

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
SELECTMEN'S STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2011
6:30 P.M. – PUBLIC SESSION – FIRE STATION**

PRESENT: STEPHEN BANNON
 ANDREW BLECHMAN
 ALANA CHERNILA
 DEB PHILLIPS
 SEAN STANTON
 KEVIN O'DONNELL, TOWN MANAGER

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Sean Stanton called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

II. REVIEW STATUS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PRIORITIES

Kevin O'Donnell reviewed the updated Strategic Planning Priorities from the last session held on July 6, 2011. He stated that the different department heads have offered comments as to how the strategic planning priorities would impact them. Kevin said that there has been an increase in communication between the departments and he is working on expanding the communication process as a whole.

1. Financial Coordinator Responses – Kevin O'Donnell stated that the finance office is 1 person with internal support who is involved in almost everything. He stated that Lauren Sartori will be involved in the comprehensive plan in regards to funding, which will have an impact on cash flow purposes and future borrowing.

2. Main Street Reconstruction – Kevin O'Donnell stated that the survey results will be on the next BOS meeting agenda. He said that there is a large amount of paperwork because of the general comments. Kevin said that they are continuing to move ahead on the project. The 25% exception report is being wrapped up and submitted to the DOT for comments.

Alana Chernila asked when a public hearing is being planned.

Kevin O'Donnell responded that it will be in December. He added that the DOT controls when it will take place.

Joe Sokul said that the DOT will get the exception report, go through it and when accepted, it will take 6 weeks to set a meeting.

Sean Stanton suggested that the hearing be planned for January if it can not take place in the first 2 weeks of December.

Kevin O'Donnell said that he anticipates that the initial work will begin in March/April of 2013 through fall of 2013 and some minor things may carry over to 2014. He said that they are still anticipating having it done in one construction season.

3. Improve Park Infrastructure - Kevin O'Donnell stated that he is looking at reducing the scope of the CIP to stay within 2012 allocations for 2013. Kevin said that the Park Commissioners are

looking beyond the traditional park related items and putting in items that are more applicable to certain age groups. (i.e. Council on Aging - putting in age appropriate items).

4. Improve Communication – Kevin O'Donnell said that the departments are always looking at web links and facebook. Chris Rembold said that his 'blog' had 352 'views' since May. There were 61 views on the busiest day and there are 20 active subscribers. He said that he is trying to link it to facebook.

Helen Kuziemko said that any new information that comes in is placed under 'town news.' She said that Marie Ryan keeps the calendar current.

Alana Chernila suggested putting 'this weeks meetings' on the side bar, so that it is obvious as to what meetings are coming up. This would be in addition to the calendar.

Andrew Blechman said the calendar is on the bottom of the web page and asked if it could be moved up and made into a calendar icon to make it more obvious. This may encourage people to attend meetings.

Andrew also asked when they will have meetings linked to you tube.

Sean Stanton replied that it takes too much effort and could take hours of time.

Alana Chernila said that all other towns do it.

Kevin O'Donnell responded that he will keep looking into it.

Kevin said that a High School student will come to intern and help with the master plan.

He also suggested the idea of getting the students involved with communication and the Superintendent was interested.

Alana Chernila said that it was great to see the social media work that Chris Rembold has done and would love to talk about taking it further. She said that they could achieve a lot if they talk about the town meetings on facebook and make a Great Barrington page that people 'like'. She suggested that there be the ability to 'like' the webpage to your facebook page and have schedules linked to facebook as well.

Chris Rembold said that it takes time to set up, but once it's up, it takes 30 seconds to blog and update.

All agree to have a facebook page and have it linked to meeting schedules and the home page.

All agree to change the picture on the website or have rotating pictures.

5. Review recommendations of Housatonic School Campus Task Force – Kevin O'Donnell said that he will start to break down the plan and crunch numbers. He said that this will have budgetary implications in future years.

6. Court System in Dewey School – Kevin O'Donnell said that the state scheduled a meeting about a Long Term lease and then cancelled. He hasn't heard back to reschedule.

Kevin O'Donnell reported that \$20,000 was spent last winter on heat.

7. Develop PILOT agreements where applicable – Kevin O'Donnell said that he will work with the Assessor on this. Kevin O'Donnell said that the new provost at Simons Rock expressed interest in having employees use the fitness facility at a reduced cost. Jonathan is trying to get classes at a reduced cost for employees, as well. The provost said that we can use their facility and Kevin hopes to have meetings at this location. Chris Rembold is having one of the Master Plan neighborhood meetings there in the future.

Kevin said that he will talk to AIER about using their facility in the future.

8. Maintain proactive distressed building code compliance – Kevin O'Donnell reported that Ed May still has \$3000 in his budget, therefore, he has not spent the budgeted amount. He said that the building inspector's team will look at Magadini and Betros buildings again to see what can be done with the property without issuing citations.

