

TOWN OF RIB MOUNTAIN  
*Special Town Board Meeting*  
*June 30, 2020*

Chairman Allen Opall called the June 30, 2020, special meeting (Strategic Planning) of the Rib Mountain Town Board to order at 5:04 p.m. at the Rib Mountain Municipal Center, 227800 Snowbird Avenue, Wausau, WI. Supervisors present included Fred Schaefer, Brad Conklin, Gerry Klein (arrived at 5:13 p.m.), and Dan Fiorenza.

Also present were Administrator Gaylene Rhoden, Community Development Director Jared Wehner, Clerk Joanne Ruechel, Street/Park Superintendent Scott Turner, Finance Director Nicole Dunbar, Building Inspector Paul Kufahl, SAFER Fire Chief Matt Savage, and Sanitary Director Mike Heyroth (left at 7:17 p.m.).

Guests: Town residents John and Penny Happli and Stephanie Finamore.

On June 25, 2020, copies of the meeting notice were made available to the media, Town Board, Town Attorney, and posted at the Rib Mountain Municipal Center and Town website.

Subdivision Strategies- Administrator Rhoden stated that there is a housing demand in the Town and land is scarce. Many residents have expressed interest in low-maintenance living such as condos or townhouses contracting with companies that handle the upkeep of the property.

The Board discussed the areas where the low-maintenance living could go in the Town. The sites that were discussed was the area west of the highway and south of South Mountain Road. This is a 13-acre parcel that would be good for low-maintenance living. At this time, nobody knows if the property owner is interested in selling this parcel to the Town. Another area that was mentioned was the Hall property on the north side of County Road N. One other area that was mentioned was the property near the Municipal Center. It was also mentioned that there is land off of Snowflake and Deertail where low-maintenance living could be built.

The issues that were mentioned was if the Town wants to be a developer and how much money the Town wishes to put into the roads and infrastructure. It was decided that the Board was not interested in putting up apartment buildings in the Town, but rather owner-occupied condos, single-family homes, or townhouses. Several Board members expressed interested in having the Town control the infrastructure around a development. It was also mentioned to identify properties now that the Town might want to use for low-maintenance living in the future.

Community Development Director Jared Wehner presented the Future Land Use Map for the Town Board to look at. He recommended that a housing needs study be completed. Supervisor Schaefer would like this item to be project-by-project. Administrator Rhoden stated that she would like to reach out to other people who have done development like this in the past.

The Town Board discussed the 208 sewer service boundary limits shown on the proposed Future Land Use Map that is part of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update. Director Wehner stated that in order to extend the 208 sewer service boundaries to the west of Dogwood Road on the map, the Town would have to find land in the sewer service area to swap out with the land that would be added. It was decided by the Board that we would not act on swapping out land until a developer has a plan for the Town to look at.

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Land Acquisitions- Supervisor Conklin began the conversation by saying that the Parks Commission would like to target parcels of land that they would like to acquire for potential parks or trails. The property would be purchased at a future date and the Commission feels that it would make the Town into more of a destination area. Some of the Town Board members are hesitant to purchase land after dealing with the Tanglewood Lanes property. The Board members did decide that any land that is purchased needs to be thought out first.

Supervisor Conklin stated that the land west of the quarry will be going up for sale in the future. This would be good land to have, but we need to have a plan in place first. Supervisor Klein stated that the land west of the Hall farm off of County Road N would be a good property for single-family homes. It would be close to the school and parks. The Board discussed how to support the water and sewer utilities in the various areas.

The Board discussed that the property off of Redbud Road would be a good place to put a park and maybe in the future, a Public Works building. It was also mentioned that the land that currently houses State Park Speedway would be a good purchase when it goes up for sale in the future. The Board talked about what the Town would do with a parcel that size. It was discussed that we should act when the land goes up for sale because the Town may not have another chance at the land in the future. Another item that was mentioned was putting a 15-foot wide trail around Rib Mountain State Park.

Incorporation- Administrator Rhoden stated that this item came up after the State Supreme Court ruling on re-addressing the Town. This would be a long process. It could be a 10-year plan or a much shorter plan depending on what happens. Administrator Rhoden would like to get plans in place, so if it does happen, the Town would be prepared.

If the Town does incorporate, the Sanitary District would cease to exist. Before incorporation, the Sanitary District could become a Utility Commission and the members would be appointed. The Town would also have to have Law Enforcement in the Town and already has been working to get law enforcement established. Incorporating would protect the Town from being annexed by other municipalities. Administrator Rhoden stated that as a Town, Extraterritorial Zoning and CSM reviews are required by the City of Wausau.

The Town Board agreed that they would like Staff to put together the issues and questions facing the Town if they should incorporate. They would like this report brought back to the Town Board for the Annual Meeting in 2021. This would be informational only and the Town Board would not be voting on this issue at the meeting. The Town would also have an informational meeting for the residents of the Town before anything happens.

