

# Stakeholder Interviews

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## ***Affordable Housing***

### **Chapter 40B Development**

- Affordable housing plan needed (Chapter 40B), require 10% every project
- Plan for affordable housing in a way that someone doesn't push in with hundreds of units (because Ludlow doesn't have 10%--it only has 2.3%)
- Housing committee needs to be reactivated, do some public education on affordable housing
- Affordable housing ordinance to rebut Chapter 40B

### **General Remarks**

- Housing is always open for improvement
- Keep Ludlow affordable
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of affordable housing (again)
- Not enough rentals in Ludlow

## ***Conservation***

### **Wetlands**

- Growth problematic with so much water
- Stay strong on wetlands protection
- A lot of Ludlow's landmass can't be developed because there are many wetlands
- Hay bales and silt fence 3 ft from back door of house but the MassDEP allowed it
- Development too close to wetlands
- Not enough accountability for developers, especially in the flood plain
- Timber Ridge extension 3000 ft into wet woods received 1989 preliminary approval and keep coming back to town for permits because the MassDEP still hasn't given comments, planning board willing to go against other departments
- Has the Chicopee River floodplain changed in FEMA's new maps?
- Many pockets of wetlands
- High sub-terrain water level

## **Farmlands**

- How do we protect farmlands? Incoming residential complexes complain about the farms when the farms were there first
- How much agricultural land is there and what percentage does it constitute?
- Farmland is taxed on the commercial level
- Right-to-Farm bylaw recently passed
- Preserve what's left of the farms and open space

## **Water Supply**

- Many homes being built in aquifer zone
- Will the drinking water source be depleted?
- Many homes relying on well water
- Open spaces of reservoir, areas near Granby, are disconnected and development is moving in

## **Overdevelopment**

- Overpopulation, overdevelopment
- Prevent it from becoming another East Longmeadow, where everything that can be built is built
- Stricter controls on grading, particularly on ridgeline development
- Need for resident education on protecting what we have

## **Wildlife**

- Forest cut down for development, with wildlife having nowhere to go
- Encroachment on space for wildlife

## ***Downtown***

### **East Street**

- East St the old downtown but there's not enough parking
- Not satisfied with the East St refurbishment (bump-outs, expense)
- Elderly man will not sell empty lot behind and to the side of Primavera for parking
- Façade program for East St
- Lacking the businesses on the great backdrop of East St
- Need mixed use for the mill, foot-traveled businesses on East St
- Fill empty storefronts, create design standards
- East St needs to be well-zoned for business

### **Things to Do**

- Not enough stuff downtown (department store, clothing, drug store, ice cream, bicycle shop, hardware store all closed)
- Not enough cultural activities (arts, music)
- Events that draw people are great to show support for the town but are just one day
- Retail for State St

### **Growth**

- Growth needs to be centered in a downtown area (the town should redesign itself)
- Focus on downtown core, making infill housing, creating density
- A lot of unused property with great potential that can be used to respond to downtown concerns

### **Historical Preservation**

- Possible issues maintaining Ludlow Village Historic District and Ludlow Center Historic District
- Maintain historic districts
- Need a bylaw on cell towers for historical districts, otherwise they can't be refused

### **Walkability**

- Downtown not walkable enough, no public place to sit down and relax
- East St is great, but not much of a thought process elsewhere
- Poor mobility, especially for young people
- People can't walk to the community center

### **Center Park**

- Center park needs better maintenance
- Picnic tables located in a bad place (under large oak trees)

## ***Economic Development and Taxes***

### **Town Government Unfriendly to Business**

- Poor reputation prevents businesses from opening
- Flat tax rate is good but the mystique overrides it
- Turn the reputation around
- Encourages dishonesty by going behind the town's back

- The bylaws themselves show the unfriendly attitude (signs for example)
- Businesses contribute a lot to the town but get treated like criminals
- No discretion or common sense
- Need for a master guide to open or expand a business, one-stop location
  - Checklist of steps
  - Names
  - Fees to expect
- Encourage entrepreneurial spirit
- Don't regulate the small businesses so much because they typically live right on the edge financially
- Spot zoning leads to people having to jump through hoops
- Being a small community doesn't have to mean anti-business or anti-growth

## **Jobs**

- Losing the industry-friendly workforce
- Losing jobs and people to the South
- Job creation and tax base are important because so many who live in Ludlow do not work there
- Link out and work cooperatively in order to keep a job base here
- Coming from Springfield, it's worrying to see the loss of meaningful work
- Western Mass businesses have left for the South—lets create many well-paying jobs at the mill
- Balance of part-time and career-based full-time jobs
- Create town-based jobs
- When you have a highway exit, you don't want the jobs to be Starbucks and truck stops
- Create an attraction based on the history

## **Types of Businesses**

- It seems like there are more restaurants closing than opening
- The market is changing (look at popular Golden Corral restaurant), so how do we adapt to it?
- Restaurants, particularly fine dining, lacking
- Bringing in proper businesses (not used car dealerships) that contribute to the community
- Small department store (currently have to go to Springfield)
- Poor shopping opportunities, no longer department stores
- Lack of businesses in some rural areas of town
- West St needs to be well-zoned for health and legal support services

- Not so many big box stores, more local

### **Industry**

- Balance residential and industrial growth
- Maintain and grow industrial tax base (Moody St and State St)
- Lack of industrial sites
- Stress industrial toward Chicopee
- Better define industrial zones (presently three kinds, one without a clear definition) and physically separate them
  - Offices and light industry
  - Construction
  - Manufacturing
- Build an industrial park to improve the tax base (Ludlow Mills)

