

**Planning Board**  
**Work Session**  
**September 5, 2006**  
Approved January 2, 2007

**Members Present: Barbara Freeman, Bill Weiler, Ken McWilliams, Ron Williams, Travis Dezotell, Dave Thayer, Lacy Cluff (Alternate).**

**Mrs. Freeman opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.**

**CASE: ADM1 – 061 – MASTERPLAN**

**Kearsarge Regional School District**

Dan Wolf, School Board Representative, said that he was going to go through the overall scope. He said that the school Board was looking to move toward attendance districts, rather than school population by town. For the Bradford and Chalk Pond area, the School Board is looking at new school in Sutton. They would like to reduce the amount of time that the students are on the bus. He commented that children in Blodgett Landing tend to socialize with children in New London and the Board would like a basic neighborhood school concept. They are currently busing over 2200 miles a day. They bus from exit 7 to just south of exit 13. The other goal in terms of busing is age compatible busing. When the middle school is built, they are looking into a 2 tier busing, younger students would start at 7:30 a.m. and older students would start school at 9:00 or 9:30 a.m. Studies have shown that middle & high school students do not function well in the morning, but elementary school children are wide awake in the morning. He said that there would clearly be a 1 ½ hour start time difference.

Mr. Wolf said that in terms of school population, they just completed the middle school population forecast. There were currently 508 students in the middle school and they were looking at 683 students in 25 years. He said that when they project more than 8-10 years, it is just a guess. They were projecting that in 2020 there would be 592 students. They have done a number of models from 1981 to 2004 and the models have been very close. The school population was down 22 students from last year, the school was down by 10 students and home schooled students were down by 12. However, Bradford was up by 37 students. Most of those students were in kindergarten. They were running three classes this year. The biggest draw back for kindergarten was the lack of transportation and the program was only a half day, not a full day. He thought that it was going to be awhile before they started transporting kindergarten students. The school was currently running 26 busses a day, plus field trips and special needs. He said that he was surprised at the lack of growth in Warner. He said that it was a bedroom community for Concord and attracted a lot of people. He said that they would like to cap the elementary school at 400 students. They were looking at the possibility of adding onto the Bradford Elementary School. The next expansion would be in the Wilmot area middle school. He

said that they would be looking to adding to the vo-tech program. They have applied for a grant and have been given grant money. They were currently sending 35 students a day to Newport, Claremont, and Concord. Programs are offered at different times of the day and they may be making 2 trips to each location a day.

Mrs. Freeman asked if there was any need for a van.

Mr. Wolf said that they currently had two vans for special needs students.

Mr. Wolf said that he thought that a lot of students would benefit from a vo-tech program. They would like to offer programs in computer repair, culinary arts etc., not mechanics. He said that they currently had an adult education program. Because of this program, they have had no drop outs at Kearsarge Regional High School in the past two years. 24 students graduated from the adult education program this year. Some came in from other areas like Newport, but they pay to do that. The High School is open from 7:00 a.m. – 9:30 p.m. He said that the adult education program is beneficial because students are not in school disrupting classes because they don't want to be there. He said that they did not plan to sell the old middle school. They were going to enter into a lease with a community group to use as recreational, gym, stages etc. It would be a place for kids to do other things like a community and recreation center.

Jesse McWilliams asked about the after school athletics with starting school later.

Mr. Wolf said that that did come into play. They may do what private schools do and have athletics on Wednesday afternoons.

Mr. Dezotell said that they could also have practice before school.

Mr. Wolf said that was a possibility, but they would get into the busing issue again. However, they were not legally obligated to transport the high school students for athletics.

Mr. Williams asked how much of every dollar went into the classroom versus administration. It was recommended that a minimum of 65% should go into the classroom and the rest into overhead.

Mr. Wolf said that he did not know because they just started on working on the budget for 2007 - 2008.

Mr. Wolf said that what they had for mandated costs were huge. They want to do a three year contract with teachers. He said that they have picked out 8 peer districts that they like to consider them part of and their goal was to be in the top 80% in those schools in terms of salary. They went into this school year with no teacher vacancies.

