

**Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC)
& Focus Group Meeting**

Minutes of May 11, 2010

Ms. Gibson-Quigley called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

The following members of the Steering Committee were present:

Members Present: Patrick Babcock, Charles Blanchard, Sandra Gibson-Quigley, Chair, Steve Dalberth, Penny Dumas, Heather Hart, Heather Hendrick, Matt Rousseau, Bruce Smith, Maryann Thorpe and Arnold Wilson.

Members Absent: Alan Curboy and Chris Rovezzi

Staff: Jean M. Bubon, Town Planner and Diane Trapasso, Administrative Assistant

Consultants: Ralph Willmer, VHB, Bob Ballou, VHB and Tracy Fowler, UNH

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Made Mr. Blanchard to approve the minutes of March 2, 2010.
2nd: Ms. Thorpe
Discussion: None
Vote: 9 – 0 – 1 (Mr. Smith)

Motion: Made by Mr. Blanchard to approve the minutes of April 6, 2010.
2nd: Mr. Smith
Discussion: None
Vote: 9 – 0 – 1 (Ms. Hendrick)

DISCUSSION OF THE COMMUNITY WIDE SURVEY WITH UNH

Ms. Fowler of UNH made the PowerPoint Presentation on the Community Input Survey.

METHODOLOGY

- Surveys were mailed to a randomly selected adult member of Sturbridge households from a list provided from the Town (N=3149) on April 12, 2010
- Reminder postcards were sent April 20, 2010
- 862 surveys were returned between April 12 & May 7, 2010

- The response rate is 28%, this is very good for a survey of this type.

KEY FINDINGS

- Overall, public safety services are rated highly
- Open space is desired for passive uses
- Theatres, health care, small retail and museums are most favored for Sturbridge overall
- Large shopping, offices, mixed-use and theme parks are least favored
- Theatres, recreational facilities, small retail and restaurants are most favored for Route 15
- Large shopping, lodging, health spa resorts, banks, campground, theme parks, single family and multi-family homes are least favored for Route 15
- Sidewalks and dedicated bike routes are most favored

Ms. Fowler went through the slide presentation in detail.

The Board decided to make June 1st the cut-off date for the survey. Also, for future reference, bold lettering on the front stating survey from the Town would be helpful.

REVIEW OF INITIAL DRAFT OF LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN

Mr. Ballou of VHB made the PowerPoint presentation on Land Use and Community Design. This was a draft version. He went through the different corridors along Route 20.

Land Use & Community Design:

- **Introduction**
Land use forms the basis for master planning and determines, to a large extent, a Town's need to provide public facilities and infrastructure, transportation networks and services and protection of environmental resources.
- **Sturbridge Corridors:**
Land Use & Community Design Issues & Opportunities
Route 20
- **Opportunities: Gateways & Places**
Eastern Gateway – Most tourist first enter Sturbridge

Western Gateway: Route 20 & Route 148 – Entry to the Commercial/Tourist Zone

The Commercial/Tourist Zone – Creating places would break the corridor down into more coherent pieces in scale with pedestrian needs.

Route 20 – Planting of trees in the median strip will enhance the Commercial/Tourist area.

- **Route 131: Issues & Opportunities**

Route 131 Gateway – The Town should explore opportunities to create a much stronger sense of identity and entry, particularly since this gateway provides the introduction to one more coherent historic resources – the restored Town Hall, the Common and the Publick House.

Town Hall – once renovations is completed, the building will provide an excellent anchor to this area.

Remaining Corridor - objectives for preserving & enhancing the Town's rural nature are comprised by economic realities & this corridor's overall character has been altered to an extent, given its commercial zoning, which makes it hard to read the rural references.

- **Route 15**

Expanded activities could typically include such things as miniature golf, a golf driving range, batting cages and a water park just to name a few. Adding such uses could comprise the existing hospitality/entertainment zone particularly if the Town wants to reinforce its historic character.

- **Creating Visual Order**

There are landscape materials that allow visitors to read the history of a place. This would provide the Town with an opportunity to identify design values that it considers important in preserving the historic character of its corridors before the last vestiges of its rich history can only be found within Old Sturbridge Village.

Comments & Concerns from Board Members:

Signage on Route 20 – very confusing

Mass Highway causes issues granting curb cuts – not notifying the Town

Commercial – parking in the rear – support shared parking

Planting of trees in the median strip – could be restrictions with
Mass Highway

The Town & business work together to beautify the Commercial/Tourist

NEXT MEETING

June 8, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. at the Senior Center - Kick-off Focus Groups

On a motion made by Mr. Blanchard, seconded by Mr. Smith and voted 11-0 the meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.