### **Center Street**

- Placement of businesses in random places
- Work on the Center St gateway
- Ludlow becoming something of a fast food town
- More high-end chains (if there are any)
- Spot zoning (farm next to auto repair next to residence)
- Center St used to be the place for businesses (our own little Riverdale Rd), but we need to put growth elsewhere
- Too many banks
- Spot zoning, design standards, especially along Center St

### **Westover Construction**

- \$300 million in construction over the next 10 years
- Bringing 1500 people additionally on the base this year
- Bringing 300 or 400 next year
- Wants to hire local contractors and sub-contractors
- Student hires (\$17/hr), but difficult to fill positions
- Base here and growing
- Mutual aid agreements with Ludlow, but town services still matter

### **Town Budget**

- Financial situation (as with all communities), FY2011 could be even worse than FY2010
- Forecast the tax base
- Maintaining tax base with businesses
- Analyze the true economics of development and work out a plan to not create a deficit
- Taxes and cost of living are too high

### **(Sub)urban Renewal**

- Economic revitalization program beyond individual projects, with Holyoke as an example.
- Timing is everything, and the timing is right with the Mill and Rep. Petrolati being a leader in the state house
- Usually the homes you can acquire on foreclosure, etc are not helpful

### **Demographics**

- People don't believe the statistics, think they must include the jail
- The statistics don't make the community bad, it's just the profile we must work with

## *Energy*

### **Renewable Energy**

- Solar energy at the town dump, residential wind power if viable
- Renewable energy bylaws (small wind, photovoltaic)
- Not an option anymore—we have to do it
- Solar, geothermal, biofuels
- See the schools run by renewable energy because they use so much
- Use renewable energy
- Wish we could move faster on renewable energy
- Could go for grants
- Western Mass Electric did solar in Pittsfield
- Would like to see wind turbines
- Residents have asked about putting up small wind turbines
- Capped landfill could be used for solar energy
- Bylaw for renewable energy, including small wind
- Plan for renewable energy—where and what?

### **Energy Use and Being Green in Schools**

- Plan of renewable energy for the schools
- Hull, MA as a model for renewable energy
- Possible solar installation, maybe leasing the roof space
- We need to be more cognizant of our energy use
- Pride and education go along with getting partially off the grid
- Recycling program very successful in the schools, great to see

## ***Growth and Development***

### **Ludlow Mill**

- A great opportunity for change with the Ludlow Mill project, with potential state and federal monies, thrust of business, jobs
- Contact Westmass Development and get a handle on what they plan for the Ludlow Mill
- Ludlow Mill revitalization
- Redevelopment of the mill shows the evolution of the region
- Anything realistic 15 years away because of contamination
- Keep construction companies out, change the industrial zoning there
- Need for an industrial park, but that is probably solved with the Ludlow Mill
- Mixed use at the Ludlow Mill
  - Live-work for professionals
  - Take care and concern with industrial areas (wooded buffer)
- Mill redevelopment
- Logistics of demolition and pollution control
- A big boom to the area which otherwise doesn't have available space
- Great opportunity to raise the tax base
- River walk, fishing accessibility
- Mid-range housing
- Businesses, cafés
- Winter skating rink
- New England character
- Green, walkable development for the mill
- Mill Redevelopment
- Overlay district for the mill property
- Walkways, street character
- Senior housing needed more than commercial and industry
- Emphasis shouldn't be on commercial

### **Unstructured Development**

- Too many "lollipop streets"
- Duplexes don't belong in the countryside
- Better manage growth and open space
- "Viable" plans have street patterns that don't make sense
- Huge trend toward sustainable building in other parts of the state
- Ludlow's development follows a less sustainable path
- Build up instead of out

- Growing very fast, majority of growth towards the outer sections (Miller St. towards Belchertown), small amount on West St.
- Places once “for hicks” are now “desirable country land”
- Worried about development spilling over from Belchertown to Randall’s Farm
  - Efforts changing zoning from agricultural to business could cause a domino effect
  - It would not be good to develop that corridor
- Development of Upper East St. around Red Bridge, route to Three Rivers with accompanying traffic

### **Need to Plan and Prepare**

- Sustainability—both environment and economy
- Hard to make changes to the pockets of different things
- We need to meet the needs of the youngest children to ensure productive lives later
- Close to the end of good buildable land
- Look at the quality of life, not the quantity of life
- Develop the town but keep the small town feel
- Taking on large developments (200+ units)
- Town may lose some cultural advantage in becoming more conventionally suburban
- Look at the leadership of the city fathers—what do they want for growth? The consumer—middle and upper-middle class wants to move in.

