

Montague Planning Board

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October 28, 2014, 2014 7:00 PM
Town Hall Upstairs Conference Room

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ron Sicard – Chair, Fred Bowman, Bob Obear, Bruce Young and George Cooke
Staff Present: Walter Ramsey, AICP- Town Planner

Approval of Minutes: September 2, 2014

Motion by Bob Obear to accept the September 2, 2014 Planning Board Minutes. Seconded by George Cooke. **Motion passed.**

Montague 2015 Community Development Strategy (CDS) Annual Update Information Session:

Ron Sicard declared the session open and gave the floor to the Town Planner who presented the 2015 CDS. Comments from the floor and from the Board were allowed throughout the presentation.

Walter R: The plan is reviewed annually. The Planning Department solicits input from the community and drafts the update for approval by the Board of Selectmen. It is a requisite for Community Block Grants and also helps to prioritize development projects within the town over the next 3-5 years. The Community Development Strategy is meant to be a comprehensive, integrated approach to the municipality's community development priorities, summarizing public purposes set out in the principal planning documents—Comprehensive Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, Economic Development Plan, Housing Plan, ADA Transition Plan, and Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan—used by the Town of Montague. The Strategy is not a plan specific only to CDBG eligible activities. The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) further require that the strategy include the following:

- A discussion how the community will plan for and implement both CDBG and non-CDBG projects that are consistent with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles.
- An explanation how the community expects to address the priorities with CDBG and non-CDBG funds over a 3-5 year period.
- A list of projects and activities in order of the priority in which the community intends to undertake them, and provide specific goals and annual timelines for accomplishing its goals.
- Identification and description of the geographic target areas that are intended as the focus of community development efforts.

Feedback

- ADA Accessibility

Betty Teagle, a local advocate for ADA accessibility brought up the some thoughts about ADA Accessibility in town including, building egress, ADA parking at the school and post office, Education campaign about the 521Architectural law. She asked for an update the 2001 ADA Transition Plan due to the fact there are items that were carried forward but need to be revisited going forward. Walter Ramsey acknowledged that the Transition Plan has not been updated since 2001 and that it should be looked at going forward. This latter item was included on the project list under priority #3.

- Housing Rehabilitation Program

Deb Little, from the Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority was present to speak to the need for the housing rehab program. The Town has been involved with this program for many years. There are 34 active projects scattered around town: 19 Turners Falls, 8 Montague Center, 6 Lake Pleasant, and 1 Millers Falls. Programs and funding 2013 was \$60,000 - 4 people in program and 2014 \$140,236 – Deb explained that it is a deferred payment program. After 15 years 50% of the money owed disappears. It includes electrical, septic, wells, plumbing under code violations. Lead issues are a primary concern and they work in conjunction with “get the lead out”.

- Social Services Programs

2009 was the last town-wide survey that prioritized the social service needs in the town. It was recognized that this survey may need to be updated. Lynn Sullivan, from Franklin County Home Care Corporation was present to ask for continued support for the successful Meals on Wheels Program. She stated that delivery and wellness checks are crucial to the elders in the community. Betty Teagle asked for additional service call demand response for elders, or at least improved transportation options for seniors. Susan Mareneck, from the Montague Catholic Service Ministries in a written correspondence asked for continuance for early literacy and child care program started under the 2014-2015 Community Block Grant.

- Improvement of existing parks

Jon Dobosz from Montague Parks and Recreation was present. He asked that “riverfront access and parks” should be separate priorities. That change will be made. Jon stated that there are existing parks in 4 of the five villages. Upgrades and repairs are needed for the parks in Lake Pleasant and Montague Center, especially Rutters Park in Lake Pleasant. Betty Teagle pleaded for ADA accessibility improvements in parks.

- Montague plains management

The goal is to prevent illegal dumping and make the plains accessible to public. The addition of fire hydrants for wildfire prevention was recommendation in the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. 10 years ago there was a meeting to make into more recreational use. This has been dormant but still a community priority.

- New or upgraded highway facility

Bruce Young expressed hesitation on ranking the highway facility so high on the list since because the Planning Board’s endorsement could be construed as a political statement. An over-ride vote is inevitable for this project. Walter noted that it is a priority with the Capital Improvements Committee. The Planning Board asked that the priority be lowered in rank among community development projects.

- Repairs to Montague Grange

Mark Cortenzi will send an email to the planner stating that the Montague Grange Hall is in need of funding for rehabilitation. At this time they don’t have the means to qualify for USDA grants. They would like to be considered for CDBG funding in the future. The hall’s roof is in disrepair and has moisture and mold issues. It is a privately owned property. ADA improvements are needed.

Planner Updates:

- Site Plan Review Bylaw Amendments at 10/29/2014 Special Town Meeting

The members of the Planning Board have asked Walter to make section 8 more concise and bring clarity to have it ready for Town Meeting. Walter and David will work on it and the Planning Board gave their permission to have Ron Sicard sign it so it can go to the October Town Meeting.

- Housing Plan updates

The housing advisory group has been meeting. A draft will be coming in the future. A public information session will be held at the next Planning Board Meeting.

Motion by Ron Sicard at 8:11 PM to adjourn the October 28, 2014 Planning Board meeting. *Seconded* by Bob Obear. ***Motion passed.***

Approved by: _____ Date: _____