

Gold Hill Town Meeting Newsletter

Minutes of the October 13, 2008, Town Meeting
Townsite Planning Initiative Discussion and Vote

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jennie Rice.
35 people in attendance.

Townsite Planning Initiative (TPI)

Garry Sanfacon, Boulder County Planning Department

The TPI lets us plan for ourselves as a community. The county doesn't get to decide based on the "one size fits all" regulations that are currently in place for the entire county, and the county wants mountain towns to participate. Other opportunities that can come out of this: Historic Preservation, Energy Efficiency, Green Building, Septic, Water, Energy, Recycling/Waste Disposal, Transportation. If these efforts need resources to get off the ground, participating in the TPI can help us receive these resources from the county. Doug Parker discussed various green building and energy efficiency initiatives that are available to the town. We need to define everything about the TPI, including the geographic scope of the area we want to include in the TPI and our own planning process. Garry is working with us, not directing us. He will also help coordinate with the other county resources and offices to help us where needed, as well as help us learn from other communities and his experience working with those communities. A few possibilities of our participation in the TPI could be developing our own "broad policies, goals and guidelines" type document. We can also amend the county land use code to our own specifics. We can define the social goals, economic goals and general sustainability goals going into the future. We have to present our ideas about the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Code to the county and they will need to approve it. This process will take quite some time, perhaps a year or two. Also, this will help bring more funding to the town, because we can ask for funding as a planned town.

Questions asked of Garry:

Q. What is the time frame of this plan?

A. Up to the community. Could take a year or two.

Q. What is the downside of not getting involved?

A. Having to stay with the status quo. Not being proactive, but being reactive. If you don't plan, the county will plan for you.

Q. What were Eldora's negative issues with the process?

A. Half the community felt "the status quo was good enough and the county was doing a good job." Eldora is moving forward, but in a smaller way.

Q. Finances of Boulder County. Can the county afford it?

A. There is not a lot of money, but it helps focus the energy of the county into the needs of Gold Hill.

Q. What are some examples of the amended land use code?

A. The county could do an in-depth study to define the issues, so we can come up with solutions. The commissioner won't approve just anything, but they want to work with us to find out what is getting in the way of making the land use code work better for us.

John Sands' Suggestion: 1996 Gold Hill Town Survey: What do we want to maintain as the town? We may want to revisit the survey. If anyone wants to see the survey, contact John.

Q. How does the TPI affect historic zoning?

A. We can make the changes that we want. We decide what goes into the land use code. We can set the parameters of what goes into the TPI and what stays out of the TPI. GH historic zoning guidelines is not currently part of the land use code. The county does have the historic zoning committee review proposed property changes, but by participating in the TPI, the historic zoning guidelines can become codified into the land use code.

Q. Do we have to decide to move forward tonight?

A. No. We can decide not to participate at all, we can decide to participate later on, or we can decide to move forward tonight. If we vote to move forward, we are only deciding to move forward on exploring how and if we want to participate.

Q. Have any towns tried to create more local businesses? Would the county allow this?

A. Yes, the county would be open to this.

Q. What brought on this change? A change in philosophy of the county or an outcry from the people?

A. A willingness to give the people a voice.

Vote to enter into the process with TPI:

For: 20

Against: 3

Motion carried forth (all attendees eligible to vote at a town meeting voted).

REAP Energy Audits

Doug Parker spoke about Boulder County Residential Energy Audit Program (REAP) which is subsidized by the county. The cost for is only \$100 (for a 2500 square foot house or less) up to \$250 (for a house over 4500 square feet). A REAP home energy analysis will help you understand your energy usage and give you a personalized set of recommendations to lower your energy bill. Once you complete the audit you become eligible for other programs such as insulation rebates. There is also a Low Income program that gives weatherization for free (if you make less then \$49K for family of 2).

Go to http://www.conservationcenter.org/Energy_Audit_Program.htm to apply for the energy audit. This program is available for homeowners as well as renters.