### **Community Preservation Act**

- Process
  - First public meeting on 9/11, two people showed
  - Strong community members opposed the CPA
  - People against any form of new tax
  - The most powerful opponent before may support the CPA now
  - Proponents now unwilling to run the campaign again
  - The conservation committee gets offered land but can’t afford it
  - No money to buy the Stevens Memorial Building
  - Grange is falling apart
  - Wait to try when things pick up again
- Board of Selectmen put down the CPA, a good idea
- Utilize the Community Preservation Act
- Missed out on the Community Preservation Act
- Give Community Preservation Act another try

## Smart Growth

- Sustainability
- Smart Growth and/or slower development
- Smart Growth principles
- Even Hampden and Monson more progressive
- Extremely dated bylaws
- Take advantage of 40R zoning & permitting
- Smart Growth accommodation
- Good development—clusters
- Subdivisions with center accommodating for community needs
- More control over the subdivisions (like Wilbraham with clusters)
- Approach to subdivisions similar to Wilbraham
- Allow for cluster zoning (buildings closer together)
- Encourage cluster development, mixed-use zoning (like on East St)

## Unpreparedness

- Imbalance of residential growth vs. commercial growth could result in services needing to be cut
- Developers can do what they want
- Ludlow needs some forward thinking
- Too many permits
- Unprepared for number of preliminary plans that add up to 500-600 units
- Multiple projects on hold because of the housing market, but they will come back
- Planning Board willing to develop anything, houses going everywhere
- Lack of consistency with planning
- Growth factor—second fastest after Belchertown

## Obstacles to Planning

- Town will lose money on gaining residents because they need services, but take residents anyway
- Anyone with a plan and a piece of land can develop
- Taking land by eminent domain may be inevitable
- Single-family homes don't come before the planning board
- No limiting on building permits per year
- No control over the contractors
- Growth both in Ludlow and in surrounding communities

## Estate Lots

- Allow for estate lots with proper requirements
  - No more than two in a row

- Get access to good back land
- Build high-taxable houses
- Require 80,000-100,000 sq ft of land
- Provision estate or flag lots (shorter frontage with a driveway going back)
- Allow of clustering with open space
- Structured development plan (clusters, maybe estate lots)
- Allow estate lots
- Would not like subdivisions created with estate lots—don't make "pork chop lots"

### **Other Problems with Bylaws**

- No specific zoning laws
- Updating zoning bylaws, which were established many years ago
- Some bylaws conflict with each other
- Stronger bylaws (no disturb zone)
- Spell out regulations
- Lot coverage bylaw (none existing)
- Ability to get business special permits for out-of-sewer areas
- Poor planning for many years
  - Grandfathered areas
  - Spot zoning in many areas
  - Zoning bylaws old and outdated
- Fiscal issues—balancing services with tax revenues

### **From the Seniors' perspective**

- There may have been a plan years ago, but it is not being adhered to
- Seniors don't feel represented in the implementation of plans
- Losing small-town feel, possible increase of 4,000 homes at build out
- Look at the Master Plan with cynicism because it wasn't followed last time in 1964
- Development plans approved without looking at the larger context
- Attitude in town of "my land, I do what I want"

### **New Kinds of Residents**

- Big, expensive houses are not with the character of Ludlow, more with ritzy Longmeadow
- People moving in from Indian Orchard
- More adults and children at and below the poverty line
- Other new residents with a lot of money

## Specific Developments

- Timber Ridge extension street too narrow
- 130 unit proposal in southeast corner
- Timber Ridge development very poor
- Some places still available for major subdivisions, one site is 100+ acres
- Three subdivisions connected of about 300 houses

## Design Standards

- Employ an architectural consultant for review of new development
- Lack of architectural oversight (Lusso Credit Union out of context, Comfort Inn looks like a saltine box)
- Need for greater context and aesthetic concern
- Design standards for new construction

## Impact Fees

- Impact fees for developments or added infrastructure (community center, recreational fields)
- Develop an impact fee schedule (x2)
- Require impact fees
- Revise the subdivision regulations to require infrastructure before home building

## Condominiums

- Condo projects—how many kids come with them?
- Planning with condo complexes
- Allow condominiums to be single-family
- Condominiums bring people from other areas unfamiliar with life in town
- Manganaro development
  - 60 affordable units (25%) not limited to local people first
  - Needs two entrances

## Other

- Do a future land use study
- Picking up mistakes from lack of planning in the past
- Plan for the future
  - Cemetery, school, and recreation land needed
  - Planning put off because of the economic crisis
- Changes in zoning to make restrictions on land owned for a long time
- Look 20 years from now: have a map of build-outs, accommodating for needs like they do projections in Florida

- Looking forward in zoning because there's no going back
- Is there a distinction in purpose or use signified with the name of the road (street, road, avenue)?
- Will this master plan actually work?
- Housing growth a concern but seems to be tasteful

## ***Open Space and Recreation***

### **Young People**

- Skate park could be a place for smoking, drinking
- Lack of a central place to hang out—not supervised but public
- Hard to know whether a downtown or community center would be more appropriate
- Young people could benefit from a small music venue with open mic nights, to hang out, etc.
- Ludlow Grange was the place before sports were big
- If the profit isn't there for a venue, then there may be alliances between churches, sports clubs, etc.
- Providing community service opportunities
- Kids are all going in different directions, so it's hard to accommodate to all of them
- Used to be Hemlock Hill for local skiing, now there's the ability to go to places to far away
- Skate park committee fell through
- Not enough for young people to do
- Recreation center in town, but nothing for the evenings

### **Open Space Preservation**

- Town needs to be more proactive on open space
- Buy land from farmers who are looking to sell
- Many have moved to Ludlow for the small-town feel, but it has been lost
- Important to preserve open space
- Maintenance of open space
- Worry about losing open space
- Open space preservation bylaw
- Most recent plan is Open Space from 2006
- Better conservation and open space management
- More care in zoning to better preserve open space
- Open space got sacrificed with the Fuller St 241-unit development once it went to the Chapter 40B comprehensive permit

