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To: Town Wide Planning Committee
CC: Board of Selectmen
From: Leon A. Gaumond Jr., Town Administrator
Date: September 5, 2006
Re: Report on Master Plan Implementation-Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen

I am preparing this report to the Town Wide Planning Committee as the Town Administrator of West Boylston. This report will detail those items identified as being the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen and/or the Town Administrator in the West Boylston Master Plan and the progress made on satisfactorily completing those recommendations.

1) Create Economic Development Commission or Task Force to promote economic development: In early 2006, the Board of Selectmen authorized the creation of the Economic Development Task Force. That committee was advertised and they held their organizational meeting in August of 2006. The DRAFT mission statement for this committee is as follows: To develop a stronger tax revenue stream from the commercial sector - without sacrificing West Boylston's ecology and character - in order to reduce the tax burden currently carried by taxpayers and to meet the increasing revenue demands of the future. To revitalize the business districts and other commercial districts, in order to protect property values and retain our current commercial base. To acknowledge the important contribution of West Boylston's business community to our Town's economic sustainability and to maintain a strong and lasting relationship between Town government and the commercial sector. It is expected that the Economic Development Committee will accomplish the above through the following activities: It is expected that the Economic Development Committee shall develop short-term (commercial revitalization) and long-term (small business expansion and local ownership new enterprise development) strategies in keeping with the above mission statement. This committee shall improve communication between the town government and the business community, debate economic development policy for the Town, seeks to develop a consensus and promote economic growth. In addition, the Committee will be asked to report back to the Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen as to whether or not it

would be prudent to create a formal Economic Development Commission as per MGL Chapter 40 (8A).

2) Improve access to Hartwell Street Industrial District: Listed as a 'long-term' project of the Town, this project will be one of the projects suggested to the Transportation Committee for their review.

3) With the cooperation of the Massachusetts Highway Department, prepare Master Plan to re-develop the Route 12 Corridor as a community Gateway. This should include beautification elements, such as landscaping, pedestrian connections, and underground wiring. The Route 12 Master Plan was completed in 1998. The implementation of the Route 12 Master Plan is one of the core missions of the newly created Transportation Committee.

4) Implement the Route 12 Master Plan. As was mentioned above, the implementation of the Route 12 Master Plan is one of the core missions of the newly created Transportation Committee. It is my expectation that the Transportation Committee will be meeting with the Board of Selectmen over the next several months and should be asked to make a formal presentation on their progress sometime in their first year of existence.

5) Improve coordination among municipal boards and departments: Listed as a recommendation of the Town Administrator, I look to others as to how well I am doing with this task. I have tried to build good working relationships between members of the Board of Selectmen and to build bridges with the community. I also have worked hard to build respect for the position of Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen with the employees and labor unions in the Town. I believe that I have made considerable progress in this front in an attempt to bring a sense of positive outlook and courteous dealings with others. In addition, I have recently instituted a 'Project Roundtable' process that will try to provide opportunities for Boards and Departments in the Town to come together to look at major projects in the Town. Hopefully, this is one additional way that the boards and departments work together.

6) Become a member of an Economic Target Area (ETA). Listed as a medium-term project of the Board of Selectmen and the EDC, this will likely be one of the tasks to be considered by the newly created EDTF.

7) Create non-profit Economic Development Alliance with neighboring towns. Listed as a medium-term project of the Board of Selectmen and the EDC, this will likely be one of the tasks to be considered by the newly created EDTF.

8) Create a non-profit housing trust, or work with an existing organization, to raise funds for affordable housing activities. Listed as a medium-term project of the Board of Selectmen and the Housing Partnership, this is likely to be completed at the October Town Meeting. It should be noted that the Board of Selectmen was able to negotiate the trust's first funding source through their negotiations with the Afra Terrace project.

9) Empower the Housing Partnership to implement a housing agenda to address the needs of the Town and work with a non-profit housing organization. It is my expectation that the Housing Partnership will be meeting with the Board of Selectmen over the next several months and should be asked to make a formal presentation on their progress sometime in the next few months. The Housing Partnership has been in existence over the last couple of years and have been successful in many of their efforts. I believe the Board of Selectmen and the Housing Partnership have worked well with each other in that time.

10) Apply for funds to start a housing rehab program: Listed as a medium term recommendation for the Town Administrator, I expect to work with the Housing Partnership and the Board of Selectmen on this effort in the near future.

