

**New Marlborough Planning Board
Wednesday April 29, 2015**

Attendees:

Chair: Patricia Hardyman

Members: Judy Hattendorf, Holly Morse, Jamie Mullen, Charlie Parton

Other attendees: Brian Domina (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission)
Jane Tant (Secretary)

Call to Order: 7:04 pm

New Business:

Ms. Hardyman opened the meeting by thanking the reviewers at BRPC for their favorable determination regarding the application of New Marlborough Planning Board for 2015 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA). She then inquired of Mr. Brian Domina if application approval resulted in a defined budget of technical assistance hours. Mr. Domina responded that there is not a set budget of hours. He noted historically some projects require more hours than initially allocated and some require fewer hours.

After passing out copies of the New Marlborough application for 2015 DLTA, Ms. Hardyman directed attention to the task "Planning ahead for Housing" as cited on the application. She noted this task reflected a goal in the Town Master Plan to diversify housing availability.

Mr. Mullen expressed his curiosity as to the specific direction of the technical assistance.

Discussion turned to the revision of the Protective By-laws drafted in 2012 and 2013 but defeated in a 2014 special election. Although disappointed in this election result, all members agreed they still affirmed the goals outlined in the Master Plan which were the genesis of the By-law revision.

Ms. Hardyman asked Mr. Domina for professional advice in obtaining a better outcome potentially using improved strategies and techniques. She summarized the Board desired to create a document people want which still accomplishes the goals outlined in the Master Plan.

Mr. Domina responded he had no further advice to provide in terms of planning techniques. Additionally, he noted that the New Marlborough Planning Board did the most public outreach he had seen in six years as Executive Director of BRPC.

Ms. Hardyman asked if a more appropriate strategy might be incremental.

Mr. Domina noted that while dealing with specific issues is often effective, "deconstructing" a proposed By-law revision can present challenges.

Ms. Hattendorf asked if there was a profile of a successful planning board.

Ms. Hardyman asked if there were lessons to be learned from the experience of other towns.

Mr. Domina responded that towns differ in voter concerns and communities differ in acceptance of change. He provided encouragement stating the concepts behind the defeated By-law revision “were headed in the correct direction.”

Board members then noted what they perceived were the aspects of the defeated revision which created the most voter anxiety. Ms. Morse cited the expanded “table of uses”. Mr. Parton cited the five village centers. Mr. Mullen cited a voter perception of increased regulation.

Mr. Domina noted that in his experience zoning revisions gain traction when the community perceives a “threat” and rallies around a common cause. Zoning change is then seen as means of protecting the community from something “undesirable”.

Ms. Morse responded this aligned with her perception that New Marlborough voters did not see a need for change.

Board members agreed the “Measle Map” showing increased residential density in the more rural sections of the Town through parcel subdivision only seemed to resonate with a minority concerned about land conservancy and did not appear to gain traction with voters.

When queried by Ms. Morse about the potential for using “incremental steps”, Mr. Domina responded that an incremental approach might be useful, if the Board can tap into a common cause or issue on which diverse publics will agree.

Mr. Domina recommended the Board members review their Master Plan as a next step.

Ms. Morse agreed the Board could review the Action Plan section of the Master Plan with an emphasis on the first steps listed in that section.

Ms. Hardyman offered that to proceed in applying hours under DLTA 2015 the Board might develop a set of options or priorities in future planning.

Mr. Domina agreed that priorities should be determined. With these articulated, BRPC could provide recommendations on how to proceed using DLTA.

Ms. Hardyman noted DLTA hours are only available through December 31, 2015 so the timeframe to develop priorities and receive recommendations is limited.

Old Business:

Ms. Hardyman read a letter from the New Marlborough Board of Health to Ms. Johnson of Mill River Farm providing approval for poultry processing under the terms of applicable Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulations.

She then asked if the current Protective By-law provision which prohibits “slaughterhouses” should be revised.

Members present noted that Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A, Section 3 effectively makes the issue moot.

Mr. Domina provided Board Members with a copy of Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Agricultural Memo ALM 10-04 dated November 19, 2010 regarding

“Small Plot Farming: Amendments to Chapter 40A, Section 3. He also expressed his opinion that a Board of Health is a more appropriate body than a Planning Board to regulate food production.

Review of Mail:

- Town of Great Barrington Select Board Notice of Decision dated April 24, 2015 granting approval without special conditions of the application of GB Historic Preservation LLC for special permits for exterior alterations, structural changes and parking deviation in the Village Center Overlay District.

The meeting concluded with Ms. Hattendorf expressing her appreciation for the privilege of working with such a group of committed citizens during her tenure on the Planning Board. Mr. Mullen noted she had been “enormously additive” to the Board. Others echoed similar sentiments and Ms. Hardyman stated her desire that Ms. Hattendorf feel free to support the Planning Board in the future as a volunteer.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.