Planning Board Meeting
September 19, 2012

Members present: Jamie Mullen, Holly Morse, Charlie Parton, and Patricia Hardyman
Guest: Judy Hattendorf, New Marlborough
Meeting was called to order at 6:57 PM

Ms. Hattendorf expressed her interests in joining the Board and the desire to make a difference within the community. Ms. Hattendorf asked the respective Board members their reasons for serving on the Board. Mr. Parton reported that he has long been interested in planning and that he previously served as on a planning board in Connecticut. Ms. Morse described her service as a reporter for the Five Village News (5VN). In this role, she became interested the planning process. On the death of John Groener, she joined the Board. Mr. Mullen said planning had long been an avocation for him. He has served on the Board since 2002. Ms. Hattendorf indicated she had participated in strategic planning initiatives through her work and felt that skill was transferable to community planning. Mr. Mullen described the citizen planner trainings provided by BRPC (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission) and Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC). He indicated there were lots of opportunities to learn more about the local planning process. Mr. Parton explained that any appointment by the BOS is temporary; Ms. Hattendorf as well as he will need to submit their names for the ballot at the next town election in May 2013.

Mr. Mullen explained that the State Ethics Commission requires each member to complete an ethics exam. The certification must be submitted to the Town Clerk. When asked, by when the certifications need to be submitted, Mr. Mullen responded, "The sooner the better."

Ms. Morse then asked about the specific agenda for this evening's meeting. Mr. Mullen indicated the posted agenda calls for a review of the Public information (PI) meeting on Saturday, September 15th.

Prior to turning to that agenda item, reviewed were the minutes of the Board's September 5th meeting. Ms. Morse made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Parton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Reviewed were the draft minutes from PI Meeting. Ms. Hardyman asked what documents, if any, should be submitted as attachments to the minutes, i.e., the revised by-laws with and without the proposed changes highlighted, the PowerPoint handout, revised table of permitted uses, and/or the sign-in sheet? As the other documents were already available on the PB web page as separate documents, the decision was that the only attachment would be the sign-in sheet.

The Board discussed the need to clarify the term, "farm friendly" and its implications for the By-law revisions. Ms. Morse indicated that Mr. Domina had said that he would check on the specific meaning of the term within MGL. Mr. Mullen reported that the designation required real estate agents to notify any prospective buyer that it is a "farm friendly town." The implication was that buyers should be aware of the potential for agriculture-related equipment, noises, odors, etc.

Ms. Morse reported on her follow-up meeting with Ritch Holben and Tim Newman and then with Louise Yohalem. Their feedback included:

- Overarching tone – if we want to pass the bylaw revisions, going forward, we need to launch an aggressive outreach campaign that addresses residents' concerns very directly, is easy to grasp,

and is more narrative – i.e. planning is the tool to help us keep what we care about in our villages and build on it.

- Give longer presentations with more visually compelling slides and documents that include:
  - Visual images about potential impacts of the revisions for the Town anchored in concrete issues and their concerns.
  - Why we think it is a good idea, why now.
    - This will require a projector, screen, and technology – options include borrowing one from the BRCP or NM Village Association.
    - Need to put together an expanded presentation that speaks to residents.
  - A data driven argument that includes the number of lots available for development, lots.
    - Mr. Parton asked if we knew:
      - How many new structures would potentially be created by the revised Bylaw?
      - How many new wells and septic systems?
      - Could the Mill River water system support the additional development?
- 2,000 sq. feet seemed rather restrictive for retail within the villages. The Board should talk to Brian about the 2,000 sq. foot limitation in the Table of Uses.
- The "grandfather" and suspension processes need to be explained.
- Critical to link the Town's vision to the importance of by-law revisions.
- Key selling point for the Bylaw revisions is their elements of "protective" rather than "restrictive."
- The revisions seemed like a "huge amount" of information to present/digest all at one time.

As a member of the PI Meeting audience, Ms. Hattendorf described the Meeting as fabulous, very informative. However, from a subsequent review of the community survey as reported in the Comprehensive Plan, she learned about the source of some residents' resistance to change. She suggested that input is needed from the public.

Mr. Parton suggested that the Board should focus on PI audience's questions.

Mr. Mullen reported that Mr. Domina had pointed out after the PI Meeting that this was the context in which The Board wanted those questions asked, not at a Town Meeting when the vote was called. Mr. Mullen also reported on a conversation with one of the participants who indicated that he/she "just wanted things not to change."

Ms. Morse indicated that the revised By-law assumes that any new wells or septic systems were individual property. However, the question about pressures on the current village water systems continues. She noted it was problematic that the Board looked unprepared to address the question about the side set backs. She asked if any other local towns have "one size fits all" zoning. Sandisfield was noted as having "one size fits all" zoning.

Many thanks to Mr. Parton's personal calls to get people out to the public meeting and Ms. Morse's postings on the Maggie's list.

Noted was the need to set the tentative date for next informational meeting.

The Board then turned to outreach activities:

- Building Inspector - Ms. Morse and perhaps, Ms. Hattendorf, will reach out to him. His hours are: Wednesday from 8 – 10 am and Monday 5 -7 pm.

- Board of Health (BOH) – Meets the first Tuesday of the month – Its next meeting is October 2nd. We need to explore any potential impacts of the By-law revisions on the health and safety within the villages, for example the incidence of failed septic systems within the villages and the new technology septic systems.

- Fire Department – Need to reach out to the Fire Department to address questions and concerns raised at the PI Meeting. But first, Mr. Mullin will contact BRCP regarding the state fire code requirements. He will then contact the Fire Department to set up a meeting.

- Conservation Commission – Meeting date is the last Saturday of the month. Need to email to ask for 15 minutes of their time.

- Board of Selectmen (BOS) – Discussed was the best approach for returning to the Select Board regarding scheduling of a special town meeting, i.e., the importance of reaching out to the BOH, Building Inspector, Fire Department, local water companies versus returning immediately to the BOS with the attendance list and straw poll from the PI meeting. Mr. Mullen will reach out to the BOS to request a place on their agenda for 24th of September. He argued that the Board should emphasize that 40+ people attended the PI meeting and voted "yes" in support of a special town meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:44 pm.

Minutes submitted by:
Patricia Hardyman
Acting as Secretary