri Carty.** Cheri reviewed her draft of the transportation chapter. Discussion points with the audience (1) Train line running through town is a resource if we can get a stop (2) Bus awareness- Need to make more people aware of the existing bus route and encourage the transit authorities to connect WRTA with PVRTA. (3) Zoning needs to take into account road capacity (4) Better understanding of scenic road law. We should include the bylaw in the chapter as well as explanation of who is responsible for enforcing the law. (4) Only Rt 9 is a state highway. Rt 148 is a numbered highway but not state owned. (5) Scenic Elm Hill Road needs restoration (not paving). It is the only part of Post Road that has never been paved. (6) There should be sidewalks throughout the town and they need to be maintained in winter so they are useable. Need to research who is responsible for clearing sidewalks.

**C) Government Services – Bill Simpson.** Bill led a brainstorming session about the ideal vision for the town: Wonderful, interactive website; reduced carbon footprint; coordinated services; beautiful, functional town buildings; intergenerational community center; expanded library services; less reliance on property tax (more user fees); more regionalization, including public safety; ideal school system with adult education and literacy; capital planning; trained volunteers involved in government; coordinated recreation for families and adults as well as children; Coordinated economic development.

We then outlined the strengths for the town:

Fire, EMTs, Library, Open Space, Churches, Town Common, Town Staff, Natural Resources for Recreation; School System, Police, Mutual Aid, Community Pride and Community Activities

Weaknesses were identified as:

Website, too few people involved; negativity; lack of community policing; no long term planning; deferred maintenance; town hall building; uncoordinated services; over-committed board of health; lack of training for town volunteers; outdated zoning and bylaws, no networked computers; poor accessibility to town committees.

Opportunities were identified as:

Website; Business areas are ripe for development; prime commercial locations available; railroad, volunteerism; town hall renovation; eco-tourism; green energy; regionalization; history of the town.

Threats were identified as:

No money; Community in-fighting; bedroom community; development; aging houses; distressed septic systems; Rt 9 blight; Small size of the town to provide all services; lack of affordable housing; solid waste costs; rising energy costs; rising health costs; litigation costs; tax delinquency.

Finally there was a brief discussion about action steps:

The Master Plan could establish a Futures Committee to look into reorganizing government services so they make sense for the future, including training volunteers; Positions that should be looking into: Community Planner; Town Administrator; Grantwriter; Volunteer Coordinator; The bylaws need to be reviewed and fixed; Expand regional cooperation; Communications Strategy using the website and facebook, etc.

**D) Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah Heller, Secretary

Date approved by the Committee: 3/10/10

Date submitted to the Selectmen's office: 4/1/10

**Note:** Bill Scanlan's Powerpoint presentation, titled "Zoning Forum 2-4-10.pdf" is attached to these minutes.