

To: Matt Vincent, Chairman BoS

From: Philip Trapani, BoS

Date: December 6, 2007

Subject: Goal Statement – Board of Selectman Strategic Initiatives 2008

Begin Implementing Recommendations of Georgetown Master Plan – Section 4 Economic Development

Creation of an Economic Development Committee

VISION STATEMENT – GEORGETOWN MASTER PLAN JUNE 2007

Georgetown remains a predominantly residential and family-oriented community with a semi-rural, small town identity. Through careful planning, the Town has retained much of the visual character of its rural heritage of fields and woods balanced by a lively historic downtown and a small sector of clean industry. Georgetown has an involved, civic-minded population and an excellent school system. The Town has been successful in shaping change to protect its livability and natural beauty while accommodating growth and reflecting the community's essential values:

- The Natural and Cultural Heritage
- The Variety of Housing that Complements Town Character
- **Economic Development**
- Ease of Moving Around Town and
- Civic Strength: strong schools, community, & leadership

4.14.1 Create Georgetown Economic Development Committee

The Town should work with its local business alliance to establish an Economic Development Committee that is charged with creating/implementing an economic development strategy for Georgetown. The work program of this committee would commence by reviewing the town's zoning and tax policies, road improvement plans, and water/sewer expansion plans as they relate to Georgetown's ability to attract new businesses. The Economic Development

Committee would then need to work with the various municipal boards and departments to develop an economic development strategy for Georgetown. As part of an economic development strategy, the town should designate a staff person in town government to oversee economic development issues. One contact person is essential, as businesses usually demand immediate responses to questions or concerns.

Responsible Entity: The Economic Development Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

Other responsible parties and participants:

- *Planning Board*
- *Finance Advisory Board*
- *Conservation Commission*
- *Zoning Board of Appeals*
- *Highway Department*
- *School Committee*
- *Merrimack Valley Planning Commission*
- *Massachusetts Economic Development Committee*
- *Several Other*

Economic Development Goals & Objectives

- Ensure that new development in Georgetown is appropriate for a rural and suburban community.
- Encourage appropriate commercial and light industrial development in Georgetown, while protecting environmental quality and town resources,
- Guide the continued development of appropriate, efficient, and economical infrastructure for Georgetown including utilities, public safety, schools, and municipal water and sewer

Next Steps

Proposed Committee Organization and Formation

Time Frame

February, 2008

Pros & Cons –if we do all this right, we will increase revenues to the town. But more than that, if we pursue this path, the type of Georgetown we want will be more likely and attainable. If we don't –if we continue business as usual- we will not only continue to suffer stagnant growth revenues, we will realize something worse. The alternative to good planning and smart growth is not a lack of development, it's bad development. Keep in mind, this is a long-term initiative.

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Improve Town Communications,

Implement Annual-Bi Annual “State of the Town” Meetings

In an effort to engage residents' interest in Town Meeting and keep it a vital part of civic life in Georgetown, I would like to have the Board of Selectmen introduce a State of the Town meeting in 2008 as part of the town's planning process.

Unlike a traditional town meeting, State of the Town is a discussion between local officials and residents rather than a business meeting – no motions are made and not a single vote is taken. The town's elected and appointed leadership present summaries of the key issues and challenges confronting the community, including a discussion of policy options for achieving the stated objectives, and then invite the residents to offer their views, comments and suggestions. This has been proven effective in a number of communities.

State of the Town is created to address increasing voter frustration with town meeting. Many citizens feel that the traditional planning and decision-making process, with its numerous meetings and hearings leading up to Town Meeting, provided little opportunity for meaningful citizen participation. The residents need an efficient way to learn about the major issues and then a chance to express an opinion about priorities and resources early in the process, before plans and budgets are developed.

Responsible Entity: The Board of Selectmen, Town Moderator

Other responsible parties and participants:

- *Planning Board*
- *Finance Advisory Board*
- *Conservation Commission*
- *Zoning Board of Appeals*
- *Highway Department*
- *Town Hall*
- *Water Department*
- *Light Department*
- *School Committee*
- *More.....*

Goals & Objectives

- Strengthen community awareness of leading challenges and concerns we face
- Increase meaningful citizen involvement in strategic planning and policy formulation
- Develop coordinated strategic planning and thinking among town boards and officials

Pros & Cons –if we execute this well with the right team work and collaboration among the boards, we will relieve frustrations of residents who may not have the time to attend or watch public meetings. It will allow them a summary type meeting to understand the myriad of complex issues the town faces and what we are doing to address them. In addition, it will help all town officials/boards/committees to develop and articulate strategic plans and begin the formulation of policies.