- Appropriate a portion of the budget for open space
- Lack of open space
- Lack of open space planning and proper zoning
- Use impact fees to purchase land for open space conservation

### **New Sites**

- Recreational facilities limited for children and adults, but new track at high school shows if you build it, they will come
- Limited space to create new areas for fields, playgrounds, etc
- Create areas close to residential zones
- Looking at old landfill on Holyoke St—very important site
- Finding land for new facilities difficult
- Possible complex by Westover Air Base
- Central sports center would be great
- Neighborhood park would be great in the front of the mill
- Maybe the landfill could be used for fields—but is it too contaminated?
- When putting in large developments, the developers should have to put a portion of the land into a field, playground, etc
- Town should buy property on Brook St for organized field sports complex
- DPW compost facility could be suitable for a hockey rink

### **Sports other than Soccer**

- Not just a soccer town
- Even softball, a smaller sport, is popular and requires space
- Need another swimming pool for competition
- Not much to do unless you play soccer
- Provide for more kinds of recreational space (skate park)
- Adult recreation opportunities, especially with seniors
- Sufficient options in town for health and wellness

### **Management**

- Recreation Commission can't control the parks—it's all in the hands of the DPW
  - No director for parks and recreation
  - Lucky to have soccer people, football and hockey moms
  - Maintenance difficult for parks
  - DPW doesn't want to get involved with a project at the old landfill site
- Start of a sports complex on West St but there were EPA issues
- Who takes care of the fields—schools or DPW?

- Recreation Commission tries to create new spaces but gets shot down
- Accommodate and enable sports organizations

### **River Access**

- Access to the Chicopee River
- Canoe/kayak launch on the Chicopee River
- Grant access to the river
- River walk could get a lot of use
- Ludlow Mill Chicopee River walk
- River walk at the mill might not be able to be connected to Indian Orchard and Chicopee

### **Existing Conditions**

- Fields in poor condition, considering this is a soccer town
- Veterans Park field structure hurts in particular
- Fields are used so often that they are difficult to regenerate
- Money to run recreational programs comes from families, not from the town
- If Camp White didn't have the soccer federation to maintain it, then it would go unmaintained and unused
- Residents want well-maintained trails and fields, but that comes with a price
- Some poorly maintained open space, including Tilly St trails

### **Bicycling**

- Is the railroad bridge in use? It would be great to have a river walk using it
- Bike trail (maybe with the mill)
- Bicycle Rail Trails, particularly to connect with Belchertown
- Rail trail committee fell through

### **Playing Fields**

- Maintenance of recreational facilities
- Demand on the fields and conditions of them, considering the popularity of soccer
- More development of the recreational facilities (Ludlow is a soccer town!)
- Funding is also limited and recreation projects get put on the back burner

### **Springfield Reservoir**

- Springfield Reservoir is a good recreational resource but it's not available at all hours
- Passive recreation opportunities not as available, Springfield Reservoir path may get closed
- Make reservoir more accessible, adjacent area more recreation-friendly

### **Boys & Girls Club**

- More hours for adults at the Boys & Girls Club pool
- Accommodating the needs of the entire population at the Boys & Girls Club
- Competition between recreation commission, schools, Boys & Girls Club

### **Cemeteries**

- Lack of land for cemeteries
- Locate cemetery space
- Maybe use eminent domain for a cemetery

### **Town Parks**

- Whitney Park—how attractive is that today?
- Multi-functional park (like Forest Park)
  - Draw in people and families, reinforce the family image
  - Tucked in somehow that people will visit
  - But will the population support it?

### **Golf Courses**

- Two golf courses in town but they aren't very popular
- Need for a new club house and banquet facility for golf, whose revenues could pay for professional staff

### **Non-Residents**

- Recreational areas need to have higher entry fees for non-residents
- Out-of-towners coming to town parks and not taking care

### **Other**

- Scenic byway Rte 21 to Belchertown
- Columbus Day soccer and Casa Grande tournaments difficult to manage for traffic and field space
- Accommodating for families who can't provide recreation in backyards

## ***Schools and Education***

### **School Buildings**

- High school sufficient capacity and in very good condition for the foreseeable future
- High School and middle school recently renovated
- East Street school the oldest but built in stages so the condition depends on the part of the building
- Veterans Park school at capacity and can't be expanded because of wetlands
- Chapin Street school maxed out and expansion difficult because of location(size, electricity, etc.)
- Age of our school buildings—replace, refurbish?
- School expansion and overcrowding
- Need for a new elementary school or expansion of existing schools
- Designate a spot for a new school, maybe one with K-5
- Ludlow has to either build a new school or build onto a school
- Elementary schools at capacity
- Should be another elementary school
- High school, middle school, and Veterans Park in close proximity but disconnected
- Plan for a larger school campus
- Need for a new elementary school
- Prefer to see additions rather than a new school

### **Elementary School Reorganization**

- School department proposed reorganization of three elementary schools, which went through but with a lot of controversy
- Reorganization of the elementary schools causes some infrastructure issues, class sizes increasing
- Reorganization of elementary schools "tearing the town apart a bit"
- Consolidate all elementary schools into one
- Avoid the conflict over the elementary schools
- Elementary school restructuring could have been handled differently, with better preparation and more information ahead of time
- People get very nasty on the issue on MassLive
- Balancing the populations and class sizes with reorganization
- Reorganization may affect children who used to walk and now need to be bussed

- Reorganization better allows appropriation of resources and targeting based on age groups