Mr. Dezotell asked what the time frame was in terms of when they would start splitting the children into different schools.

Mr. Wolf said that it would go hand in hand with the buildings. They would like to be in the new school by January 1, 2008. September 30, 2006 was the ground breaking. He said that it was probably going to be about three years before they do the split.

Mrs. Freeman asked Mr. Wolf if he could review the section on schools in the 1997 Master Plan and make notes.

Mr. Wolf said that he would.

## **Housing**

Connie Appeal and Rob Bryant from the Kearsarge Lake Sunapee Housing Coalition were here to discuss affordable housing.

Rob said that he was a former member of the Twin Pines Housing in Upper Valley and that he still consulted with them one day a week. He said that he was also in charge of the Chamber of Commerce for New London. He was here tonight to inform the Board of their program and respond to any questions, not to change anybody's mind about anything. He said that he looked at the 1997 Master Plan and thought that it was right on target in terms of the definition of affordability and the goals. The only differences now would be the housing prices and the statistics. In his mind, he saw no need to change it. Affordable housing was determined that rent/mortgage, utilities, taxes etc. should not be more than 30% of a household's income. The 1997 Master Plan stated that there were 13 families on the poverty line. Even if that doubled, the need in Newbury was greater for those who want to come back (college kids) and the elderly.

The first thing that the Board needed to determine was the need for affordable housing, whether it should be for young families or the elderly. That was the first thing that needed to be determined before identifying property. The Board needed to find out from employers who were having a hard time housing their employees. New London hospital does not have a huge need right now because many employees come from Newport, Springfield etc. However, there may be a need in the future. It is very difficult to get funding depending on what you are trying to achieve. A variety of towns around the State are faced with affordable housing challenges. The things that help the most in terms of getting started are community support, water & sewer & available land. Community support is increasing. The single most important thing to get is community support. Educate the community that affordable housing is not the huge projects of yesteryear that are filled with crime and drugs. At Twin Pines, the eviction rate was less than 0.5 % and very rarely does anyone foreclose on Habitat for Humanity homes. Most of the Twin Pines properties were similar to Bittersweet in New London, from 10 to 20-30 units in 4 buildings. They are usually only one or two story buildings and larger units have separate entrances. Twin Pines is now in the final permitting process to build a mixed community of 120 units. In the development, you would not know which was affordable and which was not. He commented that Woodstock and Norwich Vermont were finally doing affordable housing. In order to have financing available, you typically

need to do 12 to 15 units. Tax credits are the primary source in New Hampshire and NH Housing Finance Authority distributes those. He said that the housing does not have to be all together. Each year, the State decides on a priority, elderly, families, etc. The State is currently trying to push for family housing. That means that they look more positively on family housing. Community Development Block grants are available and have to be applied for by the Town. The Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston has local representatives who can apply for the funds. You need a minimum of 8 financing sources. These funds do not involve town funds or taxes. The Town is not expected to come up with any tax increases when a town does this. However, there can be an impact on the schools and facilities. On a town to town basis, there have been occasional requests to have a tax evaluation by appraisers. The typical apartment has 0.4 children per apartment for last 10 years, not 5 kids like people picture. There is a real push to build housing that is going to last a long time. Want it to be architecturally sound. In Habitat for Humanities, there is a huge push for families to know what is involved in taking care of a house. If an income eligible family were to buy a house and then sell the house for a huge profit, they would only get a portion of the profit so that the money could go back into affordable housing.

Mrs. Freeman said that they have had people in town who own a house, but were forced to leave because they could not afford the taxes because the value of their home has increased.

Rob said that Habit for Humanities is a resource and that the Planning Board might want to consider doing a density bonus for affordable housing.

Mrs. Freeman said that they currently did that.

Mrs. Cluff asked if the Town could do anything in terms of the programs that he was talking about or if it was all through the State.

Rob said that the town would just support a developer, but all went through the State.

Mrs. Freeman asked if he had a list of obstacles that towns commonly ran into.

Rob said that the cost of land was one of the biggest obstacles. They generally want a \$25,000 limit per  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre.