11) Consider adoption of the Community Preservation Act to acquire open space, protect historic resources, and create affordable housing. The Board of Selectmen has met with community representatives to discuss the CPA and have offered encouragement to the citizens of the Town to bring forward more information to the citizens and the Board of Selectmen. They have assigned the Town Administrator the task of providing information to the grass roots organization and to serve as a liaison with the Board of Selectmen. It is expected that the committee will be reporting their findings to the Town very soon.

12) Provide input into decisions on future uses of DCR and county-owned land to ensure they remain open and accessible for recreational use. The Board of Selectmen has long felt that the open spaces in the Town should be available for recreational purposes. The Selectmen, Parks Commission and the Open Space Committee must continue to work together to those ends.

13) Improve enforcement of bylaws designed to protect the environment. This duty falls to the Town Administrator as the Appointing Authority of the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer for the Town of West Boylston. I now annually remind the Building Inspector of our duties relating to the protection of the aquifer overlay district and I provided a copy of that notice to the TWPC this past summer.

14) Coordinate open space preservation with historical preservation efforts. Listed as an on-going responsibility of the Town Administrator, I can honestly tell you that I have not had much involvement with this responsibility and I look for guidance from the TWPC as to the role I am expected to play in this effort. You need to know that my involvement in these efforts should remain as one of *policy administrator* and not *policy creator*. The role of policy creator clearly lays with other appointed/elected boards in the Town. To the extent that the Town Administrator must 'coordinate' the two boards working together, I feel that a meeting between the two boards is probably a good idea and I will discuss this with each board within the next couple of months.

15) Consider adoption of the Community Preservation Act to acquire open space, protect historic resources, and create affordable housing. As was mentioned above, the Board of Selectmen has met with community representatives to discuss the CPA and have offered

encouragement to the citizens of the Town to bring forward more information to the citizens and the Board of Selectmen. They have assigned the Town Administrator the task of providing information to the grass roots organization and to serve as a liaison with the Board of Selectmen. It is expected that the committee will be reporting their findings to the Town very soon.

16) Improve pedestrian facilities, especially to commercial areas, including the installation of sidewalks along the southern part of Route 12. Listed as a 'long-term' project of the Town, this project will be one of the projects suggested to the Transportation Committee for their review.

17) Provide training to local officials dealing with open space, recreation, and water, so that laws relating to land use are consistently enforced. Training is one of the areas that I, as Town Administrator, feel very strongly about. To that end, I will be hosting a 'land-use seminar' on Monday, September 18th at 6:30 p.m. with officials from Kopelman & Paige. All land-use boards and committees, including the Town Wide Planning Committee are invited to attend and hear of the latest laws and regulations concerning land use in Massachusetts. I expect that this will be done every 2-3 years in the Town.

18) Improve coordination among boards whose decisions affect open space and ensure that the Planning Board gets input from other officials during the site plan review and subdivision review process. I believe that I, as Town Administrator, have a decent relationship with the members of the Planning Board and try to help them whenever I can within my duties as Town Administrator. I am not aware if there are any issues with this however I will discuss it with the Planning Board Chairman.

19) Assess town-owned property that is unusable (i.e. steep slopes and wetlands), and invite DCR to swap such properties for flat usable areas. Since I have been here, I have obtained the deeds and inventory of all town-owned properties and they can be found both in my office and the office of the Town Clerk. It is my understanding of the Mass. Procurement Laws that such a swap as described above is difficult and may require Town Meeting action and legislative approval. That being said, as Town Administrator, I am willing to work any such request through the appropriate process to the best of my abilities.

20) Establish a policy of notifying the Conservation Commission when land under Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B is being considered for removal. I shall be recommending this as one of my goals and objectives for the upcoming year with the Board of Selectmen.

21) Create a Transportation Committee to study needs and implement targeted improvements, i.e. the Route 12 Corridor reconstruction, sidewalk and trail projects, and remedies at high crash locations. In early 2006, the Board of Selectmen authorized the creation of the Transportation Committee. That committee was advertised and they held their organizational meeting in early July of 2006. The DRAFT mission statement for this committee is as follows: To advise the Board of Selectmen and other Town Boards on transportation issues of importance to the Town of West Boylston. To study needs

and implement targeted improvements (i.e. the Route 12 Corridor reconstruction, sidewalk and trail projects, dangerous intersections, etc.). The Transportation Committee shall work towards implementing transportation goals found in the Route 12 Master Plan and the West Boylston Master Plan and to offer suggestions to improve or add to the goals found in these two documents. Members may also be asked to serve as Town liaisons to regional transportation organizations.

