

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR SMART GROWTH GRANT PROJECT  
TOWN OF BRIGHTON - FRANKLIN COUNTY, NY  
September 4, 2008**

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**A Public Hearing was held on Thursday, September 4, 2008 for the Smart Growth Grant Project, at 6:40 p.m. at the Brighton Town Hall, 12 County Road 31 (a.k.a. Jones Pond Road) in Paul Smiths, NY, with the following:**

**PRESENT:** Supervisor Peter Martin

Council Members: Sheila Delarm, Jeffrey Leavitt, Steve Tucker and Lydia Wright

**ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Elaine Sater - Town Clerk

**RESIDENTS:** There were several residents present

**GUEST:** Rebecca Buerkett, FX Browne, Inc.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Public Hearing was Called to Order by Supervisor Peter Martin at 6:40 p.m. (After the conclusion of the Public Hearing for the Cable Franchise Agreement)

**NOTICE OF MEETING:** Notice of this meeting was posted on August 22 on the Town Clerk's Sign Board and at three post offices and businesses in the Town. It was published in the Adirondack Daily Enterprise on August 22 and 28.

**Supervisor Peter Martin** gave the floor to Rebecca Buerkett who is in charge of the Town's Smart Growth Project.

**Rebecca Buerkett:** Applied for a grant from NYS DEC for the Town in the amount of \$46,400 to survey the Town for possibilities for Smart Growth. The following was submitted as the summary and goal of the project:

**Project Summary**

The Town of Brighton, a rural town located in southern Franklin County, has received an Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth Grant for a sustainable economic development project. The Town of Brighton currently has no land use plan, zoning ordinances, or comprehensive plan, which leaves the town vulnerable to unsuitable development practices and diminishes the town's capacity to encourage sustainable business growth. The goals of this Brighton Smart Growth Project are to assess the town's existing and projected land use, to build awareness of cooperative opportunities between local businesses, and to determine ways to improve the economic development in the town by maximizing our natural, cultural, historical, and creative resources and providing economically feasible housing and business services.

**Project Partners**

Town of Brighton (Town Council and Supervisor)

Adirondack Watershed Institute at Paul Smiths College

Diane Leifheit (Point of View Studio)

F. X. Browne, Inc. (Planning Consultant)

**Project Goals**

Smart growth does not mean "no growth." This project will build on past land use planning efforts in the Town of Brighton in order to develop a more implementable smart growth plan. In addition, the project will investigate solutions for some of the biggest issues facing Brighton residents: the potential closure of Camp Gabriels, high energy costs, poor telecommunications access, lack of affordable housing, lack of public transportation, and poor visibility for local businesses.

Goals for the Brighton Sustainable Growth Assessment Project include:

1. To analyze existing and future land use patterns in order to identify both environmentally sensitive areas and areas that would be beneficial for smart economic growth
2. To build awareness of cooperative opportunities between local businesses.
3. To determine ways to improve the economic development in the town by maximizing our natural, cultural, historical, and creative resources and providing economically feasible housing and business services.

**Scope of Work**

The project will include a review of existing planning documents, two public meetings (one at the beginning of the project and one at the end), a land use evaluation, an economic resource evaluation, and the development of a Smart

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Growth Plan for the Town of Brighton.

The results of the economic and land use assessment will be compiled and evaluated in order to determine economic development alternatives that will improve the economy of the town of Brighton while at the same time protecting the town's vital environmental, cultural, and historical resources. The alternatives will be prioritized and presented in a final Smart Growth Plan. Examples of alternatives that may be evaluated include (but are not limited to):

- ▶ Encouraging sustainable businesses, particularly in light of any future potential closure of Camp Gabriels
- ▶ Increasing affordable housing
- ▶ Maximizing cultural and historical awareness and education
- ▶ Enhancing tourism
- ▶ Developing arts and crafts "trails," agricultural tourism "trails," and historical "trails"
- ▶ Town center revitalization
- ▶ Encouraging green building practices and developing cooperative purchasing programs
- ▶ Developing town ordinances that, when implemented, will help improve the appearance of the town
- ▶ Improving telecommunications in key growth areas
- ▶ Enabling local residents to become more self-sustainable
- ▶ Developing networks of home-office workers
- ▶ Encouraging cooperative advertising
- ▶ Adding value to local resources

**Project Contacts**

Sheila Delarm, Brighton Town Council – 327-3202; sheila@newandimproved.com

Rebecca Buerkett, F. X. Browne, Inc. – 891-1410; rbuerkett@fxbrowne.com

**Rebecca Buerkett:** A brochure will be created of what is available in the Town and could be published for distribution at various locations in the Town.

