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The Department of Housing and Community Development,
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Our Town – Our Future

**A Community Dialogue on
Guiding Development**

Report on Guidance Received on March 21, 2006

March 27, 2006



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Introduction

The March 21, 2006, Lenox Community Dialogue was jointly convened by the Lenox Board of Selectmen and Lenox Planning Board. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission provided assistance, and the services of a consultant facilitator were funded through a Smart Growth Grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership.

Prompted by the large turn-out of Lenox citizens at recent Zoning Board hearings, the forum's purposes were:

1. To begin a community-wide dialogue regarding growth and change in Lenox, and what townspeople would like to do about it;
2. Garner support for planning activities, and
3. To gain guidance regarding priority next steps the Town might take.

The purposes of this report are:

1. To document input received from the 81 participants
2. To summarize themes that emerged during the evening
3. To suggest next steps

A complete set of transcribed notes is appended to, and is the basis for, this summary report. An accompanying reference document is the hardcopy of Town Manager Greg Federspiel's opening PowerPoint presentation, "Lenox 101". "Lenox 101" provided a briefing of the Town's current conditions as they relate to growth and development.

Observations

Public notices of the community dialog were placed in several locations throughout town, including village markets, post offices, the Library, and Town Hall. The evening meeting drew a large, attentive, and participatory crowd. Eighty-one participants is a very good turn-out. The last community forum on planning topics occurred nearly eight years previously during the master planning process. Clearly there is much interest in the community regarding growth and change, and there is also a desire to revisit town planning processes.

The March 21 session served as a "kick-off" event that can and should lead to subsequent deliberations on topics identified by the participants as being important to the community. When so many townspeople respond to the invitation to join in a dialogue, it is crucial that participants see that their time was well spent, that local leaders heard them, and that something happened because they took the time to come.

While eighty-one is a very good turnout, it is not the entire town. The evening identified issues of concern among townspeople, but not necessarily the stance or actions that the full community would support. Next steps need to aim at achieving an even more broad-based, informed, thoughtful discussion of Lenox's situation relating to growth and change, and options for managing them. An immediate step would be to make this report of results available to as many people as possible through varied media, particularly the Town website.

Themes of Citizen Input, and Implications for Next Steps

After a brief introduction, participants were evenly and randomly assigned into four breakout groups, each of which was led by a moderator and had a scribe to take notes. The discussion group participants were given 45 minutes to share their thoughts on the following questions:

1. *There will be change in Lenox.
As a member of the community, what are you most concerned about in regard to future changes?*
2. *How can the Town best shape development?
Where do you think it could fit best, and why?*
3. *Where do you think it will be hardest to fit development, and why?*

After reconvening in full session, scribes from each of the groups gave highlights of points raised in the smaller groups, so that participants could get a feel for themes of general agreement. In light of what had emerged, participants were then asked to make suggestions regarding what would be fruitful next steps for the Town. The evening ended with a "sticky dot" straw vote that allowed each participant to mark the three suggested actions that he or she felt should be given priority for action.

What follows is a list of themes that emerged over the course of the evening's deliberations. Along with each theme is a suggested set of next steps.

1. Development seems too rapid and out of control. The Town's growth management regulations are insufficient and/or not being administered correctly. Bylaws and administration need to implement a Master Plan.

The prevalence of these views is shown by the three top winners in the "sticky dot" straw vote:

Take out the Master Plan, Open Space Plan, Economic Development Study, Build Out Study. Dust them off and start implementing. [25 "votes"]

Reexamine Zoning Bylaws, including overlay maps, for clarity and consistency. [24]

Study and apply "Smart Growth" techniques. [20]

Implications for next steps:

A. A complete set of previous relevant studies and plans should be made available for public review and consideration. For example, reference sets could be available at Town Hall and at the Library. If available in electronic form, they could be posted on the Town's website, too. As part of public information and outreach leading up to subsequent sessions, townspeople should be urged to review these materials to get a sense of work that has been done already. One or more working sessions could then be organized to review the range of findings and recommendations from this body of work. Officials and other leaders could brief participants on progress that has been made on implementing the recommendations. This will also be a good time to consider carefully what it will take to accomplish key recommendations, and to weigh their advantages and drawbacks. With input from townspeople, the Town should determine whether planning documents need to be updated, and how that process might occur.

