

MINUTES
Town of Sheffield
Community Development Strategy

COMMITTEE MEETING

November 6, 2013
Sheffield Town Hall
4 pm

Attendance

Committee members: Rene Wood, Martin Mitsoff, Ed Lord, Alicia Dulin, Phyllis Webb, Kathy Orlando, Helen Johnston

Members of the public: Michael King

BRPC staff: Patricia Mullins, Jaclyn Pacejo

1. Transportation

Committee members read the merged transportation section and suggested the following edits:

- Add introduction
- Under goal 1, bullet 4 change “that would” to “to”
- Take out reference to public rail in goal 1. Add public rail as separate bullet under goal 1.
- Change reference of “seniors and youth” (goal 1, bullet 1) to “general population, including seniors and youth”.
- Change reference of “physically/medically-impaired and lower-income residents” to “general population, including those with physical or medical challenges”.
- Add reference to “paved and unpaved” roads to goal 3.
- Move goal 3, bullet 2 to goal 2 as it refers to walking and biking.
- Add “connections” or “links” to goal 2 with “paths/routes requiring immediate attention” to clarify items are routes.

2. Economic Development

- Committee members read the draft economic development sections created by Rene and Phyllis.
- Phyllis stressed the importance of strong economic development goals and that creating an Economic Development Commission (EDC) is imperative for the town.
- Concern of stepping on other people’s toes that have responsibilities related to the EDC.
- Sheffield had an EDC. It had 3 members and it was difficult getting people to join. The committee was disbanded.
- Economic development will happen, and that the issue is whether or not it will be guided.
- Economic Development section is important in the CDS and should take up at least 1 page.
- Extra information and brainstorming sheets can be included as an appendix for the Town.
- Suggestion to add: Promote/Enhance mixed use housing in downtown area.
- Martin will merge the two economic development sections.

3. Housing

- Housing was second in priority at the first public meeting for the CDS.
- Great Barrington-Sheffield Housing Needs Assessment is in currently in draft form and has not officially been accepted by the town. Mass Housing Partnership is reviewing the document. If you have any comments/questions/feedback on the document, please refer to Jaclyn or Pat.
 - Rene recommended reading page 37 (Data and Observation section) as well as the Planning Strategies and Recommendations sections that follow.
- Repair and preserve existing housing (roofs, septic, code upgrades, etc)
 - CDBG and other funding programs
 - Create guidance for individuals interested in this
 - Housing rehabilitation specialist
- Support accessory units and funding assistance for accessory apartments/housing
- Ensure that Sheffield residents (and their families) can be the beneficiaries of these housing programs
 - Prioritizing list

- Workforce housing is important to address the “gap” between what housing costs and what workers can afford
- Good Neighbor Next Door Program – 50% discount on price of home for firefighters, police, EMS, etc
 - Update: This is only available to homes in federally designated “revitalization areas.” Pittsfield qualifies but Sheffield does not. There are other programs for first time homebuyers (refer to Berkshire Housing programs).
- “Market” rate rental housing is still not affordable for many people who do not qualify for “affordable” programs
- How to capitalize on the large houses in Sheffield that could be turned into rental units/multi-family
 - Incentives to owners/buyers
 - How to place some responsibility for upkeep on renters so owners not reluctant to do rentals for fear of damage to home
- Some owners choose not to rent out apartments due to difficulties with tenants (and the eviction process)
- Need for safe (affordable) senior housing with accessibility
 - One story or first story
 - In-home services
 - Close to town and services
- Accessory units to bridge senior needs and youth and workforce needs
 - Explore financing and privately sources funds to help create/fund accessory units (i.e. CT and VT models)
- Explore Community Preservation Act
- Look at unfriendly/friendly 40B and how senior and family housing would address
- Explore acreage sizes in zoning to encourage housing in areas you want to encourage housing (including for seniors and 18-34s)
- Leasing land as 99 year lease to build on
- Evaluate the use of town-owned land for housing, particularly across from SBRSD campus (perhaps have ownership pass from town to another organization)
- Informational meeting at senior center
- Could in-home services (e.g. house-keeping, medical, conversation/companionship) help some people stay in their homes?
- Community supported housing
 - clustered
 - with service office/ transportation
- Capture opportunities of houses and land coming on the market due to demographics etc to work with town/organizations to create workforce gap/affordable housing
 - Economic development opportunity with private business or organization (like Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires)
 - Land across from SBRSD; houses in center of town, etc.

4. General

At the end of this process, BRPC will create a notebook with copies of all minutes, agendas, brainstorming for Sheffield to keep on file.

CDS document specifications

- Maximum page limit: 7
- Font: Times New Roman
- Font size: 12
- Margins: ¾ inch

Volunteers

- Housing (draft): Rene, Kathy
- Land Use (draft): Kathy, Phyllis
- Economic Development (merge sections): Martin

Next meeting

- Meeting will be November 14 at the Sheffield Town Hall from 4-6 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.