

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Thursday, March 20, 2008

On March 20, 2008, the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at 7:00 PM at the Town Office Building in Lakeville. The meeting was called to order by Chair Yeatts at 7:05 PM. Selectmen present were: Selectman Yeatts, Selectman Evirs and Selectman Maksy. Also present were: Rita Garbitt, Town Administrator and Tracie Craig, Executive Assistant.

Meet with representatives from the Executive Office of Transportation regarding South Coast Rail

Kristina Egan, South Coast Rail Project Manager, Larissa Brown and Matt Smith of Goody Clancy, Melissa Costa from Representative John Quinn's office, Walter Healey, Brian Hoeg and Kevin St. George, Planning Board members, Linda Grubb, MBTA Rail Advisory Committee representative for Lakeville, Mike Schroeder and Joe Chamberlain, Conservation Commission members, Jeanne Alexander of Canpro Development, and Nancy Durfee of SPREDD are present for the discussion.

Ms. Egan said that the Executive Office of Transportation (EOT) is in the process of planning the South Coast Rail Project (SCRP). They are still evaluating the route and need to do the environmental review process. In 2010, they will know the route, stops, etc. They are looking at this project as a project to promote economic development in the South Coast area and as an environmental protection project. They are looking at marrying transportation planning with land use planning to prepare for the growth that will come from it. Lakeville has already had the train come to the Town and experienced growth. However, this has been residential growth, not economic development. You plan for concentrated residential development and promote commercial development where it makes sense. We want to work with the cities and towns to preserve their most important resources. Goody and Clancy will be putting together a Smart Growth Plan for the region and work with the individual towns to prepare them for the train. In the summer in 2009, there will be a Smart Growth Corridor Plan, which includes 30 other communities as well as Lakeville. Funding has been provided to SRPEDD for an additional 15 hours to work on how to get ready. This plan will show a map on where growth wants to be concentrated and where preservation needs to be. The Commuter Rail Task Force will come up with a plan for the region. We want to know what your aspirations are for your town. We are trying to look at how we prepare for the growth.

Ms. Alexander said the train is already here, how do we go forward. Ms. Egan said the train could connect in Taunton, going north. The freight line that comes in bypasses the Lakeville Station. We could run to Fall River or New Bedford to over north of your station to Boston. Another option is a bus rapid transit up Route 24. We would go north from freight trains through the Hockomock Swamp to the Hockomock Station. Another route is through Attleboro. The southeast region is the most rapidly growing region in Massachusetts. Mr. Hoeg asked if the train was continuing down to Wareham. Ms. Egan said it is proposed, but not a part of the plan. If we went from Taunton, up to Middleboro, then Boston, we would veto double or triple track. We might be able to just extend to Wareham. There is a bottleneck from Braintree to Boston. The negative is that we have to build through Quincy and Braintree, which is dense. We would have to sink the Red line and that is very expensive. Selectman Maksy asked if you do the Taunton to Lakeville to Boston, it seems shortsighted. There is no chance to expand down to the

Cape. Ms. Egan said we would need triple track. Selectman Maksy said maybe that should get pulled off the table. Ms. Egan said there are ten (10) options, three (3) would involve going through Middleboro. We have agreed that we can only take into account projects that are on the books. We are taking Wareham seriously because it has been talked about a lot. It's a balancing act. If we build through Middleboro, there are far less environmental impacts. Chair Yeatts asked about the three (3) options from Middleboro and if trains would back into Lakeville. Ms. Egan said it would cost us at least ten (10) minutes to back into Lakeville, which is not a good option. The Lakeville station isn't in the right place for us to do it. We would still run trains from Lakeville, but bypass it for the South Coast Rail project. We might add another station in Middleboro. She could not commit to not moving the Lakeville train station. It is too early. Ms. Alexander said the train is vital to Canpro's development. Selectman Maksy said times are important. Ms. Egan said the worst performance time is from Fall River/New Bedford due to steep angles and curves. Maps are available at southcoastrail.com or by calling (617) 973-7314. Mr. St. George asked why we are talking about going from Lakeville/Middleborough to Taunton when the Hockomock Swamp is the most direct route to New Bedford/Fall River. Ms. Egan said there are a lot of different towns that don't want us to go through the Hockomock Swamp due to environmental issues. There are some globally rare species in Stoughton. The Hockomock Swamp has more real values other than swamps. It has vernal pools that filter a lot of groundwater for the cities and towns around there. There is already a rail bed there, but we need to figure out how much of an impact there would be. The Feds were not consulted during the previous study. Under the Clean Water Act, we must get a permit from the Army Corp of Engineers. We must do a fair assessment on ways to get people back and forth to Boston. This is not based on just the trip time and geography. Ms. Grubb said if the Attleboro line has a stop in East Taunton, it will affect Lakeville with development. All routes will impact Lakeville.