B. Although important, zoning is only one growth management tool. It is important for townspeople to know what zoning can accomplish, and what it cannot accomplish under Massachusetts statutes and court precedents. Moreover, townspeople need to know what current local zoning says, and what it doesn't say. In light of the points raised about Lenox's zoning at the March 21 session, Town leaders could plan and carry out a community workshop on zoning. This workshop could begin with an overview of zoning's purview and limitations in Massachusetts. Participants could then experience some "hands on" exercises or role playing, using copies of key parts of the local zoning bylaw. This would provide a sense of what is clear and what is not clear in the current document. Officials could point out the quandary presented by what neighbors would like, but which is not in the bylaw. The session could conclude with a discussion of what it would take to amend the bylaw to accomplish growth management policies that have been identified by the community.

C. It was significant that both the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board were clearly evident as hosts of the March 21 session, because successful growth management requires active participation [and later, implementation] by all Town boards, commissions, and departments. While the Planning Board has the statutory responsibility to spearhead, monitor, and advocate master planning, the effort will be futile if the community and Town government regard this as just "the Planning Board's thing". At key points and key meetings in the process, the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board both need to continue to be front and center. At the same time, however, the on-going work and responsibilities of these volunteer officials will impose restrictions on their availability to coordinate and perform all the tasks required. This is why many successful planning efforts establish a representative project committee with the charge of carrying the effort forward, briefing key boards and other groups on progress, and making recommendations for consideration and action by the appropriate boards.

In October 2005 a Growth Management Committee was established in Lenox to begin looking at planning and zoning issues. In light of the guidance received from the community on March 21, 2006, the Board of Selectmen and Planning board should review the composition and charge of this committee, and jointly agree on adjustments that might be needed. The Growth Management Committee should then be formalized with a joint appointment and charge from the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board. At first this dual appointment and charge might seem cumbersome, but in the long run it will pay dividends by helping insure the broad-based understanding and support that is required to achieve a Master Plan that will accomplish its intended purpose of being a guiding policy document that is useful and used by all Town boards as they make decisions on behalf of the community.

2. Examine and choose among the tools that are available to help the town deal with growth and change

The remaining action steps suggested by participants were aimed at this general theme:

Declare a building moratorium while reviewing and updating plans and zoning [25 “votes”]

Educate community about the Community Preservation Act to get it passed this spring [17]

Prioritize suggestion list to see what is allowable as a regulation [7]

Reactivate the Scenic Mountain Act [6]

Double check regulations on limiting clearance of vegetation during construction [2]

Implications for next steps:

A. These action recommendations could be added to the compendium of recommendations that surface from the review of previous relevant studies and plans [see step 1A, above]. This would put them in context with previous recommendations. While examining the advantages and drawbacks of these tools, it will be especially important to understand the limits and burdens that would be placed on all property owners, not just incoming outsiders.

B. The opportunity to act on the Community Preservation Act will be presented at Spring 2006 Town Meeting, because the CPA is on the warrant. At the March 21 session there were numerous suggestions relating to the purchase of open space, the construction of recreation facilities, preservation in the Historic District, and the need for homes that are affordable to local young families. These are all efforts that are fundable through CPA. By Spring Town Meeting registered voters need to understand the costs and benefits of adopting the CPA. This would also be a good chance to see how much of the CPA revenue would come from second homes.

3. Strengthen the Town’s economic and residential bases in ways that keep Lenox a “real town”.

The characteristics of “real town” desired by participants include:

- Homes and businesses are open year round
- Younger families find local jobs that enable them to live here
- Environment continues to be semi-rural: undeveloped vistas and ridge lines; greenery and appropriate scale even along major roadways of 7 & 20; redeveloping and reuse rather than going to undeveloped areas.
- Current scale and mix of land uses are retained in the Village Center and Lenox Dale
- Small industries are located in appropriate locations, and businesses look like homes
- Housing is affordable to local young people [a concern voiced more than might have been heard in the past]

- Village Center maintains charm [but absorbs new development through careful infill]

Implication for next steps:

A. These attributes of a desired future lie at the heart of the informed, thoughtful deliberations that Lenox needs to carry out. When townspeople roll up their sleeves and delve into what it would take to accomplish this list, they will most likely find that no one tool will make such a future happen. Market forces, local policies and regulations, numerous private choices and decisions, numerous funding sources – all these and more will need to work together continuously, collaborative, and proactively over many years. As townspeople deliberate recommendations and potential action steps, two questions that will need to be addressed are, “What will it take”, and “Who will do it?”

