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MEETING DATE: April 15, 2008

ISSUE DATE: May 2, 2008

REFERENCE: Committee Kick Off Meeting
West Springfield Master Plan
West Springfield, Massachusetts
BTI Project No. 1292.01

PRESENT: Chris Nekitopoulos, Master Plan Committee Member
Bill Whitney, Master Plan Committee Member
Diane Crowell, Master Plan Committee Member
Suzanne Schneider, Master Plan Committee Member
Katie Harrington, Master Plan Committee Member
Marco Amato, Master Plan Committee Member
Cindy Romaniak, Master Plan Committee Member
Richard Werbiskis, AICP, West Springfield Planning Director
Joe LaPlante, Director of Community Development
Mary C. McCrann, Beals and Thomas, Inc.
Kristen D. Wilson, Beals and Thomas, Inc.
Tracy J. Adamski, Tighe and Bond, Inc.

PREPARED BY: Kristen D. Wilson, Beals and Thomas, Inc.

COPIES TO: Attendees
Edward Sullivan, Master Plan Committee Member

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this meeting was to kick off the West Springfield Master Plan process.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. The members of the Committee and of the consultant team introduced themselves. Joe LaPlante was in attendance at the meeting on behalf of the Office of Community Development. Richard Werbiskis, Planning Director was in attendance on behalf of the Planning Department.
2. R. Werbiskis gave an overview of the master planning process in West Springfield. The first plan was developed in 1963. This plan was highly implemented and the zoning was established from this plan. The plan was revised in 1974, however, it was not implemented nearly as much as the previous plan. The most recent plan was drafted

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- through the late 1990s and published in 2000. This plan has been implemented indirectly.
3. R. Werbiskis stated that in 2000, the government shifted from a Town form of government to a City form of government with a strong Mayor and a Town Council. After the Master Plan is completed, the Mayor will be directing departments to implement it. The Master Plan is to be completed by November of 2008. It is the Mayor's intention to appoint a permanent Master Plan Committee to review and update the Master Plan on an annual basis.
 4. The group discussed responsibilities of the Committee, Consultants and Planner. The Consultants will be guiding the process, however, most of the ideas should come from the Committee Members.
 5. Cindy suggested a good way to get the community involved and interested in the Master Planning process is to draw attention to important and controversial issues such as:
 - After School Programs
 - Golf Course
 - Big Box Stores
 - Developing Bear Hole
 - New Library
 - Paying for Trash
 - Traffic
 - If the tax rate should be split
 - Age Restricted Housing
 - Speed Limits
 6. The Consultants presented to the group that as part of the Master Plan process, a survey would be distributed to the residents to collect valuable information. R. Werbiskis stated that the surveys could be distributed through a scheduled mailing of the Tax Collector as well as through students at all of the schools.
 7. The Committee also discussed that they would like to get high school students in the community involved in filling out and administering the survey.
 8. Committee members expressed frustration with the 2000 Master Plan, that it is silent on some Planning Board issues, it is not easily readable and needs a better summary.
 9. The group discussed that they would like to have a coloring contest to gather support for the project. M. McCrann suggested that several members of the Committee work with the schools to support a coloring contest for the cover of the final document and exhibits to be used in the survey and at the public forum.
 10. The group discussed the draft survey. The overall feeling by the Committee members was that the survey was too long and didn't have enough controversial questions. The group discussed omitting several questions and adding others. In addition, Suzanne noted that there is a large Russian speaking population in the community and the survey should make it a priority to reach those residents. A revised draft of the survey will be distributed to the Committee members before May 7, 2008.

11. C. Nekitopoulos noted that transportation in West Springfield is a big issue, particularly the truck traffic that travels through town on Route 20 and Route 5. The Master Plan should address this issue and make recommendations. Overall, it should be an educational, easy to use tool.
12. It was suggested that maybe the Master Plan could include a Smart Growth/Green Techniques for municipalities section.
13. A comment was made that West Springfield is very poor in terms of what the town has for conservation land.
14. T. Adamski discussed that Tighe & Bond would be setting up a website for the project linked through the Town's website. A member suggested that a general comments section be incorporated.
15. The Consultants suggested that the Committee pick a time to meet in May to discuss the organization of the Committee and the draft survey. The Consultants are not scheduled to meet with the Committee until June.
16. R. Werbiskis suggested that May 14, 2008 would be a good meeting time and the Committee agreed.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Consultants will send an email to the Committee identifying tasks for each in preparation for the survey and the public forum.
2. Consultants will revise the draft survey and submit a copy to the Committee before May 7, 2008.
3. Consultants will plan a site visit to West Springfield in a few weeks and invite R. Werbiskis and members of the Committee to attend.
4. Consultants will begin collecting information for each element section and identifying the mapping requirements for each section.

These minutes are accepted as accurate and complete unless corrections and/or additions are received within one week of issue.

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