

Minutes of GSSC Meeting held Friday, Oct. 19, 2012

Present: Priscilla Gimas, Aaron Smith, Mary Redetzke, Jean Bubon, Bonnie Fancy of the Town Common, and Janice Chiaretto, resident.

P. Gimas opened the meeting at 2:30 PM.

Absent: Peter Levine, Scott Arndt.

Mary Redetzke left at 3:30 pm

1. Motion by M. Redetzke to accept the minutes of Sept.21, 2012 and seconded by A. Smith.
Vote: unanimous.
2. Presentation by Jean Bubon, Town Planner. Jean spoke about her duties and the responsibilities of a Town Planner so Committee members could get a clear understanding of expectations. Jean submitted a detailed report to all Committee members which will become a part of the minutes.
 - Jean spoke about the increase in work volume caused in part by constant changes in state and federal regulations; energy programs; green energy.
 - Growth of development plans –Planning guides growth of the community based on the Master Plan.

S. Arndt texted a question asking if Jean foresees the consolidation of the Planning Dept. with inspectional services, etc. Jean said that she can see this and it could work. One drawback was the configuration of the Center Office Building. Spencer has recently consolidated its Planning dept.

A. Smith asked if there was a set of plans the Commonwealth says must be in place.

J. Bubon stated that MGL says we must have a Master Plan. In 2009 we prepared a housing plan but didn't have the capacity to do it at that time. 40B – late 60s – “anti snob zoning act” for affordable housing; if community doesn't meet 10%, a developer can bring plans and build affordable housing and doesn't have to comply with setbacks, etc. They can circumvent local zoning. 25% of development in that case must be affordable housing. Ex: Crescent Gate – 55+ community – if seller cannot sell in 120 days, it comes off the rolls as affordable housing and sells for whatever. Currently Sturbridge is around 7% affordable housing.

- J. Bubon went on to explain the 2009 FEMA Digital Flood Maps. The Planning Dept. had to notify people who would be impacted by flooding.
- Job constantly changing
- Changes in Planning dept. also impacted by changes in the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator.
- Planning Dept. currently has a 23 hour staff person.
- Much work needs to be done outside of the office; Commercial Tourist Revitalization Plan is one example; leaves the office without service to residents at times.

P. Gimas asked: what would be your goals?

J. Bubon: would love to have full time staff person day and for night meetings.

A. Smith: administrative activities – do they require specialized skills?

J. Bubon: no, it requires confidentiality. You ask in your questionnaire if there is anything I shouldn't do – the answer is energy related issues.

- See the Light meeting with National Grid – data not transferable to new program. Diane will need to be trained to transfer the data.
- Would like to do Planning Newsletter – updating website.
- Wish more town staff were GIS (Geographic Informational System) proficient. Spatial data relating to tabular/written data. GIS is currently used in Assessor's Office.
- I could also use a laptop. I currently use my personal laptop for volunteers to work with, presentations, meetings, etc.
- New permitting software
- Large scale scanner, digitize
- MGL scanned documents don't count as public record – only microfilm/microfiche.

J. Chiaretto: does town have networking?

J. Bubon: yes.

J. Chiaretto: if you had a full time person would it help with GIS?

J. Bubon: yes, so much time to develop. Would like to also see other departments become proficient.

A. Smith: is training costly?

J. Bubon: costly and complex. 1-3 day training is about \$1200. Expensive program to maintain and train.

3. Fire Dept. report will be given at next meeting.
4. Police Report highlights will also be briefly discussed at next meeting.
5. Next Steps: A. Smith suggested laying out a roadmap for the balance of the departments with a tentative timeline. What are some common themes? Themes/data across depts.?
6. New Business: P. Gimás stated that BOS would like an updated report. Committee to present this at the Nov. 5th meeting of the BOS.
7. Diane Trapasso appointed by BOS as secretary for Government Services Study Committee.

Next Meeting will be Friday, Nov. 2, 2012, 2:30 P.M.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Priscilla C. Gimás