4. The community needs to master “Town Finances 101” in order to make good decisions relating to growth management.

During the March 21 Dialogue there were numerous questions and assertions relating to the respective contributions to town life that are made by various land uses. Questions were raised pertaining to the cost of town services in comparison to the tax revenue associated with different types of construction, for example second homes versus year-round homes. Participants also raised issues relating to infrastructure capacity, capital expenses, and other financial matters relating to current and future development.

Implication for next steps:

A. Local officials who are responsible for Town finances should prepare for and convene a workshop that could be called “Town Finances 101”. The session should feature analyses of the respective Town revenues and service costs associated with:

- The second home industry, including historic “grand estates”
- The tourism industry
- Other businesses: home-based and cottage industries in comparison with commercial, retail, and industrial settings
- Year-round residences
- Undeveloped private properties
- Properties in tax exempt ownership

There should also be an assessment of other sources of revenue and other expenses. An overview is needed of the capacities, operating costs, & projected capital expenses relating to Town infrastructure & facilities. From a growth management as well as financial perspective, the workshop should evaluate policy options relating to infrastructure, for example: should there be a boundary beyond which sewer and/or water lines cannot be extended? What requirements for hook-ups, or limitations on hook-ups, should the Town consider, and why?

Not everyone will be able to attend such a workshop, even if it is offered at different times and places. Written summary materials, however, can be communicated through the press, on the Town website, in Town mailings such as the Town Census, and as handouts at other meetings.

5. Be fair.

Numerous equity issues were raised by the Community Dialogue on March 21. The discussion regarding multigenerational housing needs is an example of the growing awareness of the social inequities that result from an inflated housing market. Some participants also voiced the caution that the community's desires for no change need to be balanced against the rights and needs of property owners. Some of these property owners are the very ones who for decades or generations have held significant tracts of land open for the community to enjoy for free. As townspeople evaluate the tools suggested under theme #2, above, they need to remember that regulations apply to current residents as well as newcomers, to owners of single parcels as well as developers of large parcels.

Implication for next steps:

A. Being fair and equitable is not only right, it is practical. It will help Lenox put resources of time, energy, and money into selecting and adopting tools that will achieve the necessary level of town-wide understanding and support. Amendments to zoning, for example, require a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting. This high threshold is set by state statute because of our society's traditional high regard for the rights of property owners. Successful growth management works with divergent views to achieve broad-based agreement.

Summary

Lenox has in place the elements needed for a successful effort to agree on, to adopt, and to implement a range of growth management tools to guide the community into a desirable future. These include:

- An interested and committed citizenry
- A body of planning work and base of information relating to the town's situation and options
- Technical supportive resources such as Town staff and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Market forces to work with
- Momentum of public debate from recent development applications and from the March 21 Dialogue

Some of the suggested next steps can take place over the next few weeks. Some will require more time to prepare. All can help maintain the momentum to agree on what the community wants to accomplish, how it can be done, and who will do it.

**“Our Town – Our Future”
A Community Dialog on Guiding Development**

Tuesday, March 21, 2006

6:50 – 9:15 P.M.

Morris Elementary School Cafeteria

Transcription of Notes: REVISED DRAFT 3/24/06

Purposes:

1. Begin to identify general themes of agreement about guiding growth and change in Lenox
2. Gain guidance regarding next steps that the Town might take in planning for the future desired by townspeople

Attendance: 81

- 1. There will be change in Lenox.
As a member of the community, what are you most concerned about in regard to future changes?**

Discussion Group #1

Moderator Greg Federspiel

Scribe Steve Sample

Quickness of development

Losing the character of the town

How do we preserve what we have instead of new development?

Rehab what we have instead of building new on undeveloped land

Need development of light industry as a means of growing our tax base instead of always more new homes

Need more bike paths, open space, recreation

Residential to commercial: hotels, business – encourage the adaptive reuse of older buildings

Recreational open space

Affordable housing

Restrictive zoning

Chain restaurants, etc. – consider banning them or at least imposing strict design standards

Dividing of large historic parcels into subdivisions

Parks, kids sporting venues; kids are our most important asset, we must not leave kids behind

Business advisory group needed to foster a stronger year-round economy

Master Zoning Plan needs to be revisited, more must be done to draw tourists in
Heavy trucks should be banned on Walker and Main at night. Main Street signage
needs to be improved

Discussion Group #2

Moderator Kim Flynn

Scribe Linda Procopio Messana

[* = points of general agreement]

Master Plan not followed in growth

Need to implement. Need to have more open space

Scenic Mountain ridge protection

* Infrastructure shortfalls, both water and sewer

* Village is quaint and historic – Keep!