***PUBLIC COMMENTS:***

**Rouse Fountain:** Disagrees with the summary that there is "no land use plan". The Adirondack Park Agency made him get a permit to sell land. There are also building permits and DEC permits that have to be obtained in the Town.

**Robyn Burgess,** a resident and the APA's local government liaison: the Town needs to pay attention to hamlets in sensitive areas such as Rainbow Lake where uncontrollable growth can take place, 1 acre lots can be used for building.

**Pat Willis:** A poll could be sent out to all residents, has more suggestions of items to be considered

- Are ideas relative to economics
- The White Pine Road Bridge needs to be repaired immediately, it is crucial to White Pine Camp and Paul Smith College (PSC) sugar bush:
  - ▶ a tour bus driver refused to cross the 5 ton limit bridge and the Camp lost business
  - ▶ PSC has not been able to get equipment into the sugar bush to clean the site, the maple sugar produced pays for the running of the sugar bush for the Forestry Department
- Fallen trees and loose logs in the lakes need to be cleared up, hazardous and causing loss of users

(**Rebecca Buerkett:** This is a DEC issue and should be addressed to them.)

- Dick Bemish did an article on the Town of Chester and they provide the following in their town:
  - ▶ Notice on their website of who needs rides and who can give rides
  - ▶ Emergency Service Coordinator who identifies people in need of help
  - ▶ Rising assessments are driving people out of the area, remedies could be to:
    - Put a tax on second home owners and use the money to build low cost housing.
    - Use the Land Trust, Senator Little could help with this, land belongs to the Trust and can sell with a 25% appreciation in value, and value of improvements. If house is lost to non-payment of taxes, Trust can pay taxes and rent home back to family
  - ▶ State Aid to Towns for promoting energy efficiency, parks, and capital growth
  - ▶ Broad Band access

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- ▶ Hamlet expansion to allow for more housing
- Can Gabriels be designated as a hamlet, needs to be looked into.
- Public access to Jones Hill Trail
- Businesses in appropriate places, not in residential areas
- Site Review for new commercial projects, there are large tracts of land that could be come available for building, such as Paul Smiths College and paper company lands.
- Historical Sites should be preserved: Town Hall, churches, St. Gabriel's Church could be purchased with grant monies, PSC is not interested in keeping up the maintenance of the building, Keese Mills Church needs maintenance
- Historical Building survey needs to be completed, it was started by the Brighton Architectural Heritage Committee a while ago but it would be nice if the Smart Growth Project could finish this survey.

**Rouse Fountain** said he was on a previous planning committee and was told that a hamlet has to have a sewage system.

**Robyn Burgess** said moderate intensity areas could be changed to hamlets, under new plan.

**Resident:** The State Correctional Facility Camp Gabriels has a sewage system.

**Sean Connin:** If a "GIS" inventory is done, invert it to "KML" for "Google Earth" users.

**Rebecca Buerkett:** The information would be available on the website

**Rouse Fountain:** Do a survey of lands available for building, include zoning by APA. Osgood Pond area is being used extensively by boats and canoes. There are no facilities available for people to go to the bathroom. There is a lot of discharge into the area; this could possibly cause damage to the water over time.

**Julie Stemp:** There are no facilities near the lakes. Has also noticed increase in activity. A water steward would be beneficial to the area.

**Resident:** Homeowners Association had volunteers in the area over the summer.

**Bob Eckert:** If this project can get the telecommunications part moving it would help the community immensely. For example, Sampson's Bar and Grill has internet access through cable and does a great business. People from Mecahm Lake Campground can access email at his place. Many people use "Hues net" so maybe a group cooperative could be formed for this. Wide area networks are also a possibility. The economic impact of the internet access is large. People need it for economic improvement. At lot of dollars spent in the community are from tourists. There is a large untapped area of horse trail systems that are not being maintained near Slush Pond and Hays Brook. A trail system to Meacham Lake from the Sheep Meadow has not been completed and would be a good loop for people to use to get to the Star Lake and Star Mountain area; DEC has let it go. There are a good number of local people that have vacation rental property on the internet. These, as well as student rentals, could be more efficiently combined on one website.