Future of the Commercial Corridor- Administrator Rhoden asked the Town Board what they think Rib Mountain Drive will look like in 10 years with the changes in retail. Supervisor Conklin believes that with so many changes in the world in the last 3-4 months, the look of retail operations is changing as well. Community Development Director Wehner suggested doing a corridor study with TIF money to figure out what the future of retail might look like in the Town. Administrator Rhoden stated that we will continue to work with developers as businesses shut down in the Town to recruit new businesses.

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High-Speed Internet- Administrator Rhoden stated that with the pandemic, it became even more vital for residents to have high-speed internet. In late 2018, the Town had discussions with TDS but at that time, they would not guarantee to provide service for the entire town. County Administrator Lance Leonard reached out to Administrator Rhoden about using the Routes to Recovery funds and paying for high-speed internet with that money. The money would need to be spent by November of 2020 in order to get the grant money. The Department of Administration would have to approve the idea.

Marathon County currently has a Broadband Committee set up to look at providing high-speed internet to other municipalities in the County. The Board discussed that it would be a good idea to have two internet providers in the Town instead of just one. The Board decided to work with the County's Broadband Committee and if that falls through, the Town will reach out to TDS at that time.

Mass Transit- This item is being brought back to the Board by Administrator Rhoden. The County had approached her about offering mass transit as a pilot program with transportation only offered on Saturdays with one route. At that point, the pandemic hit and she had not heard anything more from the County regarding mass transit.

She stated that recently a government building was looking to come into the Town and inquired about mass transit. Administrator Rhoden did learn that there is transportation provided by North Central Health Care Center for the elderly and disabled in Marathon County. Administrator Rhoden reached out to the County at that point and the County stated that it would be \$75,000 yearly to have a bus run through the Town multiple times per day.

The Town Board discussed if the Town's businesses would be willing to pay for the bus service. Administrator Rhoden would like to see a 10-year commitment from the businesses for payment for the bus service. The Board does not want bus service offered and then stopped because the Town cannot afford it anymore. It is unknown if Marathon County is willing to contribute money for the bus service at this time.

Updating the Zoning Code- It was stated that the Zoning Code has not been updated since the early 1990s. We would also need to update the subdivision code at the same time. Community Development Director Wehner stated that there are different ways to update the code. We can continue to use a use-based code or change to a form-based code. The use-based code focuses on the type of use allowed on the land. The form-based code encourages mixed-use and focuses on the aesthetics of the development and how it integrates into the neighborhood. Either direction, developers prefer working in communities where requirements are clear and concise. Community Development Director Wehner would like to start this process with a Steering Committee. The process usually takes about 2-3 years and the Steering Committee would be responsible for coming up with ideas of what would work in the Town.

Outdoor Recreation Plan and Park Master Plan- Administrator Rhoden started the conversation by stating that in the past, the Town has worked with North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to update our outdoor recreation plan. This will need to be updated before the Town can apply for any DNR Stewardship grants. The Town Board and the Park

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Commission may want to consider hiring a consultant to complete the plan, as staff feels it would receive a better work product.

Community Development Director Wehner said that the Official Map is a place that the Town can indicate where future trail connections should take place. By having this information on the Official Map, the Town is able to require developers to connect trails from proposed subdivisions to the trail system. Parks should also be indicated on this map so that the Town could make the purchase of land and make the necessary improvements.

The Town Board discussed that we have a great opportunity in the future if we have a Park Plan in place with individual park master plans. The Board would like to see trail routes and connections to neighborhoods on the Park Plan.

Official Map- Community Development Director Wehner stated that the official map is more transportation-oriented, but also contains parkland, future parkland, and multiuse trails.

General Comments- Supervisor Conklin mentioned that the hunting map will be changing. Hunters can now hunt in residential areas. Hunters will be able to hunt with bows but they must be at least 300 feet away from a neighbor's house. They would be able to hunt 100 yards away from any structure unless permission from the property owner was received. This is only for bow hunting and not rifle hunting.

Supervisor Schaefer asked what we want to do as the Town since the Village of Weston voted to terminate the SAFER contract. If the Village does withdraw, they would get back 75% of the initial investment they gave to start SAFER. Supervisor Schaefer stated that he does not want to leave SAFER and if we go on our own, it will be expensive. He also mentioned that he would like to see a joint fiscal team between the Town and the Village of Weston if they continue with the contract.

The Town Board discussed what other municipalities might be interested in possibly joining with the Town in a joint fire district partnership. Supervisor Fiorenza believes that we can work out our differences with the Village of Weston. Town resident John Happli suggested that there be an investigation into the claims that the Village of Weston made against the SAFER district.

Adjourn - **Motion by Conklin/Klein to adjourn at 7:28 p.m. Questioned and carried 5:0.**

Submitted by  
Joanne Ruechel  
Town of Rib Mountain Clerk

Note: These minutes are not to be considered official until acted upon at an upcoming regular meeting, therefore, they are subject to revision.