

Meeting #2 Meeting Minutes – May 21, 2009 Crane St

Facilitators

Denise Clemence

Richard Whitney

Monique Manna

Topics of Discussion

Introduction to Group / Purpose

Ground Rules

Upcoming Events / Community Interests

General Discussion

Action Items

Next Meeting Date / Location

Introduction to Group / Purpose

A formal introduction to the founding group was presented. Purpose of group was discussed. Concerns have been brought forth by members of our community on the negativity of issues taking place.

Group leader Dick Whitney asked that all in attendance formally introduce themselves and perhaps tell everyone something about themselves and what has gotten them involved.

It is our understanding that everyone is concerned for the betterment of our town. By working together this will move us toward solutions to the issues at hand, and help promote the positive aspects of our town.

Ground Rules

- Respect each other & their opinions
- **No personal attacks will be tolerated.** Any person violating this rule would be asked to leave the meeting.
- Looking for new information and opinions on access road – we are beyond the landfill would like to move forward.
- Entire group agreed that we need to address the negative perception that Southbridge receives from surrounding towns. Everyone agreed we need to work within our own community to stop this.

"To look toward the future of Southbridge ~ To accentuate all the positives that our town has to offer ~ We respect differing views and opinions which will make us much more knowledgeable to the issues at hand."

Upcoming Events / Community Interests

- Meet & Greet – Announcement about the Meet & Greet made. June 18, 2009 6 – 8PM at the Community Center. All welcome to attend and meet town officials and visit Town Service Displays in a casual setting. Some suggestions were also made about getting the word out for this upcoming event. Dennis Martinek offered to make flyers for Trinity Catholic Academy. Monique to email Dennis flyer.
- Community Clean Up – It was announced the Future of Southbridge group is seeking volunteers for a community clean up. All those interested please email any member of the group.
- Southbridge Fest 2009 – Reminded those in attendance of the upcoming Southbridge Fest. This year’s Southbridge Fest will be held on the common. Parade starts festivities off at 11:00AM down Main Street.

General Discussion

Discussion was brought up about several different topics.

- AO Displays – Southbridge Hotel & Conference Center
- Window Displays
- Map of Southbridge
- Access Road

AO Displays – Southbridge Hotel & Conference Center

- Dick Whitney spoke of the AO Room where our meeting was held and thanked Donna Silverberg, Gabriel McCarthy for having done what a wonderful job they have done decorating the room with AO memorabilia from the Museum. A majority of the AO Paintings in the collection are on display in this room, including the 4 original Herman Stoope painting.
- AO items will be on display at the Southbridge Hotel & Conference Center in the Lobby Wednesday, Thursday & Friday (May 27th, 28th & 29th) All were encouraged to stop in and look at the displays. Dick wished to thank Donna Silverberg for her invaluable assistance and is now assistant curator for the Museum collection!
- A model of the AO Sculpture will also be on display and is presently at the Savers bank. To date \$58,000 in contributions have been made, \$27,000 is still being sought in donations. Those interested download the donation summary off of Dick Whitney’s website.

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Window Displays

- Downtown Partnership is seeking to put window displays in empty store fronts. The idea behind this is to get those who come through town to stop and walk about town to see what some of the history of Southbridge and what Southbridge has to offer. e.g. Restaurants, Stores. It was mentioned perhaps we should volunteer to help the partnership get this going, perhaps offer items. AO Museum collection items are planned as a start, along with historic photos of downtown to show how these building appeared in the past.
- Ideas were also brought up about making movie clips about Southbridge and displaying these in the store fronts.

Map of Southbridge

- Dick Whitney Spoke about a new resident in town offering to draw a map of Southbridge. Florence Sangermano is a geographer who emailed Dick Whitney and made mention in the email that she would like to make a map of our town. She is volunteering her time to do this for the town. This is a map for the town that can be used by the residents – this would be a user friendly map that visitors and residents to highlight areas of Southbridge. Dick Whitney to follow up on this.
- Also mentioned was “Google Maps” This would be a benefit to Southbridge to add maps of interests to Google Maps. This would be a scroll over – when you go over with mouse a highlight would come upo.

