

**NORTHFIELD PLANNING BOARD
WORKSHOP – GROWTH MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE
MINUTES - 06-18-2003**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm at the Northfield Town Hall by Chairman Christopher Hunt. Members present: Doug Read, Dick Cullen, Christopher Hunt, Glen Brown, Fran LaBranche, Dick Maher, Gloria Pickering and Michelle Bonsteel. Also present: Greg Tansley, LRPC, Eliza Conde, Secretary and Albert Cross, Road Agent.

Greg Tansley presented a “Summary of Notes” explaining the rationale for a Growth Management Ordinance and various means of addressing the issue. Growth management is a reaction to a problem which is out of control. Adopting the Interim Growth Management Ordinance gives the town time to plan growth. The Planning Board needs to decide whether or not the town needs to adopt a growth management ordinance at this time. This decision is based upon the town’s ability to maintain services in a manner planned by the Master Plan and the CIP. The Master Plan survey and the reports from the Police and Road departments indicated there are problems with growth happening too fast for the available services.

An updated Master Plan and a current CIP are required as a basis for a Growth Management Ordinance. The Phase One of the Master Plan which is nearly completed includes the required chapters on land use and transportation. The CIP must be an updated 6 year program. The current CIP is updated each year with projects, but is based upon 1990’s figures. The Goal of a CIP is to level the costs of capital improvement projects so that the tax rate stays consistent. The CIP guides the Selectmen and the Budget Committee to make decisions on projects scheduled for the year. The CIP committee is required to review the Master Plan annually in making its decisions. The Board reviewed a completed CIP from Barnstead. Greg recommended that the Board use professional help to guide them through the establishment of the CIP which can then be updated easily each year.

If the town’s CIP cannot keep up with the needs for services because of growth, then there needs to be some control on growth. If increased growth is causing increased costs needed for capital projects, then the growth management ordinance takes effect. The purpose of such an ordinance is to limit the impact that growth causes. One of the alternatives for a growth ordinance is one that establishes thresholds which would trigger the Planning Board to implement the ordinance. Growth and services would be carefully monitored but no growth management would be in place until there is a perceived problem. The Growth management ordinance must consider surrounding towns growth. If Northfield’s growth is higher than the surrounding towns, then the ordinance could be enacted. This method seems to be more legally acceptable by the courts. It is only triggered when a need arrives. Adopting such an ordinance at this time would give the Planning Board the ability to implement the growth management only when the need arises. Such ordinances generally have a sunset clause of perhaps 6 years.

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Christopher Hunt asked the Board for comments on whether they want to pursue a Growth Management Ordinance. After discussion and comments, **Glen Brown moved, Fran LaBranche seconded that the Board pursue a Growth Management Ordinance with guidance from LRPC. Motion passed unanimously.**

Fran LaBranche moved, Dick Maher seconded, to ask the Selectmen to authorize the expenditure to have the CIP program be professionally developed and brought up to date. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eliza Conde, Secretary