**Rouse Fountain:** The Osgood River area is a good hunting and fishing spot. There were fire trails before the horse trails were put in. This was a snow machine area at one time. It could be a sportsman paradise at certain times. The Rainbow Flow area is a good area also. The State of New York owns most of the area.

**Supervisor Peter Martin:** The inmates used to keep these trails open for DEC. The DEC liaison position was not filled so no one takes charge of this anymore. One DEC employee would get several crews working at once.

**Bruce Sawyer:** The inmates could bring out wood from cleaning up trails for residents to use for heating their homes.

**Resident:** What is the time line for this project?

**Rebecca Buerkett:** 6 months to 1 year, this would be a start, maybe not everything would get addressed but it would be a good start.

**Steve Erman, APA Economic Affairs:** The ideas should be documented and let DEC know what the Town wants. There

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is a lot of wild forest area that the Town can decide what to do with it. Camp Gabriels needs to be looked at, what does the Town want to happen if the Camp does close.

**Rouse Fountain:** Look into the heavy traffic effect in the area. When the back areas are opened up the impact of usage needs to be monitored. The Osgood River area is a good area to look at first. The Jack Rabbit Trail is also heavily used. High Peaks is an example of over usage.

**Rebecca Buerkett:** Jones Pond is also heavily used.

**Bob Eckert:** He would rather see the infrastructure put in place to allow for the heavy usage. The quality of the infrastructure is important so its not a negative experience.

**Lisa Hanson:** PSC's Forestry students have preformed maintenance on some of the trails in the past.

**Sean Connin:** Interested in the economic development of this project. Works at home on the internet, more people in the area will be doing this in the future.

**Ann Mullen, White Pine Camp:** Concerned about the bridge, the fire truck and snow plow can't go over the bridge. The Camp could possibly loose their insurance if the snow plow can't use the bridge. The garbage truck doesn't want to cross the bridge either. There are several hundred people who use the camp each year, they spend a quite a lot of money in the area. It would be a shame if this camp couldn't continue to operate because of the bridge. There is a new steering committee running White Pine Camp and they are trying community outreach. Over 400 people attended the open house in August, people came from all over the area and from out of State. It would affect the Town if the Camp could not continue to run because they can't get plowed out.

**Jeffrey Leavitt:** Would like to rebut the bridge weight limit. On August 15 John Disbro of the State of New York DOT said the weight limit on the bridge had been lifted so any size vehicle can go over the bridge. Franklin County is supposed to notify the Town of this and they have not done so. The garbage truck can pick up their garbage. The "jersey" barriers will stay in place until repairs can be made. A fire truck can get over the bridge. The snowplow cannot because of the wing.

**Sheila Delarm:** There is a question as to the ownership of the bridge. The cost to repair it is about \$200,000. The Board is trying to determine the ownership before spending town tax payers money if the bridge in fact belongs to the county or to a third party.

**Rouse Fountain:** When is the next public hearing on this project so people can be updated on the progress?

**Rebecca Buerkett:** There will be another public hearing at the end of the project. The project will be discussed at the Board meetings and updates put on the website. Anyone who wants to be a part of the committee or give her ideas should contact her.

**Bruce Sawyer:** Senator Little should be kept informed also.

**Rebecca Buerkett:** Senator Betty Little and Assembly Janet Duprey are being kept informed.

**Sheila Delarm:** Asked Pat Willis to have someone from the Brighton Seniors contact the DEC about the safety of the trees in the lake. She also thanked Rebecca Buerkett for the work she has done to make this Smart Grown Project happen.

There were no further comments from the public.

**Motion to Close the Public Hearing at 7:30 p.m., made by Supervisor Peter Martin, Second by Steve Tucker, Aye 5 (Delarm, Leavitt, Martin, Tucker, Wright), Nay 0**

Respectfully Submitted,

Elaine Sater, Brighton Town Clerk