Access Road

Discussion was made on the Access Road. Several people brought up different points of views, all were heard respectfully.

- Spoke of doing a walk up the access road with DPW and making movie to show residents of Southbridge (Present on Cable Access Channel 12) Denise Clemence already spoke with Town Manager Chris Clark & DPW Director Kenneth Kalinowski and was given the okay to do this. Date and time to be confirmed and announced.
- It was made clear that the Industrial Access Road is the road that brings you up to parcels of land that are to be sold. The town does not build the Industrial Park, a developer does this. The town does sell the parcels.
- Joint revenue producing projects between the town and landfill operator can not be started until water and sewer are installed. Example: LGE Project

- The need for a water tower at the industrial park was discussed. This is part of the original plan. This would be used for fire safety purposes not only for Southbridge, but also potentially for the Charlton side of the Industrial Park.
- The Industrial Park / Access Road has been in planning for over ten years. Someone asked which would be the smartest way to go with this plan, the answer was “The smartest way to go is with the monetary bonding deal with Casella.”

Miscellaneous Discussion

- After introductions and before the upcoming events statements were made by some that attended the meeting.
- James Sottile stated that he envisions the “Future of Southbridge” to become the conscience of the town council. To pass on suggestions from the group meetings on different issues in the town. Jim stated that he sees this group as uniting the left and the right.
- Denise Clemence stated that the Town Council must work together “How do we accomplish this?”
- Gabe McCarthy stated “We focus too much on the negative” Gabe spoke of the opening of the DPW Building on Guelphwood Road how nice it was.
- Gabe spoke of what other towns have done and is doing to improve and move forward. An example of this was the town of Putnam, CT what have they done to improve their town? It was mentioned 20 years ago you would not want to have been there ...today they have made a 360° turn. He suggested someone look into this.
- George Chenier spoke of the Industrial Park in Oxford, MA and the business it has brought to that town.
- Dennis Martinek spoke about a Grant Writer and how this would benefit the town. He spoke about getting someone out there on the road to bring in the business. It would benefit the town to find someone that knows how to “sell” the town. Need to have parcels available to show the potential buyers.
- James Sottile mentioned to bring in high school students to act as interns or some other capacity at the town hall. Perhaps for community service hours or political science class. Also, utilizing the Media Center of the High School to help with videos of Southbridge. Contact Town Manager to discuss perhaps this can help our town in some way. This may also help students get a better interest in town government – positive influence on future generations.
- Paul St. Jean mentioned that a light Industrial Park is going is in development at the top of the hill at the corner of Dresser Hill Road & East Main Street. Sixty acres of land was just sold for this. This is a private development.

Action Items

- Dick Whitney to follow up with Florence Sangermano on Map of Southbridge
- FOS to get in touch with Media Center at Southbridge High School / John McHugh in regards to students doing small videos on Southbridge.
- Denise Clemence to confirm Date & Time with Town Manager & DPW Director regarding access road walk & taping.

Action Items Still In Progress

- Towns website is poor and out of date – need to utilize the internet (Collect information from Town Managers Office on status of the Towns Website)
- Check Status of DVD about Southbridge
- Put together pamphlets to support Southbridge Promote the entire town...We need a salesman for Southbridge – Someone to sell Southbridge!
 - *Monique putting together "News Letter" to highlight and promote Southbridge.*

Suggestions

- DPW Facility on Pleasant Street needs cleaning – is this something the Community Clean Up group could look into? Possibly Do?
- It was suggested to send a letter to Lynne Simonds at the Community Connections. They may want to set up a display table at the Community Meet & Greet.
- The Ten O'Clock Club meets every other Tuesday would it be possible to get them the information they may also wish to set up a display table at the Community Meet & Greet.
- Gabe McCarthy suggested we look at other towns that have managed to combine undesirable industry with their community to benefit the community.