* Affordable solution to housing

Overdevelopment – protect aesthetics

* More Planning Board control

* Bylaw change to protect against overdevelopment

Keep on top of infrastructure with development

Growth has to happen – why? Stabilize

Seem to be pushing growth – take a hard look

Should consider all in growth decisions

Community participation

* Huge homes in modest neighborhoods

Quality preserved – increase diversity

Preserve open space – neighborhoods – mix

* Semi Rural character seems to be getting lost

Update Master Plan and Bylaws

RIA Overlay – starting to make change

* Site Plan Review for homes larger than 4,000 s.f.

Zone for 20 years in future

Young people cannot afford to live here

No volunteers to keep community running, e.g. Fire & EMT

* Natural Beauty and open space

* Use tools – Post Farm is 350 acres

Self-Help money dedicate to open space

* Grants to use for open space

* Access to Kennedy Park for use

Conservation Restrictions

Discussion Group #3

Moderator Lauren Gaherty

Scribe Franki Mahoney

Change is happening – good schools

Overdevelopment

Losing small neighborhoods
Maintain good schools
Keep new development in scale with existing
Hurts the infrastructure
Unaffordable
Sewer on Walker and Hubbard and East Streets: need to have sewer in these areas before more development comes in
Open space along Housatonic River
No growth, no taxes
Growth should be site appropriate based on comprehensive growth studies
Don't outgrow infrastructure
Worried about second homes – are they registered voters? Don't provide volunteers for town services – fire, ambulance, town boards
Townhouses, taxes, schools
Second homes might be a blessing – don't use the schools
Fear losing more Gilded Age properties to development – large vacant homes if market changes
Development of 7 & 20 leading to change of character
Taller buildings being built – change zoning
Make town center attractive for more people to come in
7 & 20 site is unsightly [Price Chopper] –keep it looking better; façade improvements welcome
Balance landowners' rights with neighbors' rights
Fragile neighborhoods – existing pathways may close, so shuts off access for neighbors
Give tax breaks for incentives to preserve land
Talk to other towns to see how they preserve while growing
Children can't afford to stay in town
Need more small industry
What does Lenox want to be?

Discussion Group #4

Moderator Joellyn Warren

Scribe Pam Mackie

Find ways Town can save money

Building more = costs more. The cost of providing town services continues to rise. If taxes also continue to rise, can new growth/new development actually be a good thing? The types of businesses coming to Lenox are service jobs. Those employees that work in these industries cannot afford to live in Lenox.

Development of second homes is major issue. Changes the character of the town.

Would like to see mixed residential & commercial uses. The Lenox Shops are a good example.

Need to find ways to allow for mixed ages of people good. Affordable housing needed for young children/families. Lenox fire, police, teachers, and others probably cannot afford to live here or move here based on the escalating cost of housing.

Need to find ways to provide housing for all people at all stages of life.
[Multigenerational housing]

Open spaces are opportunity for huge development that may not be appropriate.
Would like to find ways to keep this space for town uses, affordable housing, mixed uses.

Why build more hotels if there are some for sale already? Need to mandate that buildings that are vacant or underdeveloped that are zoned for business/hotel/retail use be the first location for new developments as opposed to vacant land or open space.

Can the town look at ways to change incentives – such as adopting a different tax class for second homeowners? This may keep numbers of second homes down.

The town needs to do something immediately with the Bartoni property – can Town buy it?

Lenox is a cultural community; heavy industry is not going to work here. Need to bring in something else such as light industry for higher wages.

Water is a natural resource that must be protected. With new developments occurring, can existing infrastructure handle this?

Do we have studies from different towns that have similar issues? Should learn what has worked in other towns.

Town's overall population has not changed in number in 35 years, but the dynamic nature of its population has. The town is aging, but so is the national population.

The number of students in schools will dwindle

Keep the town real. The seasonality of the town, especially the village, needs to be addressed.

If the CPA can help protect land and provide for housing, it should be considered.
Taxes on second homes would help fund it. Town Meeting voters would have to determine how the tax is applied town-wide.