22) With the cooperation of the Massachusetts Highway Department, prepare Master Plan to re-develop the Route 12 Corridor as a community Gateway. This should include beautification elements, such as landscaping, pedestrian connections, and underground wiring. As was mentioned above in #3, the Route 12 Master Plan was completed in 1998 and the implementation of the Route 12 Master Plan is one of the core missions of the newly created Transportation Committee.

23) Implement the Route 12 Master Plan. As was mentioned above in #4, the implementation of the Route 12 Master Plan is one of the core missions of the newly created Transportation Committee. It is my expectation that the Transportation Committee will be meeting with the Board of Selectmen over the next several months and should be asked to make a formal presentation on their progress sometime in their first year of existence.

24) Develop a plan to improve and construct sidewalks and promote bicycling activity through expansion of the trail system. Improve walking systems near schools and construct sidewalks along Route 12 to insure pedestrian safety along this busy roadway. Listed as a medium term goal of the Board of Selectmen, this item will be one of several suggestions to be presented to the Board of Selectmen during our annual goal setting exercise. It is also expected that the Transportation Committee will be looking at this matter as one of their core missions.

25) Participate in regional transportation planning activities, especially the Transportation Committee of the CMRPC and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to keep abreast of regional projects that may affect the Town and insure that Town projects are advanced. The Town is represented at these meetings by the Board of Selectmen's representative to the CMRPC (Charles Greenough) as well as the Transportation Committee members who, on their own volition, have begun to attend these meetings on behalf of the Town. Where we did not have representation in the past, it is expected that the Town will have adequate representation in the future and the members of the Transportation Committee should be commended for stepping up to the plate.

26) Participate in planning studies that consider a new I-190 interchange at Malden St. in Holden to represent the Town's opposition to the proposal. My very first formal letter I authored as the West Boylston Town Administrator was the Town's opposition to the I-190 interchange in Holden. To be honest, I find this project unlikely to move forward anytime soon, however, based upon the Selectmen's opposition as well as the TWPC's opposition, I will continue to advocate this position as the Town Administrator.

27) Improve access to Hartwell Street Industrial District. As was detailed above in #2, this project will be one of the projects suggested to the Transportation Committee for their review.

28) Install curb ramps to provide barrier-free access to community facilities. Listed as a long-term goal of the Board of Selectmen, I will be discussing this with the DPW and the Transportation Committee for a future project for the Town.

29) Open a dialogue with the WRTA to seek improved transit services for West Boylston. As the Town's representative to the WRTA, I have now provided the Town with regular involvement with the WRTA as an active member of its Advisory Board, setting the policies, procedures and general direction of the WRTA. I believe I have developed a good relationship with the administration of the WRTA and will work with the Board of Selectmen and the Transportation Committee to ensure that the Town's opportunities for additional service are well managed.

30) Develop a water and sewer policy that manages growth. The Board of Selectmen has instituted several sewer policies that are designed to help manage the growth of the sewer system. These policies include a policy on reservation and allocation of sewer capacity for the Town of West Boylston Sewer System as well as a policy for adding properties to the sewer service area during the sewer construction project. Most recently (2004), the Board of Sewer Commissioners adopted a policy on the extension of public sewers. The Sewer Director meets monthly with the Board of Sewer Commissioners to discuss the management of the Sewer System and policy discussions take place regularly.

31) Insure adequate resources are allocated for zoning enforcement. Although listed as medium-term responsibility of the Board of Selectmen, I believe this is a responsibility of the Town Administrator. Certainly more could be done here however the part-time position only allows for so much to be done in this area. I am proud of our efforts in zoning enforcement though and as I look for a new Building Inspector, I will continue to advocate for tough zoning enforcement.

32) Undertake a thorough revision of the Zoning Bylaw to insure consistency with the Plan. It is agreed by many that the entire zoning bylaws of the Town deserve a good look-through. To the extent that the Board of Selectmen have an advisory role in this effort, I am sure that they will be interested participants when this occurs.