Mrs. Freeman said that if you multiply that by 8 to get the 2 acre minimum that is not affordable.

Rob said that that was why they encouraged a different minimum lot size with common sewer in town.

Rob said that the cost of land, zoning, community support and willingness of the town to support the concept were the main obstacles.

Mrs. Freeman asked if they had anything to say about New London.

Connie said that it was going slowly. The lack of land available on water & sewer were their biggest obstacles. Many towns that have affordable housing have had donations of land. That opens up lots of options. In Hanover, they started with a warrant article simply asking voters if they were in favor of affordable housing.

Rob said that they had a sample of that.

Rob said that they don't want a field in the middle of nowhere as donated land either. They want a community.

Mrs. Freeman said that otherwise you would be creating projects like in the past.

Connie said that she was always lobbying for rentals. Someone working in retail will never have the money for a down payment. She said that she did not want to discourage the Board, but there were a lot of things that go into affordable housing.

Mr. Williams asked if there were any state programs that would pay for public water and sewer. That would go a long way towards making it affordable.

Rob said that if land were donated you could use the State money for water & sewer.

Mrs. Freeman said that in England developers were required to make a certain percentage of affordable housing.

Connie said that there were communities in U.S that did the same thing. However, if someone wanted to put affordable housing in a wealthy community, they would have nothing in common with their neighbors.

Mrs. Freeman thanked Rob and Connie for their time.

Mrs. Freeman asked if they would be willing to review the affordable housing chapter when it was drafted.

Rob said that they would.

Mrs. Cluff asked what they were doing with the information on the school district and housing. Was the Board going to go over the recommendations as they had with the previous sections?

Mr. Weiler said that the affordable housing section just needed the statistics to be changed.

Mrs. Freeman said that they found out things that they did not know before. Community support and availability of affordable land were key and the need for rentals was

important. Finding affordable land should be in the Master Plan. Two of the major needs were people returning to the area and wanting to find housing and housing for the elderly. The Master Plan should say 'seek ways to acquire affordable land for affordable housing.' Also, a percentage of lots in developments needed to be affordable housing. The recommendation doesn't need to say how to do it; it just needs to say we want to do it.

Mr. Weiler asked if the Board should include water and sewer as well.

Mrs. Freeman said that one option was water and sewer.

Mr. Williams said that it was important that people realize that there was a difference between affordable housing and public housing.

Mrs. Freeman said that they should have an educational program on understanding affordable housing.

Mr. Dezotell said that he thought that the warrant article made sense.

Mrs. Freeman said that in order to do that, they needed an educational program.

Mrs. Freeman said that it was not clear in the zoning ordinance how to develop multi-family housing. The Board should re-do the zoning to make it possible to do multi-family housing.

Mrs. Freeman said that there should be a recommendation to seek ways to facilitate developers who wish to develop affordable housing.

Mr. Dezotell asked about the limits on accessory apartments.

Mrs. Cluff said that she thought that they should remove the 5 year requirement.

Mrs. Freeman said that they should re-examine the accessory apartment regulations.

Mr. Weiler was concerned about putting in duplexes.

Mrs. Freeman said that we needed to examine it.

Mrs. Freeman said that we needed a housing needs assessment. Claremont and Newport currently provide housing for people who work here.

Mr. Williams said that the cost of traveling from Claremont to New London or Newbury needed to be considered.

Mrs. Freeman said that they could approach the larger employers, like Mt. Sunapee to sponsor housing.

## **Education**

Mrs. Freeman said that the Town didn't have a lot of say about the school system.

Mr. Dezotell said that they could encourage community schools.

Mrs. Freeman said that they could put a recommendation that encouraged policies to decrease travel time and promote community based neighborhood schools and promote programs to encourage those who drop out to finish school through evening programs.

Mr. Williams said that it should include trades development that includes plumbers, electricians, & carpenters.

Mrs. Freeman said that she thought that Mr. Wolf was responding to what might be acceptable, but that they would offer more.

Mr. Williams said that they should make sure it is clear that it includes the trades as well.

**A motion was made to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. It was seconded. All were in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Lacy L. Cluff