### **Higher Education**

- Below the state average for students who attend four-year colleges
  - Enrollment at two-year colleges is high while retention is low
  - We need to prepare students for specialized fields such as bio-tech, which require a four-year degree
- Only 44% of the senior class took the SAT, below some urban schools
- Poverty levels don't jive with the low figures for SAT and college
- Skills needed for success
- Not a good graduation rate, but nice to see dropout rate decline
- Education is the ticket—in whatever way you deem appropriate
- Number of students who don't seek higher education

### **Finances**

- Money not spent well, the school gets everything
- Shortage of money coming from the state
- Higher taxes would help financial situation, but seniors can't pay
- Structure taxes for schools based on children per family
- Town isn't involved enough in the school budget—one line item
- School Committee members feel they're above everyone else

### **Family-Oriented Community**

- Born-and-raised people might take it for granted
- Hear people moving back into Ludlow
- Kids out and about at different times
- Strong, active parenting
- Continue quality of life with education and safety
- Reinforce and promote the positive family environment

### **Student Population**

- School space, with 30 kids per class
- New developments put increasing strain on the schools
- But the trend may be towards fewer schoolchildren
- School overcrowding, which is always an issue
- Pre-school program enrollment explosion

### **Library**

- No room for expansion
- Needs more computers as technology advances but no space
- Basement could be dug out for a community room
- If the town gets a mayor then the library will be seriously threatened

- Library is packed full (12,000 sq ft) with no room for expansion
- A great deal of library funding comes from state aid and grants, with the town paying for very little
- Better funding (especially for the library)
- How much do surrounding towns spend on their libraries?

### **Adult Education Levels**

- Mirror an urban community in some aspects, bedroom aspects in other
  - 25% of people don't speak or write English well
  - Adult learning center that interfaces well with the public schools, with long waiting list
  - 25% of people don't have a high school diploma or GED
- Highlight educational and educational opportunities in the area

### **Changing Demographics**

- How to serve low-incidence populations like Turks, Poles, Somalis, Russians
- Some people born here when it was a farming and manufacturing community, others came later
- New families are usually young families, affecting elementary schools

### **Offerings**

- High school students not getting enough offerings (foreign languages, AP classes, activities, etc)
- Keeping the current generation of young people engaged in the schools
- Way behind with technology, especially compared with Chicopee

### **Other**

- Schools have a strategic plan of 5, 10, 20 years
- Town could give grants for public education for members of the community in town with specialties to teach kids
- Keep kids busy so they don't get in trouble
- Tendency to band-aid problems

## **Senior Citizens**

### **Senior Center**

- Drivers cutting through the Senior Center and Park Place to try and beat the traffic
- Serving an average of 100 people for lunch but there isn't enough parking for them, people come hours early just for a parking place
- Lack of parking at downtown location for senior center
- New senior center with more central location and adequate parking
- Senior Center van not well-funded enough, has to be selective, cannot leave Ludlow, leads to parking and accessibility issues
- Parking very restricted around the senior center

### **Independent Living**

- Seniors prefer independent living solutions
- Tax abatement program helps seniors, but it's in jeopardy because of the economy; a lot of seniors depend on that program to remain in their homes
- A huge waiting list for senior housing under the Ludlow Housing Authority (Wilson St, State St, Chestnut St)
- Accessibility for seniors who cannot use stairs—only Chestnut St housing has an elevator to the second floor
- Fire exit for seniors

### **Transportation**

- Safety of seniors, especially at crossings (like at East St. by Walgreens where there are only flashing lights that people ignore during the day), maybe a pole light or something else is needed to get people to stop
- Seniors across from the Mill have adequately maintained sidewalks but many in other areas do not
- Transportation difficult, getting them out of cars

### **Senior-Specific Housing**

- Housing seniors in the future (expansion of the housing authority)
- Elderly housing that's walkable
- Will there be senior affordable housing in the mill?
- Plan for Stevens Memorial Building quite poor because the building doesn't fit well to the use and the cost is too high

### **Taxes**

- Taxes too high for seniors

- Taxes (again), how do they affect our seniors? Will they lose their homes?
- Most seniors want to stay but can't afford taxes
- Tax increases difficult for seniors

### **Other**

- Older people have to connect homes to sewer and face Title V costs of \$8,000-20,000 when they want to sell their homes
- Council on Aging is going to have to grow with the population
- People are living longer (huge increase in 80+)
- Community policing would be very helpful, especially at the senior center

## ***Social and Health Issues***

### **Quality of Life**

- Keep the health, wholesomeness, safety and security of the town, in contrast with Springfield
- Not a high-end community, it's safe and has good standards, but not high in spending
- Lifestyles are changing—prepared foods are more popular than unprepared food or produce

### **Emergency Response**

- Emergency preparedness not good enough, 4 min. standard met about 60% of the time
- CityConnect would be helpful to send out town-wide emergency messages

### **Health & Medical**

- No town health agent
- Satellite of Baystate Health would be helpful
- Ludlow Hospital closed in 1994, severe cases need to be taken elsewhere

### **Churches**

- Churches hurt by sports because there aren't enough fields so the scheduling has to be all the time

- Potential consolidation of parishes in the Catholic church, but probably not because each of the five has its niche (e.g. Portuguese Church, Eastern Right Church)

### **Drugs**

- Particularly a problem with young people
- A hidden issue

### **Ethnic Relations**

- The newest member of the school committee, a young Portuguese man, was the key swing vote on reorganization, so now the perception is that the Portuguese control the vote
- Promote ethnic diversity and tradition (Portuguese and Polish festivals)

### **Other**

- What are the demographics? We need to know them in order to make decisions on schools and seniors.
- Chapin St school has a great deal of construction equipment directly next to it, which is ugly and potentially dangerous
- How many foreclosures are going on in and around Ludlow?

