

Brighton Smart Growth Grant Committee
Meeting Notes
September 19, 2008

Meeting held at Brighton Town Hall from 3:30-5:00 pm

Attendees: Rebecca Buerkett (F. X. Browne, Inc.), Robyn Burgess (resident), Sheila Delarm (Brighton Board), Leslie Karasin (Wildlife Conservation Society), David Knapp (Brighton Supervisor), Jeff Leavitt (Brighton Board).

Smart Growth Plan Outline:

Rebecca handed out a draft Smart Growth Plan Outline to group members for review and comment. This document will continue to evolve. Hunting and Fishing Area Enhancement was added to the alternatives list.

Telecommunications

The committee agreed that based on the public hearing, the lack of adequate telecommunications (mainly high speed internet) was the biggest issue deterring economic growth in the town. North of the college through McCollums does not have cable, nor do other “last mile” (individual property or private road) locations. DSL won’t service the town because the phone lines are antiquated. Verizon could be contacted? We discussed the fact that Brighton alone has no pull but maybe we could band together with other area towns facing the same problem. Leslie pointed out that there is a regional broadband initiative in the works and suggested that Rebecca attend the Common Ground Conference on Oct. 14 to learn more.

Brighton Website

The site could and should be updated with a business directory (once this project is complete), the Smart Growth Plan, and Smart Growth Grant Committee meeting notes. Rebecca will provide content to Town to pass along to Rainbow Graphics. Also, it was pointed out that the website currently does not list the town board meeting dates and times.

History/Background

Rebecca has been reviewing historical documents regarding planning and zoning attempts in the Town of Brighton. In the 1980s, a Comprehensive Plan and a Zoning Plan were drawn up by hired consultants but neither was ever passed. In the 1990s, a Planning Board was established, which met regularly for a year. A Site Review Plan was developed, undergoing several revisions and a public hearing was held. The Site Review Plan stipulated that the Planning Board would review and approve new construction and development above a specified size and scope in the town. A Town Planner was hired on a part time basis (borrowed from Town of Santa Clara) to assist with developing the Site Review Plan and to help with any planning issues. The Planning Board was an educated group of town citizens representing diverse interests and all “neighborhoods” in Brighton. Diane Leifheit was part of this process and provided her insights on the experience. Despite all their hard efforts and despite numerous revisions to the Site Review Plan, the Plan was never passed and the Planning Board was eventually disbanded. One of the main reasons why people were opposed to the Site Review Plan was that they felt that the APA already put enough restrictions on private land. Another reason was questions about the qualifications of the individuals on the Planning Board; however, the hiring of the Town Planner

was intended to address that issue. Diane pointed out that local planning efforts were and are necessary because the APA regulations are designed to protect the natural environment of the Adirondacks, but not the community character. Rebecca reminded the group about the Rainbow Lake Road sand pit controversy that happened a few years ago where a private landowner tried to open a sand and gravel pit in the middle of a residential area, causing extensive public outcry. The project was within APA guidelines, but was not complementary to surrounding properties. The developer eventually abandoned the project because of the controversy, but that might not happen next time. Should the Town of Brighton re-visit the Site Review Plan?

Town of Brighton Brochure

As part of the Smart Growth Grant, a brochure(s) will be created to highlight the businesses and tourism opportunities in the town (assuming tourism is our most important industry and therefore economic growth potential). The brochure(s) could help highlight small businesses, and act as a cooperative advertising initiative. The grant committee decided that we should prepare two separate brochures, one for Brighton recreation/tourism, and one a general Brighton business and service directory. Both brochures could be made available at the stores, PSC admissions, VIC, etc. The goal is to keep visitors in Brighton that come to the VIC or for other reasons by letting them know what other opportunities exist here. Diane recommended a booklet-type brochure similar to the one she prepared for the ADK Artist's Guild. The brochure could be 16 pages, in color, and for 3,000 copies the cost would be approx \$1,800. This initially seemed like a lot, but with multiple sponsors and listings the cost could be less than \$50 each. It seems reasonable that the Brighton area businesses would be willing to pay such a small cost for the advertising. The committee thought that some maps might be helpful, particularly hiking, canoeing, skiing, snowmobiling maps, and business location maps. The following ideas were put forth for inclusion in the brochure:

Attractions

VIC
Corn Maze/Tucker Farms
White Pine Camp
PSC Events (phone no)

Food

Gus' Adirondack Diner
Shamrock
St. Regis Café (PSC)
Sampson's

Lodging

White Pine Camp
Camp Hatteras
Wakanda
Pinewood
Campgrounds/sites

Events

VIC calendar
ADK Canoe Classic
Brighton History Day
PSC Farmer's Market

Hiking/Skiing

Red Dot Trail
VIC
Hays Brook
Slush Pond
Jackrabbit Trail
Snowmobile Trails

Canoeing/Boating

St. Regis River to Rainbow Lake
St. Regis Lakes
Race Loop
Jones to Church Pond
Rainbow Lake
Motorboating opportunities

Smart Growth Project – Moving Forward

- Rebecca handed out a list of Brighton businesses that was provided to her by Pat Willis. It is from 2005, with some revisions in 2007, and needs to be updated. The Committee agreed to review the list and provide changes to Rebecca. Once the list is complete we will post the list at local stores in efforts to solicit input from residents.
- We need to find out more about regional initiatives such as Common Ground and Transition Town, and get involved if appropriate. There is an economy of scale issue with a small town, and combining forces regionally increases our leverage. Common Ground is a diverse group of Adirondack community leaders and citizens that are looking to effect change, especially in the areas of property tax reform, energy, and high speed internet access. Saranac Lake Transition Town is a new group that is “exploring ways to partner with all the members of this vibrant and creative community to establish a stable and sustainable future.” Their particular focus is reducing oil dependence and building networks for bartering goods and services.
- Rebecca will begin meeting with different groups in town. Recommended groups included: Brighton Seniors, Fire Dept., Paul Smiths College (particularly regarding affordable housing and green building), Churches, Brighton ARCH, ADK Park Institute, Lake Associations, Youth Groups (boy/girl scouts/4H), Brighton Conspiracy co-op, farms, Camp Gabriels, VIC.

Action Items:

1. Leslie will provide Rebecca with information about the Common Ground conference
2. All members will review list of businesses and Smart Growth Grant outline and will submit changes to Rebecca
3. Diane will provide Rebecca with information about Transition Town

Next meeting: October 27, 4:00 pm, Town Hall.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Rebecca Buerkett