Ms. Brown said they need to hear from Lakeville. Looking at the corridor, there are 31 cities and towns. What could the potential economic development implications be and what could the land use and growth implications be? We will be working with the communities in the region. Lakeville will get a growth and preservation portfolio. Every community is different. We want the communities to think of themselves as part of this region. We have two (2) firms of economists doing the economic modeling and projections. Ms. Durfee said SRPEDD has begun to go out to the communities in the region. South Coast is the fastest growing region in the State. Development is inevitable, it needs to be steered to the right places. In almost every Open Space Plan, it says we want to keep open space open. We have to preserve where we like and build where we should. Water resources would be at the top of your list to protect. Ms. Brown asked about the values of the community, what is most important? What is the biggest challenge? Imagine that you won a trip to the Olympics in China, and you were asked to describe Lakeville. Chair Yeatts said when we did the Master Plan, the most important thing was protect the quality of life. It is our responsibility to protect the water resources. Long Pond is in trouble from aquatic invasives. The western side of Long Pond has seasonal communities, where there are non conforming 5,000 square foot lots with wells and septic systems on the lots. The Town has been working on a water and sewer project for that area, which is very slow in coming. Except in a very few areas, Lakeville does not have water infrastructure. We've done what the State has told us. We are depending on the 40R development being built. The Lakeville Hospital project is important also. Ms. Brown asked if this is a walkable project. Ms. Alexander said the MBTA is vital for the housing development. Ms. Brown asked about infrastructure. Chair Yeatts said there is a sewage treatment plant being built for the 40R. It has been hard to do mitigation for archaeology because the development just fits. Our economic health is dependent on this. Ms.

Garbitt said there are other commercial lots available in the park. Chair Yeatts said a lot of the high dry land in Lakeville is gone. What is left is marginal. We have 70,000 square foot house lots.

Ms. Brown asked if the Town was happy with the way development has taken place. Mr. St. George said yes. Selectman Evirs said it is a little slow. Ms. Brown asked if the Town was happy with the character. Chair Yeatts said there is too much residential growth and not enough commercial. Selectman Evirs said Lakeville is the Mayberry of Massachusetts. A quaint little town in the middle of nowhere. He said New Bedford has agreed to take the sewer from the shorefront community, but \$28 million is needed. When an architectural review of Town buildings was done, they concluded that we need a new Police Station. Our population has doubled since the Station moved there. The Fire Department is too far away from the schools, so we need a satellite Fire Station. They have also recommended a new Fire Station. We have large facility bills on the horizon. We have spent a lot of money on our schools, a new middle school, renovated the high school and intermediate school, and a new roof on the elementary school. That was \$54 million at the expense of other Town services. Ms. Garbitt said the train station opened in 1997 and our building permits doubled the next year. We were cited as the second highest growth town in the late 90's to 2000. It has affected our school systems.