Redevelop in nodes to limit growth

2. How can the Town best shape development? Where do you think it could fit best, and why?

Discussion Group #1

Use what we have, keep development concentrated on the strip at the north end of town

Promote business in Lenox, Industrial zone along crystal Street & Willow Creed Road
Protect Rt. 7 & 20 North from too much growth

Have Rtes 7 & 20 stay green

Fewer summer homes

Bring industry into town, slow residential growth, down zone a large portion of town to reduce overall density

Need balance between second homes & year round residences

Town should purchase property

CPA should be adopted

Discussion Group #2

[* = *points of general agreement*]

Any parcel with conservation restrictions [should not be developed]

* In locations where there is already development

Existing infrastructure areas

* Look at maximum buildout with overlay

Commercial [village] corridors

Big houses on small areas make taxes go up

Be proactive, not reactionary [zoning]

Site Plan Review to private housing

* In existing areas scale housing to surroundings

* No overgrowth in any area

* Protect what we have

* Lenox part of Berkshire County; don't push everything into Lenox: share

* Protect the Dale

Look at Crystal Street commercial

* Clean up strip's north end

Balance rights of landowners with community's rights

* Brushwood Farms – developed and improved

New young families with children

Grant money to preserve older properties

Preserve open space: look at maps & corridors

Sense of community

* Stay in areas where development is

Discussion Group #3

Business buildings that look like homes: hide development

Need clearer bylaws – not all are understandable.

Need to be enforced

Need economic growth

Look to surrounding towns

Be proactive rather than reactive to growth

Build up town stores – town should help bring them in and keep them

What is development?

Commercial development was concern, but more pressure from house development.

Bylaws may have to change

Need clear understanding of wetlands

Raise money to help town buy property to keep from being developed

Correct the bylaws

Residential & commercial in appropriate scale

* Bylaw decisions from boards need to be fair and equitable

Investigate TDR & CPA

Families near schools

Need to bring small commercial, individual businesses into tax base

Make 7 & 20 more commercial with incentives, nice businesses parks

Keep gateway theme

[* Improving and fairly enforcing bylaws was major topic of discussion,

Also CPA was hot topic when it was described]

Discussion Group #4

Better to develop properties that are partially developed already

Professional office space at the gateways seems logical.

At gateways the developer is taking space already developed

Encouraging continued redevelopment at the Lenox Shops may be nibbling away at Kennedy Park

Not wise to have stores that close down in the winter or an excess of expensive boutiques

Keep a real town, with stores that stay open all year like grocery shopping and bakeries, for locals to shop

In addition to new development along the strip, the town should look to green-up Pittsfield Lenox Road

Can bike trails be a benefit to the community? A path system might be okay, but the town should invest in existing community centers and other resources like a swimming pool, parks or gyms.

Improve the strip and continue to allow commercial/retail, keep building there

If the sewer line were extended along East Street, there is a concern about the number of residential lots that would be created.

Lenox Shops going in the right direction

Can 2nd homeowners be taxed differently?

Different connection fees for new housing

Town should commit to preserving open space, such as buy up spaces along East Street that would otherwise be cookie cutter home lots.

The Town should mandate new development to include 20 – 30% that must be affordable, based on DHCD standard.

Allow permanent housing, and restrict second homes

The size of homes is getting out of control. Can the Town restrict the size of these new homes?

3. Where do you think it will be hardest to fit development, and why?

Discussion Group #1

Cluster zoning

Village historic district preserved

Protect ridge lines

Protect vistas

Natural gateways should be preserved as our green entrances to town; preserve a clear edge to our historic village

Keep Lenox Dale residential: preserve its strong community character and identity as a close knit residential area

Discussion Group #2

Where no infrastructure
Tighten up Title V [septic]
Fight extension of sewer lines
No East Street sewer line
Great Estates
Where topography restrictions

Discussion Group #3

Keep the Dale
Keep the balance
Proper mixed use, development for young families
The strip
Chain stores don't have local ties, corporate success too important, money is drawn out of community so doesn't circulate locally, jobs are lower level, loss of individuality
Develop near schools for those with children
Avoid development that detracts from older neighborhoods – issue of scale
Work on areas that are already commercial
Housatonic and 7 & 20 area for commercial
Depends on who you are
Bylaws have to be fair to both parties concerned
Be proactive
Transfer of development rights. Small tax moneys matched by state
Enforce bylaws [neon signs]
List of wants according to importance
Need to give weight to our ideas
Village is jewel; keep beautiful
Hardest to take would be great estates: large open spaces, traditional open space, need incentives from Town not to develop

Discussion Group #4

Would like downtown to stay the same. New zoning may allow too much development in downtown.
Make better use out of commercial center without affecting abutting areas.
Adopt a moratorium to give the town time to see what it needs/wants
Redevelopment of existing space is better than vacant land or open space.
Center of town should be retained. New homes in and around village should be in scale with other homes.
Beware of displacing wildlife with new developments.
Town should buy up green space

Highlights from the small groups: any themes emerge?

