

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
SELECTMEN'S STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 2, 2011
6:30 P.M. – PUBLIC SESSION – FIRE STATION**

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

CALL TO ORDER:

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

Kevin O'Donnell reviewed the updated Strategic Planning Priorities from the last session held on October 27, 2010. He stated that some priorities may require consolidation, while others may need further clarification.

- **Update the comprehensive plan.....**

Chris Rembold said that the Master Plan should be completed by the end of the year 2012. He said that they are looking at existing conditions and he is planning on having a town wide forum in July, which will be the first of its kind.

Deb Phillips stated that she felt that by consolidating, they may lose sight of what they feel is most important.

Sean Stanton agreed.

This priority will remain the same

- **Analyze by-laws for revisions**

Sean Stanton felt that this was far too vague

This priority will be removed

- **Main Street Reconstruction**

This priority will be condensed into **MAIN STREET RE-CONSTRUCTION 2013**

Deb Phillips said that there are things that need to be done before the next phase. She said that 5-6 questions should be sent to business owners to see how things can be done properly and to include people in the process. She feels that the question sheet should also ask if they would like to serve on an advisory board. She also stated that merchants should be encouraged to apply to be on the parking task force. She suggested that some of the people to contact would be Richard Stanley, someone from the Mahaiwe Theatre and residents. Lastly, she said that they need to use the website and chamber domain names to put things together.

Alana Chernila suggested that the informal tree committee should be engaged. There are also people that have raised money to buy bigger trees and they should be included in conversations. Stephen Bannon stated that there should be a formal group, with minutes taken, to talk about this topic.

Kevin O'Donnell suggested that these be agenda items for future meetings.
Stephen Bannon requested that the parking task force be on the next agenda.

- **Maintain 5 year CIP inclusive of park infrastructure**

This priority **will become "improve park infrastructure"**

It was suggested to keep in mind AmeriCorps to help with park projects.

- **Be transparent**

This priority will be removed

Sean Stanton stated that there have been some instances where E-mails have been sent to Kevin and the Board and it has been difficult to determine how to respond. He feels that such E-mails should be brought to the next Board meeting for input from the entire Board. Stephen Bannon also suggested that appropriate E-mails can be read during Citizen Speak Time.

Alana Chernila stated that there are many communication needs that come up and they don't know how to deal with them. She suggested that a road map be created to direct citizens on how to communicate with various Town Departments and Boards.

- **Continue to explore use of website & other communication avenues possible streaming of meetings, you tube, facebook**

The wording was changed to "Improve communication with the community by doing the following; exploring the use of website and other communication avenues, possibly streaming meetings, you tube and facebook.

Alana Chernila suggested that the meetings be put on you tube where there is unlimited space. Sean Stanton suggested that meetings be put on the website to be available for a limited time. Stephen Bannon asked that this be explored as an agenda item. Sean Stanton suggested that Bob O'Haver may have some ideas on how to do this.

- **Explore alternatives to Housatonic School & Castle Street Former Fire Take out Castle Street Fire Station**

- **Continue to work on 10 year court house lease in Dewey School**

This priority will remain the same

Kevin O'Donnell encouraged the Board to tell Senator Downing and Representative Pignatelli of the Towns interest.

- **Continue with cross training of employees**

This priority will be removed

Helen Kuziemko stated that the Berkshire Health Group Wellness Coordinator will be coming in on March 9th, to meet with all Town Hall employees and follow up meetings with other Departments to present Healthy Behaviors program. There will be biometric screenings offered to all Town employees as well as a wellness fair in the future.

Deb Phillips stated that these are ways to decrease expenses through creative means.

Stephen Bannon suggested that the employees be polled to see what the interest is in using Simons Rock athletic facility.

Kevin O'Donnell agreed to survey the employees.

- **Explore refinement to PILOT**

This priority will remain the same

- **Continue proactive distressed building compliance**

This priority will remain the same

Kevin O'Donnell said that 3 buildings were taken down with no cost to the Town.

Ed May stated that he is watching 27 buildings at this point.

- **Continue with police reorganization/community policing process**

This priority will remain the same

The police department is hoping to be State certified by late spring and will be the first in Berkshire County.

- **Review of services for cost effectiveness & needs of entire community**

This priority will remain the same

Kevin O'Donnell stated that he has pursued the 'Swap Shack' concept that two neighboring towns use and he anticipates being able to do something along these lines at no additional cost. He said they are reviewing the cost of the recycling center as well.

Alana Chernila asked if anything is being done to evaluate things other than the 'dump.'

Kevin replied that the Council on Aging is a focus as it becomes an acute need.

Sean Stanton stated that, although the number of children (and young families) are decreasing, he wants to focus on them so that those numbers will begin to grow again.

Deb Phillips stated that she would like to see regulations in Wastewater Treatment, in order to manage costs.

Kevin O'Donnell said that this would fall under sustainable practices and should be a focus of the energy committee.

- **Develop partnerships both private & public sector**

Kevin O'Donnell agreed to re-write this priority with more detail based on the following discussion.

Stephen Bannon said that he sees this priority being about the empty buildings and the grants available to the Town. He feels this should still be a priority until they get rid of all of the empty buildings.

Alana Chernila stated that this is about job creation.

- **Develop sustainability practices**

Sean Stanton stated that New Corp. has become carbon neutral and we should find out what that means.

Stephen Bannon suggested that the Energy Committee continue to look at LED lighting as part of the Main Street Reconstruction project.

- **Work with all appropriate agencies public & private to retain young adults**

This priority will remain the same

It was suggested to add such as working with Railroad Street Youth Project.

- **Explore alternatives with all appropriate agencies for youth to transition into workforce**

This priority will be removed

- **Continue with broadband development**

This priority will remain the same

- **Explore training options with appropriate agencies**

This priority will be removed

- **Explore working with 2nd homeowners to establish mentoring program**

This priority will be removed

Sean Stanton suggested that we seek out retirees and those who have moved into the area.

- **Review housing stock; explore approaches to aid home ownership**

This priority will be removed

Additional Changes:

Deb Phillips would like to see:

- a. promote active employee wellness program
- b. develop PILOT agreements where applicable
- c. establish base line level of services provided by Town government and evaluate cost effectiveness

all under a new title of 'Maximize revenues, Minimize Cost'

Alana Chernila would like to add:

Increase communication between Boards

It was decided that there would be an hour set aside before BOS meetings to have discussions between the BOS and various Town Boards. The meeting should begin at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

The next Strategic Priorities meeting will be held at the new Fire Station on Wednesday, July 6, 2011 at 6:30 PM.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion made by Stephen Bannon, seconded by Deb Phillips, the Board adjourned its meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Cara Becker

Recording Secretary