

Walsh Property Community Planning Committee (WPCPC)

Meeting Minutes

August 30, 2023 | 6:00 p.m.

Members Present

Co-Chairs Ken Oxtoby and Eileen Breslin; Members Betty Gallo, Jane Lea, Jeffrey Fischer, Fred Gaechter, Morgan Clark, Paul Wisotzky, Raphael Richter, Steve Wynne.

Members Absent

Russ Braun, Todd Schwebel

Also Present

Darrin Tangeman, Barbara Carboni, Stephanie Rein, Carole Ridley, Sharon Rooney, Allie Koch, Joan Holt; Amy Wolff, Brian Boyle, Candida Monteith, Dan Gessen, Daniel Mierlak, Geoffrey Doherty, Jack Reimer, John Thornley, Sophie Mann-Shafir, Tim Hickey

Welcome, Roll Call and Agenda Review

Co-chair Oxtoby read the remote meeting access instructions.

Co-chair Oxtoby read the roll call and committee members present identified themselves.

Co-chair Breslin led discussion of the minutes of July 26, 2023. Minutes to be amended to show Stephanie Rein as absent, and Todd Schwebel as present. Motion to approve meeting minutes as amended by Co-Chair Oxtoby, seconded by Member Wisotzky. Unanimously approved.

Tonight's agenda was reviewed.

Public Comment

Candida Monteith: Educator (Masters and PhD). Expressed concern there has been no discussion on impacts on the school system (class size, staffing, supplies, classroom, traffic increases). Encourages serious discussion on financial concerns and alternatives. Jack Reimer: Truro Voter. Noted overwhelming call for 40-80 units max at previous meetings; Viability? Burden to taxpayers? Cost analysis? Appreciative of the WPCPC's efforts doing the best with the data provided. Geoffrey Doherty: Thanks to the WPCPC. Abutter to the landlocked isolated property where the proposed water tower is indicated on plans. Asked for this to be included in the discussion. Participated in the meeting and is interested to see how the plans will be revised. Jim Hickey: Attended forum; overwhelmingly stated we need 40-60 units. Disconnect on "A" affordable. Clarity requested on who this housing is for.

Town Staff Updates

To date, there have been 286 survey responses. Analysis will begin when survey is closed. A request was made to send a Truro alert out before the weekend. The Select Board considered a new charge for the WPCPC. This change consisted of the determination to keep the committee size of 11; Member Fischer was appointed as a primary, Member Richter as alternate. Town Staff is currently determining options for the cottages – move, sell, or demo.

Outreach Events to Date

Ms. Ridley provided an overview of the recent public forum at the Community Center and other tabling events (transfer station, church, etc.). There were a number of consistent comments, and unique comments. General

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themes: too much affordable housing in one location; less housing and more space for recreation; too dense. There is recognition of the need for community housing, however, questions were raised on the Housing Production Plan. Consistent comments indicated 252 units is too many, despite the need for affordable housing/housing in general. Questions included who these homes for are, would single family lots be deed restricted, how many bedrooms, how does the lottery system work, how many students would be added to school system, how would Town manage who lives in these units, how would Town ensure these stay affordable, what is the timing of this process/phasing, can the public be involved in future decision making, what will the taxpayer be responsible for, what are costs of all this work. The WPCPC determined that these questions can be answered via informational memo or within the report.

WPCPC Members provided feedback on the forum and tabling events. The events have been highly attended and feedback is coming in; however, a shift in focus towards communities not reached to date is critical – families with children; service workers; Jamaican community; Seniors; farmers; low income families. It's critical to collect more diverse feedback to create actual quality data. WPCPC Members called attention to overwhelming support for housing at tabling events hosted at the church and by individuals/families in need. Generally, it appears there is no outright opposition to housing; it's a matter of how much, and where.

Review of Warrant Article

The draft warrant article for the October 21, 2023 Town Meeting was reviewed. Stephanie Rein, Select Board liaison, encouraged the best chance for success for the acceptance of the warrant article is to provide a range of numbers, 50-80 units, for example, and incorporate a range within the report. There will be future opportunities for public involvement. Clarity was requested on the difference between the report and an RFP subsequent to the vote at Town Meeting. Should the plan be accepted by the Town, there would be some evaluative process down the line between phases of work, such as an update to the HPP to determine if need has changed. Clarity was provided on the meaning of "adoption". Mr. Tangeman clarified that to adopt means that the Town would vote on it and would make it the Town's recommendation as well. An RFP would be presented to the Select Board after they've voted on the plan, the RFP would be published, and proposals would come in. Ms. Rein noted that citizen petition was reviewed by counsel and found to not be in the proper form. She noted that Select Board wants to honor the petition and prepare its own article for an ad hoc committee to advise the process and implementation of Phase 1 of Walsh development, evaluation process, and continued feedback collection and research. The committee's support for such an article at a future meeting was suggested.

Wrap Up, Future Agenda Items, and Next Steps

The WPCPC will submit the plan for review by the Select Board on 9/19/23. Limited time remains for edits to the plan. Discussion of WPCPC weekly meetings. Solid feedback has been received to date and WPCPC should continue reaching diverse groups. WPCPC to develop a FAQ sheet/link with resources to date, and to cull questions from survey and forum responses to address in responses. Survey responses will also be analyzed and reported on at next meeting. Agreement to hold weekly meetings through September as needed.

Public Comment

Joan Holt: Expressed concern that the decisions will only be advisory. All of this work could be ignored.

Tim Hickey: Expressed extreme concern that the WPCPC and Select Board are not inclusive or reaching the community in the right ways.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Member Gallo, seconded by Member Wisotzky. Adjourned at 8:15pm.

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