9. Implement Buracker Police Reorganization – Kevin O'Donnell said that this priority could come off. Chief Walsh will do a detailed presentation about this at a future meeting and will tie in the accreditation report.

10. Maximize revenue and minimize cost – Kevin O'Donnell said that and Town Clerk will have a presentation about the fish and game licenses since the process has changed.

Kevin said that they are looking at establishing a base line level of services. Examples are the Grant in Aid program that is about \$26,000 and the contract with Berkshire South for \$50,000 (for recreation programs); both of which are optional.

Sean Stanton asked Chief Walsh if he knew what the vote was in regards to making the police dispatch regional.

Chief Walsh said that the vote was overwhelming for keeping dispatch local.

Sean Stanton suggested that this be re-visited since it would be a huge saving.

Lauren Sartori said that she will pull out the cost benefit/savings from that meeting.

Fire Chief Jennings said that some other fire departments have agreed to adhere to the standard Great Barrington is using. He said that firemen will wear either a yellow or black helmet that will signify who is certified. (It takes 2 years to be certified)

11. Partnership opportunities – Kevin O'Donnell stated that the Town is in the Berkshire Joint Purchasing Group for the purchase of gas, diesel fuel, and salt. This allows better savings for the Town.

Chief Walsh said that we also have Mutual Aid agreements with 4 towns to use our jail.

12. Continue to develop sustainability practices – Kevin O'Donnell said that his intern Jonathan is working with the energy committee to get an RFQ to get an energy consultant to come in and do a more advanced energy audit. The Town Hall's energy use is being analyzed, as well as, the cost of using light sensors. Kevin said that they are still working on getting 'manuals' on the lighting in Mason Library.

Andrew Blechman asked Joe Sokul if there is anything that can be done to increase the durability of the roads.

Joe Sokul responded that truck traffic is the biggest culprit. Joe said that the smaller residential streets could last 10-15 years.

13. Continue to work on broadband development – Kevin O'Donnell said that this will be an agenda item periodically. Construction is still anticipated in 2013.

III. MODIFY/ADD STRATEGIC PLANNING PRIORITIES

Alana Chernila suggested adding 'updating the recycling center' to the strategic planning priorities.

Kevin O'Donnell replied that it will be part of the Budget meetings because it has cost implications.

Steve Bannon said that it seems more complicated than just the budget aspect. He said if it is looked at before then, it can be decided upon during the Budget season. He suggested removing the Housatonic Task Force and adding this topic.

Sean Stanton suggested that it be put under sustainability issues.

All agree to give this topic BOS Agenda time.

Andrew Blechman said that there are 2 areas being looked at in terms of wind power. (One is the Cape/Nantucket and the other is us). He feels that it will be pushed on us soon and said that we should own our own wind turbines.

Sean Stanton said that we would want the ultimate permitting authority, but not to own one.

Deb Phillips suggested that this topic be put under sustainability.

Sean Stanton said that this topic belongs with the Energy committee.

Alana Chernila said that it is on the radar of the Energy committee and is not being ignored.

All agree to put this topic under sustainability as local energy options/local control.

Andrew Blechman said that the roads are unsustainable but he is worried about the bridges.

Steve Bannon said that there is no need for a strategic planning priority for this.

Kevin O'Donnell said that all of the bridges are in the CIP and the annual review of the CIP will help to focus the Board on this.

Joe Sokul said that they have done research with the State and consultants. The State has accelerated programs for bridges and said that this is the most expensive project to do.

Sean Stanton said that the Town Planner has conservation as the number 1 priority.

Sean said that the Community Preservation Act could be a huge help to conserve open space and should be looked at again.

Kevin O'Donnell said that he will do some research, bring it back to the Board, and try to get it on the warrant.

Lauren Sartori said that it may require a ballot vote and a Town Meeting.

All agree.

Sean Stanton said that there needs to be cross-walk standardization from a safety perspective.

Kevin O'Donnell said that he will add it as a research project for an agenda item which can relate back to the DOT standards.

All agree.

Andrew Blechman said that the Master Plan talks about passive traffic control and asked what is being done about it.

Chris Rembold responded that it is being incorporated into the comprehensive plan with specific recommendations.

Deb Phillips suggested that each time they look at the CIP, they should address what should be done in regards to traffic calming. She said the Board should talk about roads as they come up. All agree.

IV SELECT NEXT STRATEGIC PLANNING PRIORITIES MEETING

The next meeting will be held at the Fire Station on Wednesday, March 7 at 6:30.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Deb Phillips, seconded by Alana Chernila, the Board adjourned its meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cara Becker".

Cara Becker
Recording Secretary