May 22, 2019

Minutes of the Rutland Managed Growth Steering Committee meeting on May 22, 2019

Minutes of the Growth Management Steering Committee
Small Meeting Room, Rutland Library
May 22, 2019 6:00 pm

The meeting was called to order at 6:13 pm by Chair Jeffrey Stillings

Members Present:
Jeff Stillings, for the Board of Selectmen
Shawn Moore, for the Conservation Commission
Richard Williams, for the Planning Board
Ron Barron for the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission

There were no members of the public present. The meeting was not televised nor recorded by RCTV Cable. Member Jeff Stillings took notes for the minutes.

Approval of April 24, 2019 Minutes:

A MOTION was made by Mr. Williams and seconded by Mr. Moore to approve the minutes of the April 24, 2019 meeting of the Managed Growth Steering Committee (MGSC).

Unanimous/approved.

Updates

Phase 2 Report:
Ron Barron, CMRPC, reports that he is half way through his final report of the Phase II managed growth study. He anticipates the final report to be ready at the end of June. Jeff Stillings asked if CMRPC would return to the town, either at a Board of Selectmen meeting or otherwise, to present his Phase II conclusion. Ron Barron said he would if that is what the town wants. Jeff Stillings stated that he would like for CMRPC to present the conclusion at a Board of Selectmen meeting at the least. Ron agreed.

Ron Barron said that in addition to the six recommended options presented in the Phase 1 and 2 process, he has come up with some more viable options that he would like to present to the Town:

1. Transfer Development Rights
2. Natural Resource Protection Zoning
3. Tax Increment Financing, which is a tax stabilization process where the town designates certain districts for discounts on the land value if it were to be built out. This is a tax incentive for commercial building. The Board of Selectmen would have purview on this option.
4. Workforce Housing Tax Stabilization, are incremental tax breaks up to three years for developing of certain housing. Ron Barron wrote a similar plan for the Town of Leicester, which is currently being considered there.

The additional options will be further detailed in the future CMRPC report back to the town.

Dick Williams commented that the Town previously attempted with subdivisions to have a rate for low income housing and breaks for town employees so that they could afford to live in town.

CMRPC Grants:
Ron Barron stated that CMRPC is pursuing a new grant to study Economic Development and other zoning changes for Rutland. This is a new project and not a Phase III of the last. Ron Barron stated that CMRPC’s grant funding relating to the Managed Growth phases expires at the end of June 2019. He advises to utilize the services of the Town’s full time Town Planner. The CMRPC can provide material toward an economic graphic master plan.

MGSC Future:
Shawn Moore, stated he was speaking as a Planning Board Member, asked how long the Managed Growth Steering Committee was going to continue. He stated that the Planning Board should be the primary entity. He asked why the public isn’t seated on the MGSC.

Ron Barron explained the background history leading up to the formation of the MGSC. The previous Town Administrator, Margaret Nartowicz initiated the process, and the plan was to pull members from each board to make up the MGSC. Ron believes a couple spaces were reserved for the public, and that it was advertised and only one person responded. Jeff recalled possibly
Carol Martens attending the early versions of the meetings.
Jeff Stillings advised that the members of the MGSC are appointed, and their reappointments are coming up at the end of June. Jeff will put the question on the BoS agenda to ask: if the Board of Selectmen should re-vote to continue the Managed Growth Steering Committee.
Jeff Stillings discussed conflicts of interest and the importance of abstaining if matters of conflicts of interest and personal fiduciary interests cross into the matters before the MGSC moving forward. Members should feel free to disclose and discuss, transparency is welcomed.
Shawn Moore stated that he is in the process of seeking a commercial business for marijuana retail and possibly cultivation, in the commercial zone, former Sims Cab building, next to the hardware store. The building and property is owned by Mr. Blair. If his potential commercial enterprise involves a conflict he would contemplate a replacement member from Conservation Commission.

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Jeff Stillings asked if other entities should be included in the MGSC, specifically the Finance Committee as a participant member and the Town Building Inspector, as a technical advisor.

MOTION: Dick Williams motioned to send a request to the Board of Selectmen to ask the Finance Committee and Building Inspector to participate in the Managed Growth Steering Committee. Motion seconded by Shawn Moore, unanimous approved.

There was discussion about including business organizations in the MGSC. Ron Barron stated that when the membership list gets too large, it becomes difficult to obtain a quorum.

Conservation Commission:
Shawn Moore stated that the Conservation Commission is interested in pursuing a Wetland Protection Bylaw. Dick Williams asked if such a bylaw would be Zoning or General? The Chair of MGSC will ask the Town Planner to research Wetland Protection Bylaws, specifically those that set back the distance of building from a wetland, and to determine if it is a Zoning or General bylaw. Discussion on whether a set distance for building near a wetland needs to be a bylaw and does it need to be by town vote.

Planning Board:
Dick Williams states that the Planning Board is interested in updating the Subdivision Bylaw. The Planning Board has a Business Meeting scheduled in June 2019.

Upzoning and Downzoning:
Discussion about the Upzoning and Downzoning option. Ron Barron stated that the concept of Upzoning and Downzoning, as it relates to setting minimum and maximum lot sizes, isn’t by a separate bylaw, but rather an amendment to existing zoning bylaw. The MGSC Chair will ask the Town Planner to advise which Zoning Bylaw applies if any.

Sewer Line:
Dick Williams stated that the City of Worcester has constructed a 36-inch main sewer line that reaches the Town of Paxton. Could Rutland tap into the Worcester line through Paxton and would it save money and add to the capacity allowance? Ron Barron will talk to the Transportation people at CMRPC.

Next Meeting
The next meeting of the Managed Growth Steering Committee will be Wednesday June 26, 2019 at 6:30, in the Library.
Meeting called for adjournment at 7:09 pm; motion to adjourn by Mr. Williams seconded by Mr. Moore, approved/adjourned.
Respectfully Submitted: Jeffrey A. Stillings, Chair, Select Board Representative to the Managed Growth Steering Committee, Scribe of meeting minutes