## ***Town Government and Citizen Participation***

### **Planning Board**

- Planning Board never changes the plans
- Planning Board does a good job site-by-site
- People show up for zoning meetings only when the project is in their backyard
- Planning Board consumed with day-to-day operations
- Overdevelopment with a part-time planning board
- Accountability and cooperation between board
- Planning Board doesn't do enough due diligence
- Give a spine to the Planning Board (they need to look at Wilbraham for open space planning)
- Planning board makes no real evaluation of development
- Abolish planning board (too political) and replace with more hired professionals and architectural review committee
- Bylaws not observed or respected, especially section 6, and they are contradictory

- The boards are the ones that approve the plans—the Planning Board needs to stick to the bylaw

### **Change From Town Meeting Government**

- Mayor and council too much, town manager may have been better
- Ability to adapt between 60 and 90 days rather than in 2 or 4 years
- Take care of zoning issues to take building away from popularity contest of town meeting
- With growth, people may feel they lose participation
- It would be bad for the town to have a mayor appointing so many people
- Budget passed out at the town meeting without people having been able to look at it
- Community's inability to "pull the trigger" at town meetings
- Lack of accountability and a contact in the current form of government
- How do precinct members really know what their constituents think?
- Incorporate mayoral-council government system
- Board of Selectmen have no power, make no crucial decisions
- Mayor and council system put down on a vote

### **Intra-Government Relations**

- Too many boards fighting and going off in different directions, but no answer for it
- Board of Selectmen the "Board of Redundancy" with the number of paper copies, can't change because "we don't do it like that"
- Selectmen have no control over the other elected boards
- DPW, Planning Board, Building Commission, Conservation Commission, and Accounting Department conflict in their visions and actions
- Need more of a hierarchy, with boards under town manager and town select board
- Consensus difficult to achieve with the boards

### **Boards and Citizens**

- Not a good working relationship between boards and community
- Reorganization of the elementary schools—people got very nasty with each other
- Coordination between boards is very poor
- Having a hard time to find people to sit on boards for the environment
- Town citizen participation lacking

### **Importance of a Plan**

- Not looking many years forward to project budgets
- Make a plan and stick to it (again)
- Growth will happen one way or another, but you want it planned
- Commitment to a planning process and keeping to a plan
- Get the town to stick to the master plan

### **Overall Complaints**

- No central authority figure, so you can't go to just one person
- Lack of accountability and transparency in government
- Small number of people that make life and business frustrating in town
- Personal agendas and views getting in the way of the interests of the town
- Decisions get made with anecdotal evidence
- Need more centralized form of government

### **Elected Citizens vs. Appointed or Hired Professionals**

- DPW, because elected, can turn roads into politics
- Boards should be appointed rather than elected, particularly the DPW and Board of Health
- Abolish recreational commission and Westover Golf Course commission and replace with Parks Department and professionals
- Finance segment is antiquated, should be a finance department staffed with hired professionals

### **Other**

- Need a grant writer
- People community-wide need to become a little more open-minded about procedure
- Town hall could use more space
- Master Plan should go to town meeting for a vote
- Keep people interested and engaged in the town

## ***Traffic and Parking***

### **Specific Streets and Intersections**

- Truck traffic on Sewall St. corridor, which has been a concern for years because of link to Mass Pike exit
- Is it feasible to put a parking garage on Sewall St? Turning the Boys & Girls club into parking?

- Excessive speed on Center St and East St
- Ludlow Bridge
- Chapin St and East St
- Hate getting onto Center St from Moore St
- New road between Miller and Moore
- Roadways to I-291 and Mass Pike
- Center St too narrow from the highway to the bridge
- Another bridge? Maybe this was proposed
- Traffic on Center St and East St
- Plan for Rte 21 improvements in case the state wants to make a change
- Woodland Circle, off Moore St, has a very dangerous blind spot
- Issue with Leland Dr not built and inspected properly
- Divided highway plan would be good for Center St
- Moore St not wide enough for two trucks or school buses
- Widen streets (Highland Ave, Park Ave)
- Settle E. Otis Way, between East St and Miller St, which is irregular because of confusion about the street
- More sidewalks (one senior died from an accident on a sidewalk), Meadow St in particular
- Anything south of Chapin St is a disaster
- Chapin St (three schools)
- Development near Mass Pike needs to contribute to infrastructure improvement
- United Bank on Center St too close to street, no way to enlarge the road
- Relocate Mass Pike exit to East St, to where it was originally designed
- Mass Pike exit 7 the only toll in Western Mass
- Avoid zoning to create more congestion on Center St and East St
- Moore St dangerous because it is so narrow
- At Miller St & Chapin St
- East St light at the bridge
- East St and Windsor St intersection a problem
- East St and State St light not timed correctly
- Mass Pike Interchange could use a redesign
- Intersections need to be reworked (Sewall St and Center St)
- Bridge has way outlived its usefulness

### **Parking Issues**

- We need parking downtown, but we fight historical concerns
- Hubbard, East St, Highland Ave also face parking issues
- Parking for recreational facilities (e.g. Whitney St pool, public pond)

