

**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON
SELECTMEN'S STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4, 2012
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. UPDATE STATUS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PRIORITIES &
III. SELECTBOARD DISCUSSION RE: MODIFY/ ADD STRATEGIC PLANNING
PRIORITIES, TIME FRAME FOR THE PRIORITIES – DIRECTION RE: "ENDS"
DESIRED**

Kevin O'Donnell reviewed the Strategic Planning Priorities from the last session held on October 5, 2011. Each department head provided the Board with a written update to the priorities relative to their department. Kevin suggested looking at the desired end result to determine what direction to take going forward.

1. Update the comprehensive plan - It was determined that the Master Plan is Chris Rembolds' focus. **All agree to take this off the list.**

2. Main Street Reconstruction – **All agree to take off the list**

3. Improve Park Infrastructure – **All agree to take off the list.**

4. Improve Communication– it was agreed that the website has made positive progress. Other media avenues are not being utilized.

Kevin O'Donnell said that the streaming of meetings through the cable company may be forthcoming.

All agree to discuss this at the end of the summer.

5. Dewey School – Kevin O'Donnell said that money allocated would be better spent hiring a consultant to see what the building needs rather than fixing little things. The State was supposed to send Kevin sample RFP's, but he has not yet received them. Kevin encouraged the Selectmen to continue the contact with Rep. Pignatelli and Senator Downing.

Deb Phillips agreed that the Board should actively solicit them.

Steve Bannon suggested that the Board send a letter, as well.

Sean Stanton said that he and Kevin O'Donnell will meet with the current judge. It was agreed that a positive letter would be written requesting an RFP and stating that the Board is ready to move forward.

Steve Bannon clarified that taking an item off the list does not mean that it is not a priority; the Board still needs to follow up on it.

All agree to keep this as a priority with a decision to be made by September 1, 2012.

6. Develop PILOT agreements – **All agree to take off the list**

7. Maintain proactive distressed building code compliance – **to be re-worded**

Kevin O'Donnell said that funds are set aside to do this and they are looking at it on a continual basis.

Sean Stanton suggested that a by-law be created to deal with those who pay taxes but do not maintain their property.

All agree to revisit this by-law topic before September and if they are interested in moving forward, an agenda item will be devoted to it in the Fall.

8. Establish base line of services provided by Town Government and evaluate cost effectiveness to maximize revenues and minimize costs- Alana Chernila said that this should stay but should be re-worded. (remove the part that says "to maximize revenues and minimize costs.")

Steve Bannon suggested adding "by prioritizing budget policies."

This priority will now say, "achieving a high level of service with an efficient use of town funds by utilizing the tool of the budget policy."

Kevin O'Donnell said that a more in-depth conversation is needed about the budget policy.

Kevin will present the budget policy in the September to allow conversation and adjustment.

All agree to have a discussion in September

9. Openness to partnership opportunities with both public and private sectors – **take off**

Alana Chernila said that enhancing job creation and the tax base is important. She asked how the Board can do this.

Andrew Blechman said that economic development is key.

There was discussion about creating a committee.

By July 1, Kevin O'Donnell will have information about the possibility of creating an economic development committee.

10. Continue to develop sustainability practices – **All agree to keep this priority**

11. Continue to work on broadband development – **take off the list.**

All agree to add:

Restructuring of the transfer station by June 1, 2012

Energy, agriculture and land use. (Solar By-law – this will be on an agenda in an April meeting)

Housatonic School Campus – Deb Phillips said that the Board needs to create a deadline to make a decision and what steps they need to take in order to move forward. **It was agreed that they will make a decision by the end of summer/ September.**

Walkability – All agree to have a discussion by September 1, 2012.

Andrew Blechman said that this should include sidewalk and bike path connectivity.

He would like to see an inventory of sidewalks in regards to what there is and what is needed.

Chris Rembold said that this is a big part of the Master Plan. He said that studies can be done this year about this and a cost ascertained.

Sean Stanton suggested that the priorities be categorized in overall topics:

Community Development

Communication

Health

Government Services

Sustainability

Tax Rate

Economic Development

IV SELECT NEXT STRATEGIC PLANNING PRIORITIES SESSION (JULY)

The next meeting will be held at the Fire Station on Wednesday, July 11 at 6:30.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Steve Bannon, seconded by Deb Phillips, the Board adjourned its meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Cara Becker

Recording Secretary