Ms. Brown asked about any differences in demands and expectations versus old and new residents. Mr. Hoeg said new residents want more services, sidewalks, street lights, etc. Mr. Chamberlain said there was an immediate response for Town services. New residents don't understand we have part time staffers. Chair Yeatts said there is a large 55 and over complex being constructed on Route 79. Our population is aging. There is some farm land remaining, some cranberry bogs. Ms. Schroeder said no matter who she talks to, we talk about wildlife that people see. In Weston and Wellesley, they don't have frogs and turtles. We will lose them. We need to look at keeping our wildlife corridors, from the bioreserve in Freetown to the Cedar Swamp, APC up the Nemasket River. We need to be thinking of how wildlife can cross rail beds. Ms. Brown said they are looking at the regional level, not just local. Where are the key connections for regional open space networks. Pat Chernow, resident of Sassamon Circle, said we have ponds, but no pathways to walk or enjoy them. Chair Yeatts said there is 4,000 acres of bioreserve that have walking paths. Jim Laham, resident, said he has been on walks around the ponds. He came from the north of Boston, moved from DC, initially to New Bedford. We had to drive to Lakeville to get the train. That's what made him move to Lakeville. His major concern is that this station not be touched. The Town has developed a plan around the station. The draw was the rail and the community itself. There is no traffic; there is open space. This could compromise the Lakeville Station and we might lose it. He does not want to go to Middleborough to get the train. Lakeville needs to retain its integrity, water, open space. It's not urban.

Mr. Healey said the train station has allowed Lakeville to become more of a bedroom community to Boston. There is a fairly transient population. The white collar population moved in and moved out. The station has a lot to do with development. Mr. Laham said it is an hour train ride if you are lucky to Boston. The Greenbush line was number 1, but you need the service for the train. They need to build in efficiencies, but cannot do it to the detriment of the riding population. Since the implementation of the Greenbush line, sometimes trains don't show up. Ms. Chernow said they have been delayed more often at the bottleneck. Last week, there were 30 minute delays leaving Lakeville. Mr. Chamberlain said the bottleneck goes further, due

to the lack of capacity at South Station to handle the trains. If you keep putting more trains into service, you are still going to be delayed. There is more of a demand for commuter rail to and around 495 rather than into Boston. Ms. Brown said a lot depended on dispersment of employment. Downtown Boston is still a hub for jobs. We will measure how the greater availability of labor in South Coast will benefit employers in Boston. This will not solve the problems for people who work in Natick or Framingham. Mr. Healey said in Mansfield and Wareham, there are huge malls being opened up. You need to take into consideration those type of jobs becoming available. Ms. Brown said this transportation project is an opportunity on how to manage growth and preservation in this region. If the State wasn't trying to think about this in advance, the train itself wouldn't be bringing in smart growth. Selectman Maksy said the population escalated when the train came in. New Bedford and Taunton have permission to take water for their two (2) cities from our ponds, but they are pretty close to the maximum. They will need more water for growth from the train. Ms. Brown asked about a Town center around the T station. Selectman Maksy said we need an economic center, industry to offset residential growth, and we are trying to promote this area. Our schools can barely survive with the money we are taking in. We have a great Capital Plan. Chair Yeatts said that 40B's are a constant threat. Ms. Egan asked if Lakeville has reached its 10%. Ms. Garbitt said we are at 8.8% under Planned Production so we can currently say no to 40Bs.

Chair Yeatts said there is a lot of affordable housing along the shorefront. Ms. Brown said if you are going to continue to see some growth, doesn't it make sense to try to direct that growth around a creative compact village with opportunities for people to be able to work close by and not drive. Not just create more compact growth around stations, but reduce the increase in people's miles traveled. Are you thinking of this area growing into a village. Selectman Evirs said the train station and industrial park came together. We have the 40R with 200 plus units. The Lakeville Hospital property was purchased with the thought of having businesses in front, offices in the middle and residential properties in the rear. There is a CVS planned, a Rent All building, and Route 79 is being relocated across from Commercial Drive. There is additional 55 and over housing within walking distance. We have commercially developed Lakeville in that area, where there is some municipal water, but no sewer. There is a little part of that area that is serviced by Taunton and Middleborough for water. We have rezoned an entire neighborhood and other spots in that area. To move the train station will throw it all out the window. Ms. Alexander said that Canpro wants to build a retail site near the train station. Ms. Schroeder said we need to think of that area as a center that is not just pedestrian friendly, but attractive. The hospital property has the potential for that, but the plans have been modified. It could have been better. You don't want people to just drive in and out. Ms. Brown said Middleborough has a typical New England walking town center. You could create a connection. We could provide you with guidelines for these projects so you get the best version. Mr. Hoeg said that has been developed over 20 years. The train station was not there then. It was not developed as a town center, but cut up as a corporate park. Ms. Schroeder said Lakeville had no center when she first moved into Town. The Route 18/105 intersection has changed with the library, the coffee shop and the Arts Council Fair, it has suddenly become a Town center. Selectman Evirs said historically it feels like a center. He spoke about the State owned land on Bridge Street. We would like to get control of that. We request every year to have the State give it to us. Ms. Garbitt said the State is talking about selling all their surplus land and offering it to the Towns first. Selectman Evirs said if something comes up to purchase, the residents step up.