33) VARIOUS DUTIES UNDER MUNICIPAL FACILITIES: To be sure, there is no other task more deserving to be tackled than the whole discussion about the municipal facilities. To their credit, the Board of Selectmen has made substantial progress on this problem in the Town. Earlier this year, the Board of Selectmen authorized the creation of the Municipal Building Committee. That committee was advertised and they held their organizational meeting in February of 2006. The DRAFT mission statement for this committee is as follows: *to implement (not study) a building plan for municipal buildings. The Committee will work with the Capital Planning Committee and Town Financial Team to formulate an acceptable way of dealing with the financing of such a*

plan with the goal of having a plan prepared for presentation at the May Town Meeting. They would have general supervision over the design and construction of all public buildings, including the authority to employ professional assistance and, subject to specific authorization by the Town, to enter into contracts on behalf of the Town for the preparation of construction plans and specifications and for the construction of buildings and other structures. All such plans, specifications and contracts shall be developed in conjunction with and subject to the approval of the appropriate committee, board, or department head concerned.

For the last seven months, this committee has met diligently and have subdivided their responsibilities to look at the needs of the Town Hall, the Senior Center, the Fire Department, the Police Department, the Department of Public Works and the Schools. They have met with many town boards and departments and I believe they are in the final stages of plan development. As of right now, I believe they will be prepared to bring articles to Town Meeting in May, if not before.

The members of the Town Wide Planning Committee should also know that they are also becoming familiar with the new requirements set forth by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts regarding public construction and will soon be voting on designer selection procedures.

I expect to brief the TWPC on the Committee's progress as the process continues. You should also know that the recommendations of the Building Study Committee are being considered, however preliminary discussions indicate that the plan will be different than the plan presented in the Master Plan.

34) Investigate a centralized maintenance system responsible for maintaining all Town buildings and facilities. Listed as a long-term responsibility of the Town Administrator, it is my expectation that this will be certainly considered as any new buildings come online in the Town. This process will work quite well, in my opinion, with the newly created Capital Planning Committee, who will be charged with the administration of all future capital purchases.

35) Initiate a budget process that is open to public scrutiny and involves all boards and departments. Present budget recommendations in layman's terms and identify impacts on citizens and Town programs. As the Town Administrator, I would leave the evaluation of this process to others to provide input however I believe that I have tried very hard to improve upon the budget-making process in West Boylston. Since I have arrived in West Boylston, I have instituted a new budget process with new forms for the Departments and with the formulation of a BUDGET MESSAGE, written in such a way that the public will have access to the information they need to make an informed decision on Town Meeting floor. I know that no process is perfect and I continue to work with the Selectmen, the Departments, and the Finance Committee to refine the process. This year, I am exploring the idea of using power point presentations during the Town Meeting to walk through the entire town budget. However, if last year's Town Meeting is any indication, the citizens are comfortable with the Budget Process in West Boylston, having

voted to accept the Town Administrator's budget recommendations without any public reading or debate.

36) Include capital improvement funds in all yearly budgets. Insure building and facility maintenance costs are properly accounted for each year. Starting in this year's budget, the Capital Investment Board is charged with the task of preparing a capital budget for the Town and to prepare a long-range capital plan. I have tried to provide the capital fund with additional resources in the past two municipal budgets and I am committed to continuing advocating for appropriate resources.

37) Implement the municipal building plan contained in this Master Plan as soon as finances allow. See #33 above.

38) Form a permanent Capital Planning Committee to assist the Town in planning for, administering, and prioritizing capital improvement needs. In the Fall of 2005, Town Meeting authorized the creation of the Capital Planning Committee. That committee was advertised and they held their organizational meeting in early February of 2006. Per the organization of the Committee by Town Meeting:

B) The Board shall consider matters relating to appropriations from the Capital Investment Fund, and may, but is not required to, make recommendations to the Town or any board, committee, or official thereof, relative to matters and establish policies relative to the funding of capital projects of the Town and set priorities and schedules for such capital projects. The Board may study proposed capital outlays involving the acquisition of land or an expenditure of \$20,000 having a useful life of at least five years. All officers, boards, and committees, including the Selectmen and the School Committee, shall by September 1st each year give to such Committee, on forms prepared by it, information concerning all projects anticipated by them to need Town Meeting action during the ensuing six years. The Committee shall consider the relative need, timing, and cost of these expenditures and the effect each will have on the financial position of the Town.

C) The Committee shall transmit its recommendations to the Town Administrator, as well as the appropriate officer, board, agency or department involved in proposed capital improvement. These shall constitute a Capital Improvement Program. The report of this program shall, as to items planned for the ensuing fiscal year, be given to the Town Administrator and Finance Committee for their review and possible inclusion in the budget. The text and tables of a capital program for the following five years shall be published with the Town Administrator's report. Such capital program after its adoption shall permit the expenditure on projects included therein of sums from departmental budgets for surveys, architectural or engineering advice, options, or appraisals; but no such expenditure shall be incurred on projects which have not been approved by the Town either by approval as above or through the appropriations of sums in the current year or in prior years.