- Parking in the downtown area
- Paid (but convenient) parking
- Tear down Stevens Memorial Building for parking garage except ground floor for commercial
- Senior Center parking a “nightmare”
- Parking downtown
- High school has parking problems, can’t expand because of wetlands
- Handicapped parking problems (and it’s not just for people in wheelchairs)
- More parking needed everywhere
- Several missed opportunities like when one building burned down
- Buy up properties for a municipal parking garage

### Causes

- Too many curb cuts, no thought process on Center St, too hard to maneuver
- Belchertown development contributing to the traffic, not only with new cars but with trucks of all kinds
- How to deal with traffic from Palmer for a casino, Belchertown State School
- Growth in the last 10 to 15 years, where traffic and businesses aren’t at the right scale to accommodate
- Palmer casino a big worry
- Are there lights with sensors at any of the lights?
- Westover Air Show, even planned 6 months before, caused paralyzing traffic and great angst for the town
- Fuller St 241-unit development bring too much traffic
- No base housing, so many come from Ludlow
- Number of cars on the road continues to grow
- Students driving to school causing congestion
- Traffic getting worse especially from Belchertown
- Only 5-10 high school students bicycling
- Cars from schools and from neighboring towns
- Huge subdivisions have a large impact
- Police and DPW not cooperating on managing traffic
- Roadway construction issues (poor paving, a result of funding issues)

### Suggestions

- Create main streets that have pleasant traffic
- Projections on traffic level of service
- More traffic studies for subdivisions
- Toll Rte 21

- Four lane streets may be a necessity
- Lights with sensors would be helpful
- Upgrading streets for turning lanes, turning signals
- It would be nice to have a high-speed rail stop east-west
- Modernize old streets
- Better traffic planning
- Discourage urban sprawl by not planning for more and more cars
- Curb cut at Chapin and East
- Work on traffic flow
- Sensitivity to handicapped people
- Focus on the bridge, which is and always will be vital to the town

### **Business-Related**

- Commercial development is very exciting in terms of potential, but traffic handling is a priority
- Traffic in and around commercial areas, neighboring connections to Mass Pike, with the mill redevelopment
- Some businesses draw on a wider area than just Ludlow
- Short-term construction projects interrupt flow
- What are improvements for the town are obstacles for businesses
- Traffic creates business—but is it good for the town?
- Too many curb cuts, cross-traffic
- Business-sponsored maintenance of landscaped traffic islands—but will they maintain them well enough?
- Businesses should pay more for their impacts
- Traffic good for business

### **Ludlow Mill**

- Mill development traffic
- Future growth in Ludlow Mill complex and Boys & Girls club, with traffic coming along with it that the bridge can't handle (bridge probably should have been expanded)
- Ludlow Mill could be serviced by bus, shuttles from Springfield
- Creates a lot of traffic; they need public safety and traffic planning
- Traffic could be an issue, but it seems to be managed well

### **Sidewalks**

- Sidewalks inadequate
- Keep size of sidewalks with the character of the neighborhood
- Not enough sidewalks (to walk to Big Y)
- Residents on older streets have to deal with poor streets
- Sidewalks, especially for the elderly
- Are there requirements for sidewalks in new developments?

- Downtown is not popular with walking

### **East Street**

- Bump-outs they made on East St got rid of parking, also made it harder to plow in the winter time
- People unwilling to walk down East St
- Makeover of East St pretty but “big black things” unnecessary

### **Public Transportation**

- PVRTA underutilized
- Sparse, infrequent, and unhelpful public transportation
- Public transit to the library, maybe a park and ride

### **Air Traffic**

- If there's more training at Westover, there will be more noise
- In 2014, airplane engines will get much quieter

### **Other**

- Secondary routes cars use illustrate the problem
- Speeds too fast on rural roads
- Traffic (again), especially coming from other towns
- Don't limit growth
- Developers come in and leave, not thinking about the long-term impacts
- Keep traffic coming through town
- Roads not keeping pace with development
- Speed limits not adequately enforced
- Amount of traffic a public safety issue
- Not enough roadways

## ***Utilities and Services***

### **Water and Sewer**

- Sewer and water system development
- Private water and septic systems there, so how much growth can you sustain before you overtax or contaminate the water supply?
- Smart Growth a popular topic, but how can you accomplish that when on private water and septic?
- No municipal water available in much of town
- Require subdivisions within a certain distance to be connected to sewer and water

- Too many homes on septic tanks
- Sewers exist but not connected
- No requirement to hook up to municipal water
- Sewer hasn't come to certain pockets of the town (e.g. three streets off Cady St)
- Aquifer being tapped into and maybe not watched for capacity
- Stress on the public water supply
- Convince Springfield to build pump stations to get to higher elevations
- Conflicts when developments are within short distances of MWRA water lines and Wilbraham won't let them connect
- Playing catch-up with water supply
- Pursue an agreement with MWRA for water rather than Springfield, especially considering there are pipes running through town
- Need to extend sewer systems

### **Police and Fire**

- Satellite stations for police and fire
- Very high fire and police response time to planned subdivision near Belchertown
- Current fire station, staff does not meet needs
- Outgrown fire department, police department
- One developer didn't put fire suppression tanks as required, had to stop the building permits
- Fire Department great
- Response times for police and fire are getting longer and longer
- Keep police, fire services good
- One fire station may not be enough, especially with no fire hydrants

