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Office of the First Selectman

September 8, 2023

Middlefield's Future Survey Results

The Board of Selectman has undertaken an initiative to craft a plan for shaping Middlefield's future. By creating this plan, we can focus our limited resources on pursuing key priority projects and working to have them "shovel ready" for when grant opportunities present themselves.

Over the last couple years, we looked at all the initiatives, opportunities and projects that have been proposed. Acting on one initiative could potentially prevent action on another. In addition, initiatives in Hartford to create affordable housing in communities and possibly assume control of local zoning has created some tension between compliance with the State and maintaining our town's character.

Recognizing that individually, we don't have all the answers, but collectively we can develop the best answers, the Board of Selectmen held a joint meeting of every board and commission in town to review some 40 different initiatives and plot a course for Middlefield's future. At this first of a kind meeting for Middlefield, the leaders of our town participated in discussing the projects, providing insights into pros and cons, adding additional ideas and or enhancements.

Gathering all these perspectives together, we then created a rather lengthy survey for board members, residents and local business owners to add their insights. The Board of Selectmen extends **A Big Thank You** to all who responded to the survey. We had 283 respondents which is almost 10% of our voting population. That's an outstanding response - especially for a survey that took nearly 20 minutes to complete. Again - thank you for your participation! In addition to ranking the various projects and initiatives, there were many additional insights and valuable comments that were shared and will help shape the plan as it moves forward.

Key findings of the survey:

- **The number one favorable initiative was to establish a vision for Middlefield's Future!** With all your help and support, we have already undertaken the first steps in that process.
- Forty (40) board and commission members (our town leaders) took the survey. Their responses mirrored those of the residents – your leadership is aligned with your views.
- We received a lot of suggestions for what might be done in town - the survey results will give the town government and our board and commission volunteers a great awareness of what our community wants to see, and many things we don't want to see happen.
- We clearly hear that residents want to preserve the rural charm of our community and its open spaces. We must maintain our small and peaceful town charm.
- Among the highest rated project preferences for potential enhancements for our town include:
 - **Improve the water quality of Beseck Lake**
 - **Develop a Blight Ordinance**
 - **Protect and maintain our open spaces**
 - **Purchase the Town Green**
 - **Enhance the Current Fire House**
- Given our limited resources (people and funding) and a desire to limit tax increases; prioritization of "big ticket" projects will allow us to get a head start on planning / design / permits / and preparing us for grant applications.

Next Steps

There will be another joint meeting of the boards and commissions with a goal to:

1. Review the results of the survey
2. Prioritize the key initiatives
3. Assign / Solicit volunteers to lead high priority initiatives
4. Ask for Board's to sponsor key initiatives

Sincerely,

Robert Yamartino

Robert Yamartino
First Selectman
Town of Middlefield