39) Improve relations with the DCR and seek their financial or technical support to achieve Town goals. As with some of the other tasks, it is difficult for me to assess my status with this point. However, I would state that I have tried very hard to maintain a good working relationship with all state entities, including the DCR. Having worked for the Commonwealth for a number of years, I have a different perspective than many others who live in West Boylston and I use that perspective for the Town's benefit. I realize that we must coexist with the DCR for many years to come and a good relationship with the largest land-owner in the Town is important for the Town's long-term best interest.

40) Continue working for higher PILOT funds (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) from State-owned lands. The Board of Selectmen and I have frequent discussions with our legislative delegation on the issues of PILOT funds. They know of our interest in this matter and have been responsive on this topic.

41) Open a dialogue with the new Sheriff to negotiate for payments to offset the Town's costs incurred by hosting the Jail. Upon the election of the new Sheriff, the Board of Selectmen and I have opened up new doors to the Sheriff's Department on this issue. Since my arrival in Town, I have taken the opportunity to discuss this with the Sheriff and with our legislative delegation who has since filed legislation on our behalf to create a new appropriation for communities who host former county correctional facilities. We have also sent word out to the other communities who find themselves in this position to gain their support and the response has been encouraging. The Selectmen and I are certainly committed to this effort and shall remain vigilant in this effort.

42) Allocate Town funds, and/or apply for State grants, to help increase the Town's tax base. As the Town Administrator, I stress the desire for increasing grant opportunities in the Town and the Board of Selectmen stress this with me as well. I understand there is nothing better than 'free money' and I pursue as many opportunities as I can. I also understand that there is a tremendous amount of work to apply for and administer grants for the Town so the Town must be choosy in determining which grants are worth the time and effort in applying for. Regardless, I remain committed to increasing the amount of grant opportunities in the state.

43) Explore new ways of providing Town services. As the Selectmen would call this point, this is concerned with my ability to be 'innovative.' Without getting into too many of the particulars, there are several areas when I am exploring new ways to do business in the Town. One way that I will discuss is the soon to be revamped West Boylston website which will hopefully provide the residents and businesses of the Town with new ways of doing business in the Town.

44) Seek to comply with State regulations to increase the Town's eligibility for grants and other payments. I assume this relates directly with the Town's failure to comply with the required number of affordable housing opportunities and the fact that the Town has not met the minimum amount necessary to turn away new 40B projects. Assuming that is

true, I am cognizant of the Town's liability on this issue and I am committed to work to reduce the Town's exposure on this while still balancing the character of the Town.

45) Communicate openly and work cooperatively with State agencies to insure the Town's interests are represented in State decision-making processes. As I alluded to in #39, I have tried very hard to maintain a good working relationship with all state entities.

46) Identify potential cost savings through regional service and purchasing proposals and work to gain the public's trust and support. I consider these two separate issues. First, to the issue of regionalization, I am committed to the idea of regionalization to answer of the Town's pressing needs. The Town of West Boylston has been a leader among the Wachusett area towns on this topic by hosting a large regional meeting of Boards of Selectmen. In addition, I have explored several ideas for regionalization that have yet to bear fruit but you should know of my commitment to this effort. As to the issue of group purchasing, the Town has made great strides in this area. We have implemented a town purchasing program for supplies, saving the Town thousands of dollars every year and I have recently brought a training effort to the Town where officials from the Operational Services Division spoke to Department Managers about the state bid list and how we can save money buying off the state bid list.

47) Develop fiscal policies for the Town. I consider this to be an important aspect of the Town Administrator's responsibilities. I continue to work with the financial officials with the Town and the Selectmen have established a Policy Subcommittee to review the Board's policies to ensure we are adequately covered. I do expect that new fiscal policies will be established within the next year.

In conclusion, I believe that the following Master Plan recommendations are now **fully complete**: Recommendation 1, Recommendation 3/22, Recommendation 21, and Recommendation 38. I believe that the following recommendations are now **partially or soon to be complete**: Recommendation 8, Recommendation 11, and Recommendation 17. The balance of the recommendations are either ongoing efforts with no clear completion or will be discussed with the Selectmen and other Town Boards and Committees as the years go on.

I hope this report satisfactorily answers the concerns of the Town Wide Planning Committee. As always, please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.