### **Maintaining Services with Growth**

- Keeping service increases at the pace of population growth
- Maintaining services with the pace of new development
- Growth going towards Granby and Belchertown, public safety and infrastructure needs to be maintained there
- DPW is doing a good job of bringing utilities to site
- Keep the town family-friendly with all the services
- Utility poles and lines tax would help
- Services have not kept pace with development

### **Broadband Access**

- Lack of DSL access in parts of town
- DSL access to the outer reaches of Ludlow, where the only options are Charter Cable and dial-up

- Lack of a DSL option in some parts of town

### **Power Redundancy**

- Many power outages and not many facilities with backup generators (maybe not even town hall)
- Power a big concern, with lightning protection
- A senior woman stuck in an elevator for an hour in the last outage

### **Problems with the DPW**

- Keep DPW services
- DPW doesn't look at spending like a tax payer
- Not enough cooperation with other boards

### **Stormwater**

- Enforceable stormwater ordinance but the DPW doesn't have enough time to enforce it
- Need something more than underground cisterns

### **Other**

- Update and upgrade aging infrastructure, put utilities underground
- Plan for underground power lines

### **Likes**

Rich history and core values, hard-working middle-class reputation, family-friendly quality, people are great, a lot of ethnic diversity, hardworking community, feels safer than even Springfield's Hill McKnight neighborhood, a lot of potential for improvements, town health able to see patients at their homes, self-contained community, benefit from regional traffic, rural spirit on the periphery, feels safe, rural and urban mix, evolved social and ethnic changes smoothly, large senior center, support for senior center, close-knit community, pride of ownership, safety, great services for the tax dollars, inter-department support, town feel, rural character, friendly people, good businesses, phenomenal services (police, fire, trash), strong senior center, very many churches, great youth, kid-friendly functions, East St corridor, adequate amount of open space, good school system, safe and caring community, fire department wonderful, high level of public safety, composting available to residents, relationship between schools and DPW, people and families stay in the area, strong sense of community, DPW does a good job of repairing roads, Rep. Petrolati gets a lot of money, never a foreclosure because of the social capital, hard-working people, serves immigrants, right amount of retail, low tax rate, civil discourse, town committee members and staff are objective

and fair, precinct members have common sense, great small businesses, Celebrate Ludlow and other festivals, family-oriented (especially coming from Springfield), small town feel, older subdivisions (1/4 acre lots), farms, people stay in Ludlow, best police, fire, and DPW around, open space, schools, small-town feel despite the size, safe, blue collar and down-to-earth community, small-town feel, ethnic diversity with the shops, meat markets, and restaurants, family-friendly, easily accessible via the Mass Pike, plenty of banks, strong sports organizations, Celebrate Ludlow event (but might be better on Sunday), Our Lady of Fatima four-day event, town services, composting facility, Boys & Girls Club, small-town feel, eclectic nature, safe, well-protected, family-friendly, people stay for generations, generous people, "the perfect dysfunctional family," ethnicities get along, phenomenal services, very dedicated senior center, Board of Health with dedicated nursing staff, rural aspect, friendliness, community spirit, safety, well-supported senior center, senior tax abatements, HAP Stevens Memorial Building plan, great relationship between the high school and senior center, people in town know each other, safe and comfortable, family-friendly, good police and fire, community-oriented, occupied storefronts, beautiful and clean, prideful, Chicopee River (although underutilized), restaurants, history, family cohesion, sense of belonging, community rallies together in crisis, people and families stay here, community festivals, Portuguese traditions, great library programming

### ***Dislikes***

The disagreement among ranks in town (can't build a future with too many people disagreeing), divide in politics, good example of agreement is Longmeadow (great recycling, almost no school buses), the fact that the biggest employer is not a productive one but the jail, zoning bylaw is terrible and needs a complete revamp done by professionals in Chapter 40 law (Amherst has the best), people are stubborn and do things without permits, difficult to volunteer time and materials to the schools and Boys & Girls Club (e.g. start a stamp club), physical separation (by the river), aesthetics that come from poor zoning (especially on Center St from the bridge to the Mass Pike), gateway from the Mass Pike, Havelin Beach very sad-looking (especially with chain-link fence), new islands and posts on East St, not enough sidewalks or lack of connectivity, parking and traffic issues, fragment of government, fast growth, lack of affordable housing, fear of affordable housing, fear of low-income people, not always

community-wide discussion, form of government (mayoral form voted down), divide in communication and understanding between departments, recreation handled by separate private groups, politics of backdoor dealing, developers don't want to listen, more reactive than proactive, Planning Board that is very pro-developer and not pro-town, not enough cooperation between departments, scared of change, less-than-progressive approach with schools (need to constantly evolve with the world), traffic and road maintenance, not enough quality public places, traffic, suburban sprawl, "crazy-quilt growth," traffic, center turning lane on Center St, poor planning, traffic, people unwilling to walk, East St bump-outs, reactive instead of proactive, overcrowding of lots, reactive, resistance to change from a small-town feeling, quiet, boring for young people, dividing the town ethnically (Portuguese, Poles, everyone else), boards don't work well enough together, lack of mediation, town government not effective, poor planning for seniors, rapid growth with no plan, infrastructure strain, getting new people involved in committees, unwillingness to change, change in balance between agriculture and residential/commercial, recent episodes with sentiment against the Portuguese community, construction (particularly Center St), lack of town center (compared with Northampton), lack of financial support for the library