Ms. Grubb spoke about the private agricultural lands on Bridge Street because the Nemasket River is a significant resource. We have to think about how we are going to protect the river. It's a stress basin. There are wells and septic systems right there. We need a sewer line possibly to help us. Ms. Schroeder said this has been designated a scenic river. Ms. Grubb said we need to preserve the river corridor there. Selectman Maksy said we are building pretty close to it. There are major septic systems going in. Ms. Grubb said there are large parcels of privately owned property there. Ms. Brown asked about conservation restrictions. Ms. Schroeder said we have some of those. Ms. Grubb noted the river serves as the town line.

Ms. Garbitt said over the past ten (10) years, the Master Plan Committee and Selectmen have felt that businesses should be developed between Starr Market and the Middleborough line. They want it to be pedestrian friendly. The Selectmen negotiated with MassHighway for sidewalks on both side of Main Street. We have a single tax rate to draw business in. We had hoped to get to 20% business. We were up to 17%, but it is back to 13%. The tax burden is on the residents. Ms. Brown listed the Town's highest priorities. Ms. Grubb said to protect our resources and open spaces, specifically the Assonet Cedar Swamp and Poquoy Brook watersheds. Audubon owns 1,000 acres, but the uplands that surround the swamp make it what it is. We need tributary control. Selectman Maksy said Lakeville is lacking in infrastructure, we rely on surrounding towns. It behooves the whole State for us to protect the water. Ms. Schroeder said if you take the sewer out, there will be no recharge. Chair Yeatts said we would have to do an interbasin transfer. The 15,000 gallons a day that would go to New Bedford is not considered substantial. The line wouldn't be open for new construction. We looked at Alan Butler's property for a secondary treatment facility. Selectman Maksy felt sewer was needed for commercial development to come to town. Selectman Evirs spoke of the Natural Heritage map. Ms. Brown said a lot of those areas aren't statutorily protected. There is lots of potential residential development, think about where you don't want it to happen. Chair Yeatts said if you take wetlands into consideration, it is not as much as you think. Mr. Brown asked about Hill Street. Ms. Grubb said it is all wet. Ms. Brown said there is almost 1,200 acres that is zoned industrial and owned by the Town, but it is not permanently protected. Selectman Evirs said we just put a conservation restriction on a portion of it. Ms. Garbitt said previous Selectmen zoned it industrial in hopes of the State reimbursing the Town to put a conservation restriction on it. Mr. Hoeg noted there are tracks that go right through it.

Selectman Maksy said there are a lot of neighborhood concerns about the Taunton line, lots of houses affected. He is not convinced that is feasible. Ms. Schroeder said you have houses 20' from the tracks. Ms. Egan said we have that problem everywhere. We will look at how many people would be affected. I am not sure what the mitigation would be. Fencing, sound walls, wood ties, or perhaps better windows. We don't know what options are viable yet. It's the slower line, so it won't attract as many riders. And if the Lakeville station was moved, that would be weighed. Selectman Evirs said that is an active freight line. Ms. Egan said that is a positive, people already knew the train was there. We can work out window mitigation with freight trains. These tracks aren't CSX owned. Ms. Brown said to think about some implementation item that we could include as part of this project that could help move this project along. Selectman Maksy said parking for the T is an issue. Ms. Egan said there might be some relief on parking. Ms. Egan said that everyone seems to be clear on the priorities and we need consensus quickly.

Adjournment

Upon a motion made by Selectman Evirs, seconded by Selectman Maksy, the Board:

VOTED: To adjourn at 8:55 PM.
Unanimous vote.