[Points raised in Discussion Groups as reported by their Scribes,
sorted by major topics]

Priority Open Space Areas

Protect ridge lines and vistas
Protect gateways/entrances into town
Open spaces associated with Great Estates' lands
Avoid places with topography restrictions
Farmland
Preserve natural beauty
More access to Kennedy Park
Beware of displacing wildlife
Find ways to raise money to purchase properties

Growth and Development

Avoid overdevelopment
No overgrowth in any one area
Be proactive, rather than reactive, in regard to development. Shape the development
Keep Lenox a real town; businesses and homes that stay open all year
Mix of opinions regarding whether to foster different types of development
What is "development"? [Commercial and residential development got different reactions from Group #3; too hard to generalize where to place development without differentiating which type is being discussed]
Need to have, understand, & implement a Master Plan for growth management
Build in areas where infrastructure already exists
Need to understand and adopt Community Preservation Act as growth management tool
Need to protect the Historic Village
Preserve Lenox Dale residential and community character
Difficult in areas with no sewer [e.g. East Street]
Mix of opinions on whether to extend sewer system [e.g. Walker, Hubbard, & East Streets]
Worried about the quick pace of development
Need parks
Preserve historic resources
Growth needs to be managed so as not to overburden water & sewer, other infrastructure
Use the tools available [e.g., grants, local parcels, Community Preservation Act]
Schools are an important asset
Limit height of buildings
Housing needs to be scaled to fit into existing residential areas
Avoid mansions that become deserted
Need to understand the interplay between growth and taxes

Balance the rights of property owners and needs/rights of the community
Use tax incentives and tax breaks to encourage desired types of development and preservation
Need to continue to invest in community resources such as Community Center
Lenox is part of the Berkshires; don't push everything into Lenox.
Fewer summer homes

Priority Development Areas

Routes 7 & 20 for carefully sited and properly scaled development. Avoid overdevelopment. Keep as green as possible
Improve the "strip" area
Downtown infill
The Village as historic development center, but note desire to preserve the Historic District
Redevelop existing developed areas, including parcels where development was started but not completed
Rehabilitation, adaptive reuse of existing underutilized or empty buildings
Develop and improve Brushwood

Affordable Housing

Mixed use developments that include housing for families
Local young people can't afford to remain in Lenox
Need young people in town to staff volunteer services such as Fire Dept.
Need multigenerational housing

Economic Development

Mix of opinion regarding industrial park, but was a theme of the need for skilled, better-paying jobs so younger people can stay in Lenox
Smaller industries and light industry that fit here and provide taxes, jobs
Promote Lenox as a destination for businesses to move into
[See also Mixed use developments that include housing for families, above]

Zoning

Adopt a moratorium while reviewing and revising zoning
Zoning needs to achieve what Master Plan envisions
Planning Board needs more control
Site Plan Review for residences larger than 4,000 square feet
Better enforcement of zoning and other bylaws

Other

Bike paths
Talk with other towns to learn from them about their growth management
Important that what we've said is heard

Taking into account what has emerged tonight, what are your suggestions for fruitful next steps? [with count of “votes” to prioritize each]

Take out the Master Plan, Open Space Plan, Economic Development Study, Build Out Study. Dust them off and start implementing. [25]

Declare a building moratorium while reviewing and updating plans and zoning [25]

Reexamine Zoning Bylaws, including overlay maps, for clarity and consistency [24]

“Smart Growth” techniques studied and applied [20]

Educate community about the Community Preservation Act to get it passed this spring [17]

Fewer Variances from Zoning Board of Appeals [8]

Prioritize suggestion list to see what is allowable as a regulation [7]

Reactivate the Scenic Mountain Act [6]

Find ways for the Town to save money [5]

Double check regulations on limiting clearing of vegetation during construction [2]